

ETHICAL TRANS-FEMINISM:
BERLIN'S TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS' NARRATIVES AS
CONTRIBUTIONS TO ETHICS OF VEGETARIAN ECO-
FEMINISMS

By

Anja Koletnik

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Supervisor: Assistant Professor Eszter Timár
Second Reader: Professor Allaine Cerwonka

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Abstract

This thesis will explore multi-directional ethical and political implications of meat non-consumption and cisgender non-conformity. My argument will present how applying transgender as an analytical category to vegetarian eco-feminisms, can be contributive in expanding ethical and political solidarity within feminist projects, which apply gender identity politics to their conceptualizations and argumentations. I will outline the potential to transcend usages of gender identity politics upon a cisnormative canon of vegetarian eco-feminisms lead by Carol J. Adams' *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990). Adams's canon of vegetarian eco-feminisms appropriates diet as a central resource of their political projects, which contest speciesism and cis-sexism. Like Adams' canon, my analysis will consider diet as always having political connotations and implications, both for individuals and their embodiments, within broader socio-political realms. Alongside diet, transgender as an analytical category will be employed within analysis, due to its potential of exposing how genders as social categories and constructs are re-formed. My analysis will be based on narrative interviews, which will explore the multi-directional ethical and political implications of meat non-consumption and cisgender non-conformity among members of Berlin's transgender / cisgender non-conforming and meat non-consuming subcultures. Acknowledging the correlations of material instances and discursive notions, as exemplified by meat non-consumption and transgender / cisgender non-conforming identifications, can therefore enhance ethical and political solidarity of feminisms, and enable transcending limiting gender binary systems and usages of gender identity politics within feminist projects. I will follow feminist new materialisms and transgender studies, which highlight the great importance of including materialities, embodiments and lived experiences into analysis of socio-cultural and political notions. Tracing the notion of 'ethical trans-feminism' will thus be presented through juxtaposing ethics with usages of notions of genders by vegetarian eco-feminisms, feminist new materialisms and transgender studies.

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The World Needs More Lighthouses:

You can join the millions talking in the dark. Or you can stand up and scream light, out into the night.

I Wrote This For You

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Introduction

This thesis will explore the multi-directional ethical and political implications of meat non-consumption and cisgender non-conformity.¹ Correlations for researching ethical meat non-consumption of transgender / cisgender non-conforming individuals stem from the fact that within processes of commodification, animals, their flesh and byproducts, undergo enclosure into systems of gendered constructs.² The context within which I am situating meat non-consumption are Western capitalist and consumerist societies. By forefronting ethics and political solidarity, rather than identitarian binary systems, as central to feminist political work, I will show how transgender individuals' meat non-consumption enables a critique of usages of identity politics within vegetarian eco-feminisms. Tracing the notion of 'ethical trans-feminism' will be presented through juxtaposing ethics with usages of notions of genders by vegetarian eco-feminisms, feminist new materialisms and transgender studies.

Vegetarian eco-feminisms are situated amidst eco-feminisms, which argue for the recognition of speciesism as a form of oppression. They manifest contentions towards speciesism and cis-sexism through ethical diets – explicitly meat non-consumption. Diet is their central resource for political work. I will critically engage with a canon of vegetarian eco-feminisms lead by Carol J. Adams' *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990) and followed by Gaard and Gruen 1995; Donovan, 1995; Lucas, 2005; Donovan and Adams 2007; Merriman, 2010; Nath, 2011; Kemmerer 2011, *et al.*³ Adams' monumental book, contextual to radical feminism, argues for meat being a social and

¹ Cisgender originates from the Latin prefix *cis-*, which means 'on the same side'. A cisgender person is someone whose gender identity, assumed gender roles and gender expressions are in accordance with social norms posited for either women or men within the hegemonic gender binary system. Cisnormativity refers to norms, which assume and prescribe that individual's gender identity and portrayed gender roles are coherent with the biological sex they were assigned at birth.

² Hereafter referred to as 'transgender individuals', yet including all arrays of gender identifications, embodiments and expressions, not merely those whose identification is transgender, but rather all who contest and / or are not in alignment with socially hegemonic cisnormativity.

³ Hereafter referred to as 'Adams' canon', indicating vegetarian eco-feminist works by Adams and authors befitting her line of argumentation.

gendered construct which appropriates the oppressive patriarchal ideology. Adams offers a feminist critique of patriarchy, and claims this critique is completely intertwined with vegetarian eco-feminism. Calling for recognition of animals' and women's oppression, Adams indicates meat non-consumption is a contestation of patriarchy. I will highlight cisnormativity of Adams' argumentation, and aim to delineate how Adams' canon (inadvertently?) disables a critique of gender identity politics, which are manifested through ethical meat non-consumption. Based on presenting the usages of the concept of gender within vegetarian eco-feminisms, I will argue that all central notions of vegetarian eco-feminist argumentation, gender among them, can be immense contributions for ethical and political projects of feminisms.

Expositions of cisnormativity within Adams' canon will show how applying analytical approaches, when including gender as a constitutive element of argumentation, can help not only in overcoming rigid usages of identitarian notions, but also expand ethical work of vegetarian eco-feminisms. In congruence with Adams' canon, I will also consider diet as always having political connotations and implications, producing politically re-formed embodiments. While signifying political implications of one's ethical meat non-consumption, I will join the ranks of those (Stryker, 2006; Valentine, 2007; Enke, 2012) who argue for the category of transgender applied as an analytical category to contest feminist projects which deployed gender solely as cisnormative.

“Disidentification resists the interpellating call of ideology that fixes a subject within the state power apparatus. It is a reformatting of self within the social, a third term that resists the binary of identification and counteridentification,” (Muñoz, 1997: 83). I will use the term disidentification, a debt to José Muñoz, in order to avoid prescribing gender identities and to indicate all cisgender non-conforming expressions, embodiments and performatives, which are not in congruence with hegemonic gender regulatory regimes. Rather, disidentification will imply contestation to normalizing discourses, accompanied by ethical re-questioning of oneself in

regards with others, and with commitments to not re-create or partake in the exclusionary gender binary system.

Meat non-consumption of transgender individuals will refer to acts of non-consuming any animals' flesh. Rather than using the term vegetarian, which is indicative of an identity, I will use meat non-consumption to stress the perspective of *doing*, of individuals engaging in material acts. I will follow feminist new materialists (Barad, 2003, 2011; Grosz, 2008; Frost, 2011), who argue for including biology and organic processes into socio-cultural and political analysis. Intertwining discourse and materialities will enable me to show multi-directional influences of meat non-consumption and conceptualizations of genders. Vegetarian eco-feminist analyses, especially those which appropriate radical feminism, and their usages of dichotomous divisions between nature / culture, sex / gender, body / mind, are therefore challenged by new materialisms.

The notion of 'ethical trans-feminism' will be used to present anthropological and ethnographical insights from contemporary urban feminisms of Berlin's transgender and meat non-consuming collectives and communities. My analysis of narrative interviews will look at the correlations of meat non-consumption and cisgender non-conformity, and their ethical and political implications for projects of feminisms. Using narrative interviews as primary empirical material provides merging discursive notions with materialities and lived experiences, without prioritizing one to another, which is central to commitments of transgender studies and feminist new materialisms. Merging discourses with materialities will also portray how transcending constrictive usages of gender identity politics can enhance feminist commitments to ethics. The term transcending will be used throughout this thesis and with it I aim to indicate all forms of challenging, subverting, and contesting of majoritarian hegemonic social norms, which take form as dichotomous systems.

Empirical research was situated in Berlin, Germany due to Berlin's abundance of transgender, queer and / or cisgender non-conforming, vegetarian / vegan, anti-consumerist, politically active communities and collectives. Their socio-political stances are manifested through an array of material instance; diet, gender performativity, choices regarding accommodation, consumerism etc. being among the most prominent. In "Queer Berlin" (2006: 484) Goebel indicates the city's attributes as 'aggressive self-promotion as a dynamic space for innovative self-invention'. This very instance supports the placement of my research, and enables developments of my analysis to be in juxtaposition with feminisms of urban cisgender non-conforming subcultures. Berlin will be representational of multiculturalist socially non-conforming feminist urban subcultures of Western societies. Goebel specifies that 'Berlin's queer space do not necessarily contribute to gay identity politics or social emancipation', rather they enable a 'self-reflexive, even playful engagement' with instances that contribute to the re-formations of 'queer desire and lifestyles' (2006: 489). The reality of these very instances, which are manifested by inspiring individuals, is why Berlin was the most appropriate setting accessible to me for conducting research. Ethical trans-feminisms, however, are not bound by location. As ethical trans-feminism developed due to correlations of various insights, notions, and concepts, let me now present their positionings within the structure of this thesis.

Chapter 1 will outline theoretical backgrounds and present literature from all three fields of scholarship central to this thesis; vegetarian eco-feminism, new materialisms and transgender studies. Chapter 2, methodology, will explain my usage of narrative interviews as a primary method of inquiry. Chapters 3, 4 and 5 will be analytical delineations of reoccurring notions from interviews in correlation with theoretical concepts.

Chapter 3 will present narratives of interview participants regarding meat non-consumption, and influences of their diets on their ethical and political positionings and values.⁴ Transgender individuals' meat non consumption withholds a critical stance towards normative systems of regulatory power. Following Barad's "Posthumanist Performativity" (2003), I will show how meat non-consumption can be considered as 'agency of ethics'. All participants broadly talked about how their ethical meat non-consumption and awareness of speciesism constantly empower them to be self-reflexive with regards to all other forms of oppression (gender, disability, class, race, etc.). I will thus introduce the notion of 'ethical self-reflexivity'; a postulate upon which self-reflexivity develops not only regarding well-being of animals, but also other non-hegemonic entities, which are exposed to oppression. Meat non-consumption will therefore not be presented solely as dietary manifestations of partaking in battling speciesism, but rather as empowerment for a self-reflexive way of life. Acknowledgements of oppression and political solidarity are central to an ethical way of life. Ethical self-reflexivity will enable me to show that one's diet offers possibilities for re-thinking discursive and material notions of vegetarian eco-feminisms. Adams' canon appropriates their argumentations to the gender binary system, which is not in accordance with feminist ethical values who aim to contest reiterating gendered constructs. I will argue that, rather than solely contesting gender encaptured in patriarchy, ethical self-reflexivity of transgender individuals arising from ethical meat non-consumption, fuels feminist projects to use transgender as an analytical category. I suggest such analysis can be only contributonal to projects of vegetarian eco-feminisms and their ethical considerations regarding all genders.

Chapter 4 will present embodiments as loci of agency, with power to transcend hegemonic normativities, among them the cisnormative binary gender system. By showing how embodiments are delineated through narratives of transgender meat non-consuming participants, their alignment with new materialisms' conceptualizations of embodiment will be highlighted.

⁴ Hereafter referred to as 'participants'.

Agency of transgender meat non-consuming embodiments will thus be presented as transcending body essentialism; the binary logic of sex / gender and nature / culture. I will then consider the correlations of embodiment and gender fluidity – articulated as all participants’ gender disidentifications. Gender fluidity will be delineated through notions of Butler’s ‘gender performativity’ from *Bodies That Matter* (1993) and Davis’ “Situating “Fluidity”” (2009). Following Barad (2003), I will offer a reading of Butler’s gender performativity through a perspective of new materialisms, thus transcending discourse and incorporating material instances of embodiments, as essential also for transgender studies. Engaging with these works will enable me to show that transgender non-consuming embodiments fuel a critique of vegetarian eco-feminisms’ usages of gender identity politics. Transgender meat non-consuming embodiments thus have potential to contribute to re-negotiations of socio-cultural intelligibilities of genders as presented within Adams’ canon expanding their works’ ethics and political commitments regarding genders.

Chapter 5 will present participants’ considerations of feminisms and genders, which are seen as both empowering and problematic. I will argue for feminisms as projects with immense commitments to acknowledgement of pluralities of genders and show how these commitments call for transcending gender identity politics. While engaging with participants’ thoughts on cisnormativity, alongside presenting indications that exposing the cisgender norm is crucial for enhancing its visibility, I will deliberate upon the potentials of creating a new binary between the categories of cisgender and transgender. Drawing from Butler’s “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” (1990), I will explicate that no gender identity is inherent; gender identity politics are thus products of hegemonic regulatory regimes. Ethical implications regarding conceptualizations of gender, arising from all delineated arguments, will finally be presented through developments of the notion of ‘ethical trans-feminism’. Ethical trans-feminism engages ethical self-reflexivity in analysis of discursive and material notions, which enhance feminists’

ethical commitments to transcending restrictive binary systems and usages of identity politics within feminisms.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Background and Literature Review

1.1 Tracing Food and Meat Consumption

Post-industrial Western societies and the emergence of the capitalist / consumerist economic systems have situated food as a prominent commodity. Commodities have a highly influential role on formations of identities; we (re)create ourselves through consumption (Bourdieu 1984; Featherstone 1991; Baudrillard 1998 in DeSolier, 2013: 1). Food is socially constructed as more than an energy source; among other instances it expresses ethical and political values. This thesis will present argumentation based on practices of consumption, specifically meat non-consumption, which expresses political resistance toward oppression and social normativities.

‘Food viscerally connects individuals and social bodies,’ claims Belasco, and suggests the ‘politics of food, culture, and society is an increasingly important area for social inquiry’ (Belasco 2008 in Cherry, 2010: 233). Cherry (2010: 243) implies that consumption identities transcend the initial understanding of the concept of identity as being what someone is, and build upon what someone does. Discursive realms are thus being transcended with considerations of identifications based on the materiality of lived experiences - a central stance of my argumentation. I will correlate diet and gender as analytical categories through analysis of transgender individuals’ meat non-consumption.

Industrialization of food production in Western countries has introduced a new era of animal consumption; mass commodification of animals into food products. Commodification of animals has experienced a shift from killing animals for means of consumption to the emergence of factory farming and the industrialization of meat and animal byproducts. Opponents of animal commodification joined forces into animal rights / animal liberation movements, which were inextricably interrelated with the arise of abstaining from meat / animal byproducts consumption in the forms of ethical vegetarianism and veganism.

1.2 Ethical Meat Non-Consumption: The Arise of Ethical Vegetarianism

Ethical vegetarianism in the West dates as far into history as Pythagoras (Lucas, 2005: 160).⁵ Vegetarianism as a social movement started to take form in the middle of the 19th century, mostly in Europe and the USA (Kheel, 2004: 1275). Among focal points which contributed to contestations, Kheel emphasizes the introduction of living conditions of animals being signified, in juxtaposition to the already present advocacy regarding the cruelty of slaughter (2004: 1276). Vegetarianism is affinity among entities within and beyond the human world; vegetarianism indicates a 'self-conscious decision to abstain oneself from flesh foods based on philosophical, ethical, metaphysical, scientific or nutritional beliefs' (Kheel, 2004: 1273).

Modern animal rights movements advocate for the deconstruction of the human/animal dichotomy, challenging speciesism, and recognizing animals as inherently valuable beings (Regan, 2003; Singer, 1990; Francione, 1996 in Freeman, 2010: 165). The term vegetarian describes a diet, which excludes all forms of animal flesh, while decisions whether to consume meat or not are usually ingrained within one's philosophical, ethical or religious beliefs (Kheel, 2004: 1273). DeSolier (2013: 5) signifies that in post-industrial societies the morality of production is immense; it has power over (re)shaping consumption. One's moral deliberation on what they ingest is ethical consumption.

Animals are beings that exist for themselves - ontology is not defined only by an entity itself, but also by one's relation to it/them, claims Overall (2012: 337). One's ability to recognize oppression is inseparably intertwined with their ability to identify and acknowledge the moral status, political autonomy and importance of individuals (Overall, 2012: 338 - 339). However, she emphasizes (2012: 339), that who is seen as intelligible is not merely the result of empirical discoveries, but also products of conceptual and normative evolution. Oppression has a central

⁵ Dated approximately between 580 B.C.E. – 500 B.C.E.

stance within this thesis, as it legitimizes not only ethical meat non-consumption, but also resistance toward all other forms of constrictive hegemonic regulatory regimes, gender binary among them. Recognitions of the importance of interrelations thus contribute to individuals' ethical acts and decision making. Humans' recognition of animals' oppression fuel their ethical meat non-consumption; up-taking vegetarian or vegan diets, and consequently having a non-normative diet in regards to Western socio-cultural realms.

Contextualizing ethical food consumption within post-industrial societies denotes food as a prominent source through which one's ethics of self making are materialized. Ethical consumption is altruistic and places others' interests before those of (one)self (DeSolier, 2013: 108 - 109). Diet is always political; meat non-consumption thus re-creates embodiments, which manifest ethical and socio-political stances. Within comprehending (every)one's socio-political positionings, having in mind contextual differentiations is crucial. Curtin's (1991: 69 in Gaard, 2011: 38) notion of 'contextual moral vegetarianism' elaborates that individuals' reasons for moral / ethical vegetarianism have distinctions in regards to their locale, gender and class. This implies there is no ultimate ethical stance in regards to which anyone's diet (meat non/consuming) can be ethically evaluated. Rather, individuals' specific socio-political contexts should be comprehended while analyzing food non/consumption and its political significations in correlations with other social categories, including gender.

Political importance of meat non-consumption is not possible without acknowledging the inherent political matter of animals themselves. Overall (2012: 338) argues that whether an individual, human and non-human animal, counts as a person is partially dependent on how they are treated from others. Individuals' significance derives not only from who they are, but also from how they are being engaged with and how they engage with others. Considerations of multi-directional socio-political engagements should thus be central to all projects of feminism, as is highlighted by feminist new materialisms, whose presentation follows that of eco-feminisms.

Eco-feminisms are subfields of feminism, which introduce and problematize the equivalencies of human and non-human animals being exposed to oppression. But how far do eco-feminisms reach in regards to not abiding to identity politics, whilst aiming to be ethically and politically considerate of (every)one's significance?

1.3 *Eco-feminisms: Concepts, Contexts and Critiques*

1.3.1 Eco-feminisms - A Genealogy

Eco-feminisms emerged from collisions of cultural feminists, advocates of animal liberation movements and anti-violence or peace protestations. The oppression of non-human animals, known as speciesism, is central to projects of eco-feminist analysis (Gaard, 2002: 117). Eco-feminisms' central argument is that speciesism functions like other forms of oppression such as racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism and naturism (Gaard, 2002: 117). However, amidst eco-feminists' indications that speciesism, sexism, racism, homophobia must be considered and appropriated into analysis (Kemmerer, 2011: 6), some eco-feminists' discourses regarding gender are discussed solely on the level of the cisnormative gender binary system. My analysis will show how gender, when considered as an analytical category, enables transcending limiting binary gender systems.

Eco-feminist theories arose from debates on nature among radical and cultural feminists in the 1970s and 1980s, indicates Sandilands (1999: 5). Radical feminism argues for a feminist approach which centralizes the interrelations of sex and gender, depicting these interrelations as women's oppression by men (1999: 10). Radical feminisms' conceive gender as cisnormative; one's gender identity is expected to be in accordance with their biologically assigned sex at birth, resulting in their argumentation deploying a reiteration of the gender binary system logic. Koyama (2006: 701) claims radical feminism forwards believes 'that women's oppression is the most pervasive, extreme and fundamental of all social inequalities, regardless of race, class, nationality, and other

factors.’ Such rankings of oppression and simplistic usages of identity politics are inherently oppressive to people who are marginalized due to their intersections of multiple differential factors/categories, adds Koyama (2006: 701). In accordance with Koyama, I am arguing that canons of vegetarian eco-feminisms delineate their argumentation for vegetarianism while manifesting the limiting usage of gender identity politics.

Cultural feminism sought salvation in nature, denotes Sandilands (1999: 11), as it appropriated *natural* distinctions as explanations and legitimizations of women’s indivisible interconnections, regardless of their race, class or sexual orientation. Eco-feminism focuses on interconnections between the domination/oppression of women and nature perpetrated by men, indicates King (458 in Kemmerer 2011: 14). Essentialistic depictions of women, and forefronting femininity as *natural*, are therefore central to cultural feminisms and appropriated eco-feminisms. Dichotomous divisions of nature and culture are contested by feminist new materialisms, whose presentation follow. In this moment I want to stress that whilst eco-feminisms aim to critically engage with social categories, they also juxtapose women, animals and nature due to their mutual oppression from men exclusively within a patriarchal matrix. As Lucas (2005: 170) claims; pointing to the differences of others to justify them being harmed is far removed from sound feminist thinking. Appropriations of arguments, confined solely within a one-fold structural matrix regarding gender, can be restrictive, not fully acknowledging the potential of gender as an analytical category. Especially when theoretizations aim to contest complexities of oppression, opportunities for reclaiming agency should be sought in every category applied within argumentation. Now I will proceed with delineating the concept of vegetarian eco-feminism - a form of non-normative food consumption inscribed with means of socio-political critique within a Western context.

Vegetarian eco-feminisms are an active form of the feminist notion ‘the personal is political’ which explore and re-act to political contexts with dietary choices (Gaard, 2002: 117). Vegetarian

eco-feminists argue that only by acknowledging and acting upon our sympathies for animals, are humans able to prevent immense amounts of animal suffering, claims Gaard (2002: 119). But, like all emotions, one's ability to be ethical and sympathetic is encaptured within social and political contexts (Gaard 2002: 119). Vegetarian eco-feminisms argumentations somehow seem not to comprehend that everyone's multi-fold encapturement in socio-politically (constructed) contexts. Let me elaborate; meat non-consumption are material manifestations of contestations towards oppressive socio-political hegemonies. Within Western contexts individuals therefore consciously make decisions about their food consumption, and manifest their decisions with actions fueled by their ethical and political values. So far vegetarian eco-feminists would agree. Where the logic of vegetarian eco-feminisms' argumentations seems to plunge into self-contradictions, is throughout their conceptualizations of gender(s). Whilst seemingly critical of various hegemonic social categories, they seem not to engage in critical analysis of notions of genders. Rather, their argumentations appropriate everyone's gender as being in congruence with their sex assigned at birth.

Until the emergence of queer eco-criticisms, whose presentations are up-coming, eco-feminisms portrayed an omnipresence of reiterating dichotomous stances of nature / culture, women / men.⁶ I am questioning how argumentation, which argues for overcoming oppression with ethical manifestations (e.g. meat non-consumption), justifies partaking in constrictive binary systems? Sandilands (1999: 19) indicates the problematics arising from eco-feminisms are their more or less linear narratives of assuming the dominance of gender polarity and discourses linking women and nature. She articulates that polarity has never been utterly dominant within Western conceptualizations of gender, and thus rejects eco-feminisms' forefronting binary notions (1999: 19). Relying on cisnormative gender as a socially located discursive construct, notions of eco-

⁶ 'Queer' refers to individuals, notion and acts, which do not subscribe to logics of heteronormative social organization. Additionally, queer individuals, notions and acts also resist vastly arising homonormativities. Queer thus indicates a stance which problematizes the heterosexual hegemony and its reiterations of normativity and privilege within social order.

feminism seem not to acknowledge that all genders are discursive constructs and that gender identity politics need not be central to feminist projects. In other words, if the constitution of cisnormative gender takes place in discourse, so does the constitution of cisgender non-conforming genders; concepts which critique and aim to transcend the notion of gender identity politics. It is throughout acknowledging transgender as an analytical category, which addresses these discrepancies, that I will argue for vegetarian eco-feminisms' potential to enhance their ethical commitments. Now let me exemplify how essentialist usages of gender notions are perpetuated by a canon of vegetarian eco-feminisms lead by Carol Adams.

1.3.2 Carol J. Adams: The Sexual Politics of Meat

The Sexual Politics of Meat was first published in 1990 and re-published with an additional preface in 2010, for its 20th anniversary. Adams is considered as one of the most significant theorists of vegetarian eco-feminisms (Gaard, 2012: 127 – 128). The book is seen as one of the most prominent works of vegetarian eco-feminisms and resulted in serving as a primary source of reference for a canon of vegetarian eco-feminist scholarship (Gaard and Gruen 1995; Donovan, 1995; Lucas, 2005; Donovan and Adams 2007; Merriman, 2010; Nath, 2011; Kemmerer 2011). Consequently, various works of vegetarian eco-feminisms appropriated Adams' arguments; my analysis of her text can thus be expanded to a canon of vegetarian eco-feminisms.

Permeated by emotional charge, Adams' work appropriates arguments for vegetarianism with presenting animal derived food, meat in particular, as gendered female, and claims their consumption is a form of reinforcing oppression towards (cisgender) women and animals.⁷ Adams' theoretical stance is positioned between feminism and animal liberation theories, and considers connections between sexism and speciesism by portraying how women and animals are

⁷ When addressing meat non-consumption I am referring to flesh of all animals killed for food consumption. As Adams (2013: 111) claims: "People who eat fishmeat and chickenmeat are not vegetarians; they are omnivores who do not eat red meat. Allowing those who are not vegetarians to call themselves vegetarians dismembers the word from its meanings and its history."

conceptualized in Western culture (Gaard, 2002: 128). Adams argues that important connections exist not only between women and nature, but also between women and animals, and argues for a feminist theory and practice which includes ecological perspectives in accordance with animals' wellbeing (Gaard, 2002: 131). Adams (2013: 48) posits meat as a food item indicating power symbolism: "Meat eating measures individual and social virility". She claims that dietary habits proclaim patriarchal distinctions: "Women, second-class citizens, are more likely to eat what are considered to be second-class foods in patriarchal culture: vegetables, fruits, and grains rather than meat" (2013: 48). For Adams meat consumption is a male activity manifesting sexism, and the removal of meat is a threat to the structure of the patriarchal culture.

Adams correlates meat and dominance: "The male prerogative to eat meat is an external, observable activity implicitly reflecting a recurring fact: meat is a symbol of male dominance" (2013: 56). She links gender inequality with species inequality; obtaining meat and its consumption was primarily a male performance (2013: 58). Women, she continues, were/are gatherers and consumers of vegetable foods, which are associated with passivity, femininity (2013: 60). Adams' statements lead me to question her appliance of gender as an analytical category to argumentation. Adams' argument does not acknowledge the fact that if meat non-consumption is seen as powerful enough to fuel resistance to patriarchy, it can also contribute to analysis and de/re/construction of all notions of genders, not only those bound by the cisnormative binary. Adams' claims, arising from work that was 'charged with gender essentialism' (Stange, 1995: 18 in Gaard, 2011: 34), remain within the gender binary system and do not enable to acknowledge the agency meat non-consumption has in correlation to oppression stemming beyond the patriarchal matrix.

Animals and women are made to be absent referents; this allows forgetting their existence as individual entities, claims Adams (2013: 67 – 68). She depicts the absent referents as following:

Metaphorically, the absent referent can be anything whose original meaning is undercut as it is absorbed into a different hierarchy or meaning; in this case the original meaning of animals' fate is absorbed into a human-centered hierarchy (p. 67).

Linking (sexual) violence upon women and violence upon animals within processes of meat production, Adams highlights how men dismember and objectify women and animals for their enjoyment and consumption (2013: 67 – 68). She claims the values of patriarchy become institutionalized through the structure of the absent referent. Adams' absent referents has developed from within feminist stances, yet solely appropriating arguments to cisnormative notions of gender implies a construction of *other* women (e.g. transgender women) taking place. I suggest that *othering* cisgender not compliant individuals' consequently disables one's meat non-consumption to be considered as a resource for critiquing gender identity politics. I will return to discussing the notion of absent referent and its ethical implications in Chapter 3 (p. 42).

Twigg (1986: 24 in Nath, 2011: 262) argues that abstaining from meat is a rejection of dominant masculinity. Adams claims meat removal is hazardous to the structure of the patriarchal culture (2013: 62 - 63), adding that 'men who become vegetarians challenge an essential part of the masculine role.' Again, I question what do such arguments imply about Adams' and vegetarian eco-feminism's comprehensions of genders? Due to Adams' self-proclaimed positioning within the 'radical feminist arena' (Tyler, 2006: 123), my questionings in regards to her argumentations should not come as a surprise. Reducing gender to essentialist dichotomous notions, as Adams deploys in her arguments, disables analytical consideration of any form of gender identification, except for those constructed as cisnormative. With forwarding transgender as an analytical category I will aim to expand the ethical potentials of her arguments.⁸

Confining argumentation within identity politics diminishes agency arising from material forms of contesting social hegemonies, e.g. meat non-consumption. Claiming a man's vegetarian diet

⁸ Transgender as an analytical category will be delineated on page 24.

challenges instances of his masculinity and thus threatens patriarchy, implies that men are essentially masculine. I question if argumentations based on forefronting females' experiences of oppression, which are instances Adams appropriates as enablers for women's ethical meat non-consumption, consider the possibility of female masculinity? And beyond this, would decoupling the linkage between cisgender women and animals, solidified within arguments that re-appropriate the patriarchal matrix, and transcending these linkages to social groups exposed to oppression due to various identificational categories, endanger vegetarian eco-feminisms' argumentation or add to its analytical depth and ethical and political solidarity? Eco-feminisms' queer critiques and feminist new materialisms will provide theoretical support for this elaboration.

1.3.3 Eco-feminisms' Queer Critiques

Gaard's *Ecofeminism Revisited* (2011: 31) depicts the downfall of eco-feminisms from a very promising theoretical and activist stance in 1990's, to receiving harsh critiques, and being avoided from scholars and activists by 2010. Due to over-intensely presenting women as embodied nature and cultural eco-feminisms' forefronting patriarchal notions, all eco-feminisms' were portrayed as essentialist by post-structuralists (Gaard 2011: 31). This can be related to eco-feminisms' tendency of conflating sex and gender categories. Applying transgender as an analytical category to vegetarian eco-feminisms might be contributonal to regaining their critical acclaim.

While eco-feminisms consider human and nonhuman animals central to their argumentation, their usage of gender as an analytical category seems to be one-fold. Twine (2010: 401) claims eco-feminists receive suspicions of essentializing identity categories, which supports my critique of readings of Adams' canon. Eco-feminism as a movement links feminist and ecological struggles, claims Sandilands (1999: xvi - xvii), yet adds that these links need considerable unpacking, especially within their questionings of gender and nature. Sandilands elaborates her

apprehension with forefronting that not only does nature have an important role in feminist discourses, but gender also has an important role in the social and political creation of the concept nature (1999: xvi). Amidst indicating that both nature and gender work as discursive constructs, Sandilands exposes eco-feminisms' inadequacy with critically questioning the fundamentality and consequences these constructs have within discourse in Western contexts (1999: xvi – xvii). My readings of Adams' canon have produced similar observations, which can be attributed to the emergence of eco-feminisms from radical and / or cultural feminists.

Gaard's (2002: 128) articulation 'feminisms' commitments to inclusiveness' suggests that (ideally) when a disenfranchised social group is recognized, responding to and including concerns of that group would influence the form of feminist theory. She adds that such processes of inclusivity and theoretical transformations can be traced within vegetarian eco-feminisms. Gaard's claim is of great importance for this thesis; whilst acknowledging contributions of Adams' canon, I will show boundedness of their theoretical transformations when considering genders. Usage of transgender as an analytical category calls for acknowledgement of all genders in feminisms' theoretical transformations.

Within acknowledging eco-feminisms' calling for diversity of women's (oppressive) experiences, Sandilands (1999: 26 – 27) claims eco-feminisms failed to challenge identity politics, and actually remained committed to reiterations of this exclusionary logic. Identity politics consider women as sharing mutual experiences of oppression, some of these being their relations to nature, which result in portrayals of women as a homogenous, hermetically sealed group (1999: 26 – 27). This line of reasoning supports for my signifying Adams' canon as politically problematic in regards to genders. Gaard's (2010: 8) explicit questioning regarding whose sexual freedom is suitable for inquiry of ecocriticism, be it women's, queer's or other animals' species, indicates not only the analytical importance of eco-feminisms, but also their visceral positioning within concepts of feminism.

Gaard (2010: 8) suggests feminisms' theoretical legitimacy could be at risk, if there would only be advocacy for one group of females and ignorance toward intersections of their race, class, nationality, sexuality or species. I am adding gender to this list of individuals' intersections, and suggesting that vegetarian eco-feminisms' withhold immense critical power with which the notions of genders can be analyzed and re-constructed to transcend exclusionary binary logic. Sandilands (1999: xx) argues for more open and flexible explorations of identities and subjectivities, and places these processes within discourse, rather than denoting one's compulsory oppositional identificational factors prior to their presence in discourse. As I will now delineate, similar discourses in regards to notions of (gender) identifications and subjectivities have taken place within feminist new materialisms and transgender studies. I will connect those discourses with the notion of ethical meat non-consumption, upon which an ethically self-reflexive notion of trans-feminism will develop.

1.4 Thinking Nature: Conceptualizing New Materialisms

The concept of nature is essential to (vegetarian) eco-feminists' theories. Some also echo essentialism – dichotomous divisions of *natural* and *cultural*. Kemmerer's (2011: 15) claim exemplifies dichotomies of vegetarian eco-feminists: "In Western patriarchal culture, both women and nonhuman nature have been devalued alongside their assumed opposites – men and civilization/culture". New materialisms intersect into these essentialist discourses. Feminist new materialisms forefront including 'the biology of the body in cultural and political analysis' (Frost, 2011: 69). Grosz (2008: 23) emphasizes that biology does not refer solely to 'the *study* of life,' but also to 'the body, the organic processes or activities that are the *objects* of that study.' Vegetarian eco-feminist analyses, especially those which appropriate radical feminism, is thus contested by new materialisms in regards to their usages of dichotomous divisions between nature and culture, sex and gender, body and mind.

New materialisms seek to ‘re-introduce biological and material agency into feminist analysis,’ indicates Frost (2011: 70). I will draw upon notions of new materialisms, which call for feminist analyses to be applied in ways presented by Frost (2011):

What they ask is that feminists leaven our analyses of the discursive constitution of embodiment and material objects with an acknowledgement of the forces, processes, capacities, and resiliencies with which bodies, organisms, and material objects act both independently of and in response to discursive provocations and constraints (p. 70).

Embodiments are therefore not only being considered as instances of power within culture and discourse, the realms are widened to acknowledge how ‘the body in its very materiality plays an *active* role in the workings of power’ (Barad, 2003: 809). As Grosz (2008: 24) claims; if we *are* all biologies, complex accounts of those biologies are needed for more adequate explanations of the variability of social, cultural and political life. Through acknowledging meat non-consuming transgender individuals’ embodiments as agency, their possibility to impact vegetarian eco-feminist socio-political discourses is thus exposed.

Barad (2003: 826 – 827) presents agency not as something one has, but something that one does within intra-actions. She indicates agency is intra-relational, it is interaction, not something that merely is, but something that is produced. Presenting a shift within feminist critical analysis, new materialisms view ‘culture and biology as having reciprocal agentive effects upon one another,’ claims Frost (2011: 71). She introduces agency as neither a direct or incidental outcome of human intentions, but rather as its own force of energy and trajectory (2011: 70). In accordance with new materialisms, meat non-consumption will be shown as agency. Upon this I will argue for meat non-consuming transgender embodiments’ to have power in relation to discursive cisnormative vegetarian eco-feminists’ argumentations.

Argumentations of Adams’ canon are encaptured within binary logics of sex / gender, body / mind, nature / culture. Frost (2011: 76) claims that while feminists have been engaging in

denaturalizing nature, they have not been ‘deculturalizing culture’; assigning matter also to biological and material instances. Frost signifies that this very reluctance of feminists’ binds them to binary systems, which they are otherwise aiming to deconstruct. Exposing cisnormativity and usages of gender identity politics within Adams’ canon, will thus provide grounds upon which I will show that transcending binary logics can be only contributory and not detrimental to vegetarian eco-feminists’ ethical and political solidarity. Frost argues that within ‘calling for feminists to acknowledge that matter and biology are active in their own right, new materialists push feminists to relinquish the unidirectional model of causation in which *either* culture *or* biology is determinative’ (2011: 71). Rather, feminists are exposed to demands of rethinking causation as complex and multi-linear, and called to assess of the possibilities for and towards socio-political transformations (Frost, 2011: 71). It is these calls that I am applying to Adams’ canon, specifically their usages of gender identity politics amidst political projects of overcoming oppression, primarily speciesism and cis-sexism. Cisnormativity of their argumentation in regards to gender will be shown in accordance with my usage of transgender as an analytical category. Let me thus trace notions, aims and aspirations of transgender studies, with focusing on conceptualizations of trans-feminism and the analytical category of transgender.

1.5 De/Stabilizing Trans/Genders

1.5.1 Conceptualizing Transgender Studies

Transgender studies emerged in the early years of the 1990’s, in intersections of feminist and queer theory’s discourses. However, neither feminism nor queer studies were forefronting the questioning and poignancy of lived complexities of contemporary gender, indicates Susan Stryker (2006: 7), co-editor of *The Transgender Studies Reader* (2006). Transgender studies embraced the primary position for attuning to questions of embodiment and identity, rather than desire and sexuality, which are widely explored within queer theory (Stryker, 2006: 7). Transgender theories

transcend feminist and queer theory, by unequivocally integrating the instances of ‘fluidly embodied, socially constructed, and self-constructed aspects of social identity’ whilst considering the correlations of these instances within narratives of lived experience (Nagoshi and Brzuzy, 2010: 432). Transgender studies therefore make valuable contributions to analysis and interpretations of unique situations of embodied human consciousness (Stryker, 2006: 12).

Feinberg’s *Transgender Liberation* (1992) re-constituted the meaning of the word transgender, as hir work gave it radical political meanings.⁹ Zie called for formations of political alliances between all individuals who were experiencing discrimination and stigmatization due to their non-normativity in regards to gendered embodiments, denotes Stryker (2006: 4). Feinberg’s’ re-formations of the term transgender took stance of calling for a ‘pangender’ movement of oppressed minorities, elaborated Stryker (2006: 205), within which transsexuals, butch lesbians, drag queens, cross-dressers and others were called to contribute in a mutual revolution of seeking social justice.¹⁰ From its emergence, transgender studies have developed into a framework for analyzing and interpreting gender, desire, embodiment, and identity, with producing outcomes relevant to and with radical implications for widespread ranges of subject areas (Stryker, 2006: 3).

Contemporary transgender studies are an interdisciplinary field of scholarship, in dialogue with various social sciences and humanities; gay and lesbian studies, queer theory, gender studies, sexuality studies, disability studies, political theory, citizenship studies, etc. Stryker (2006) offers clarifications of transgender studies:

Most broadly conceived, the field of transgender studies is concerned with anything that disrupts, denaturalizes, rearticulates, and makes visible the normative linkages we generally assume to exist between the biological specificity of the sexually differentiated human body, the social roles and statuses that a particular form of body is expected to occupy,

⁹ Hir is an inflected form of 'zie' or 'sie', a gender neutral pronoun. Zie/Sie is the most commonly know and used invented gender neutral pronoun among non-binary, gender-queer communities.

¹⁰ Pangender refers to individuals who do not consider themselves female or male, they do not conform to the gender binary system and can be understood as meaning ‘all genders’. The terms’ meaning is correlated to the meaning of the term gender-queer.

the subjectively experienced relationship between a gendered sense of self and social expectations of gender-role-performance, and the cultural mechanisms that work to sustain or thwart specific configurations of gendered personhood. The field of transgender studies seeks not only to understand the contents and mechanisms of those linkages and assumptions about sex and gender, biology and culture; it also asks who “we” are – we who make those assumptions and forge those links – and who “they” are, who seem to “us” to break them (p. 3).

Amidst various perspectives of transgender studies’ analyses, the perspective of seeking to understand the contents and mechanisms in regards to formations of suppositions about sex, gender, biology and culture are central to this thesis. In *Transfeminist Perspectives: In and Beyond Transgender and Gender Studies* (2012) Enke (2012: 1), in reference to Simone de Beauvoir’s observation that “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”, claims that transgender studies emphasize that there is no natural process by which *anyone* becomes a woman, but rather highlights that *everyone’s* gender is made. “Gender, and also sex, are made through complex social and technical manipulations that naturalize some while abjecting others” (Enke, 2012: 1).

Transgender studies ask why does the fact, that people experience and express their gender in fundamentally different ways, ethically and morally matter, indicates Stryker (2006: 3). The field also concerns itself with what can politically be done about the injustices and violence manifested upon individuals whose genders are non-normative and atypical (2006: 3). Ethical values are thus of great importance for projects of transgender studies and this thesis. I will argue for the possibility of broadening vegetarian eco-feminisms’ ethical projects by transcending usages of gender identity politics. Rather, openness and self-reflexivity will be posited as central for ethical and politically solidary feminists’ projects. I will build upon Stryker’s (2006: 7) claim, that confronting topics of transgender studies ‘requires that some feminists re-examine, or perhaps examine for the first time, some of the exclusionary assumptions they embed within the fundamental conceptual underpinnings of feminism.’ Analytically critical feminisms, which I will present as ethical trans-feminisms, consider transgender as an analytical category.

1.5.2 Transgender as an Analytical Category and Disidentification

Conceptualizations of genders and their applications within research and analysis, are means through which cisnormativity of vegetarian eco-feminism is being delineated. They are also a postulate upon which arguments for feminisms' capabilities to transgress gender identity politics and expand their ethical manifestations will be applied. In *Imagining Transgender* (2007), a critical ethnography of the category transgender, Valentine (2007) explicates transgender as an analytical category:

I want to argue that “transgender,” rather than being an index of marginality or “an out of the way category” (to paraphrase Tsing 1993) is in fact a central cultural site where meanings about gender and sexuality are being worked out (p.14).

Valentine applies transgender to elaborate upon its political, theoretical and ethical possibilities and limits (2007: 19 – 20). Rather than locating transgender at the margins of social intelligibilities of genders, transgender is being forwarded as a category which lies within the very constitution of gender as a social and analytical category (2007: 19 - 20). Transgender as an analytical category therefore has the capability of exposing how gender as a social category and hegemonic normative have been constituted. It is this capability of transgender that urges for its application and consideration to be included in analytical projects concerning genders and feminism.

In *Female Masculinity* (1998) Halberstam (1998: 161) associates the emergence of the category transgender as a reaction to the difficulty of disentangling sex and gender categories. Transgender implies gender identities, which are at least partially defined by transitivity, suggests Halberstam (1998: 161). Heyes (2003: 1094) indicates it is through challenges to enforced binaries of sex and gender, that broad ranges of gendered subjects experience gain. However, transforming genders is met with political resistance, states Heyes, and adds, that it is (partially) feminisms who (should) work towards changing such politics (2003: 1094). She claims that it is clear that feminist politics need to speak to many more subjects than heterosexual women and men, as “feminisms of all

stripes share the political goal of weakening the grip of oppressive sex and gender dimorphisms in Western cultures . . . ” (2003: 1093 – 1094). In this realm is where Heyes locates ‘the ethics of self-transformation’ - collisions of ethics and politics; “feminism entails not only organizing for change but changing oneself” (2003: 1094).

Considerations of feminisms as ethical projects are thus inextricable from usages of gender as an analytical category. I am suggesting transgender to be applied as an analytical category, which functions as committed to ethical and critical analysis. Transgender as an analytical category implies awareness and recognition of transgender identifications, yet does not analytically consider solely these identifications. Rather, transgender variance is emphasized, and accompanied with commitments not to abide to constricting gender binary systems. Amidst contesting ultimate free rein for self-ascertaining of gender, Heyes (2003: 1095) indicates that one’s gender expression might limit possible meanings and opportunities for others’ genders. Ultimate individual freedom of gender expression would thus sidestep important ethicopolitical questions arising from gender relations and communal demands (Heyes, 2003: 1095). My usage of transgender as an analytical category forefronts ethical considerations of others as a instance of gender expression, with aims not to hamper others’ agency and social intelligibility within their gender expressions and identifications. This notion will be referred to as ‘disidentification’, inspired by José Esteban Muñoz.

“Disidentification is a performative mode of tactical recognition that various minoritarian subjects employ in an effort to resist the oppressive and normalizing discourse of dominant ideology,” elaborates Muñoz (1997: 83). Disidentification offers individuals possibilities to reclaim and regain command of themselves within social spheres, without engaging in superiority of relations of excluding Others (1997: 83). Through disidentification resistance is enabled without mandatorily forming a counteridentity, it is rather a third term which resists the binary of identity and counteridentity (1997: 83). My usage of disidentification will follow Muñoz, yet also

signify there are not always deliberate or primarily contentious processes of contesting mainstream ideologies taking place within individuals' performative acts. In other words, my usage of disidentification implies there is a possibility of the presence of transgressing social hegemonic ideologies within certain acts of performativity, however there is no certainty of disidentification taking place. Rather, certainty of individuals' commitments to ethics can be traced within my application of the notion of disidentification. Resistance to normalizing and oppressive discourses is accompanied by ethical re-questioning of oneself in regards to others and with dedication not to take part in reiterating or re-creating exclusionary binary identities. Disidentification is therefore an instance of both matter and discourse, realms which are now to be entangled within my analysis and argumentations for ethical trans-feminism. Conceptualizations of trans-feminisms will now be presented.

1.5.3 Conceptualizing Trans-Feminism

Emi Koyama's "The Transfeminist Manifesto" (2001) introduces transfeminism as a movement primarily by and for trans women, and "open to other queers, intersex people, trans men, non-trans women, non-trans men and others (. . .) who consider their alliances with trans-women as essential for their own liberation" (2003: 244 – 245). Koyama explicitly notes that transfeminism has no intentions of overtaking existing feminist movements (2003: 245). Rather, transfeminism seeks to advance feminism as a whole, and do so by embodying feminist coalition politics within which each individual has the right to define their own identity and make decisions regarding their body (2003: 245). The notion of ethical trans-feminism, which I present in Chapter 5, will build upon Koyama's conceptualization of transfeminism, whilst incorporating material notions of non-normative diets, embodiments and gender disidentifications. Koyama's (2003: 245) explicit indication that no one is completely free from the socio-cultural dynamics of the hegemonic gender system we all are embedded in will be continuously reflected upon. In other words, I will not present an argument which will call for formations of a utopian version of

vegetarian eco-feminisms, but rather appropriate the cisnormativity of vegetarian eco-feminisms to exemplify how ethical self-reflexivity can be beneficial when analyzing and expanding incorporations of notions of genders, even though they are bound within hegemonic regulatory regimes.

Crucial political work of trans-feminisms is their tackling the concept of privilege. Koyama claims that any individual, who has a 'gender identity and/or an inclination toward a gender expression that match the sex attributed to her or him has a privilege of being non-trans' (2003: 246). Like other privileges, the privilege of being non-trans is invisible to those who possess it, while suffering due to its absence is severely familiar to those who are experiencing its lack (2003: 246 – 247).¹¹ Challenges of Adams' canon of vegetarian eco-feminisms' will be elaborated with regards to their un/acknowledgements of privileges, exposed based on their argumentations being solely in alignment with cisnormative gender concepts. I will follow Koyama's claims that essentializing gender identity is just as dangerous as omitting to biological essentialism in regards to the notion of sex (2003: 248), and such work is not in alignment with transfeminism. Projects of transfeminism dismantle the essentialist assumptions of normativity of the sex/gender congruence and call for challenging ways through which socio-political factors influence our gender expressions and embodiments (2003: 248 - 249). Trans-feminisms thus contest the *naturalness* of biological sex or biologically sexed bodies, which is in agreement with (priorly explicated) conceptualizations of feminist new materialisms.

¹¹ I will refer to discussing privilege when elaborating upon the concept of cisgender normativity in Chapter 5 (p. 67).

Chapter 2: Methodology

My research question looks at the correlations between ethical meat non-consumption and transgender / cisgender non-conformity, and their implications for ethics of vegetarian eco-feminisms. Narratives of transgender meat non-consuming individuals' take form as an array of complex and diverse representations. To acknowledge these diversities I have used methods of qualitative research for my empirical research. Qualitative interviewing is used to obtain a report on both internal and external experiences from participants and a density of details is required, which is not an attribute of an ordinary conversation (Weiss, 1994: 73). In "Queer Studies Under Ethnography's Sign" (2006: 627 - 628) Boellstorff notes anthropological ethnography as mutually constituting of method, data and theory, and adds that like all theories and bodies of data, all methods are partial insights into human projects. Using ethnographical methods was highly appropriate for this project and in accordance with transgender studies and new materialisms, which juxtapose the importance of individuals' lived experiences alongside discursive conceptualizations.

My primary sources of empirical data were semi structured narrative interviews. This thesis forefronts feminisms as committed to manifestations of ethical and political solidarity. In order to highlight this notion, I aimed to gain insight into how meat non-consuming members of Berlin's transgender / gender non-conforming subcultures perceive concepts of feminism, vegetarianism and veganism, bodies, gender non-conformity, solidarity, works of political and their correlations. In my preparation for conducting interviews I compiled an interview guide, which was broadly divided into four sections: food and meat non/consumption, gender, feminisms, and politics. The interview guide served as the basis for structuring and conducting interviews. I adapted the questions and topics to the participants' narratives, which was possible due to using the method of semi-structured interviews. This offered the participants freedom to

express their thoughts and narratives. At the beginning of each interview I also said that if, for whichever reason, they do not wish to answer a certain question, they should tell me.

I conducted 10 interviews in April, 2014 in Berlin, Germany. I interviewed participants in accordance with the snow-ball method, some were my acquaintances and others were introduced to me through community contacts. The relationships among the participants were various; some were acquaintances, friends or unknown to each other.

Pseudonym	Age	Vegetarian diet (years)	Vegan diet (years)
Liam	26	15	/
Ed	24	8	mixed
Jonna	29	19	10
Finn	31	18	mixed
Aleks	30	10	mixed
Elias	24	6	2
Katrin	26	4	mixed
Niki	29	8	mixed
Charli	20	6	5
Yori	38	/	10

Table 1: Interview participants' pseudonyms and demographic data

Table 1 shows participants' demographic data relevant to my analysis. I interviewed individuals aged between 20 and 38 years of age, the average age of participants' being 27.7 years. Interviews were conducted with individuals who are meat non-consumers, their diets are therefore vegetarian or vegan.¹² The duration of participants' meat non-consumption ranges between 4 and 19 years, with the average time of their meat non-consumption being 10.4 years. Most participants have had vegan diets for a certain period of time, some are currently strictly vegan,

¹² A vegetarian diet is that which excludes meat consumption. A vegan diet excludes all animal products and by products, including meat, cheese, milk, other dairy products, honey, etc.

and others' diets interchange between vegetarianism and veganism. The only mandatory requirement for the relevance of this research was the fact that participants are meat non-consumers, my argumentation does not differentiate with regards to diets being vegetarian or vegan.

Another important personal circumstance for my sampling was participants' gender identification. This circumstance is relevant for correlating individuals' and animals' experiences of oppression, which fuels their contentions towards oppressive acts and discourses. I interviewed individuals who do not identify as cisgender – their gender identification is thus not in accordance with the socially expected gender identity appropriated to them based on their sex assigned at birth. I did not make distinctions or divisions between participants' gender disidentifications (e.g. transgender / transsexual). I specifically aimed not to do so, as I did not want to insert any notions which could be (mis)used when considering participants' social intelligibility. Also, seeking articulations of identity would not be in alignment with the ethics or argumentations of this thesis project, as I am arguing for feminisms to transcend usages of gender identity politics within their research and theories.

Participants' anonymity was of great relevance, as narratives regarding embodiments, gender identifications, etc. are highly personal topics. Manifesting social non-conformity increases one's vulnerability to social marginalization- I thus saw my attention to accuracy of representations and sensitivity as crucial. I also wanted the interviews to be as much in accordance with political project of this thesis, thus manifesting openness and ethical self-reflexivity, rather than aiming to categorize individuals and their narratives. Categorizing participants could increase inaccuracy of their representations and subject them to stereotypization. Transgender individuals and groups are vastly exposed to being prescribed stereotypes and stigmatized due to them, which is something I tried to avoid. I offered participants to choose a pseudonym of their choice, by which they are referred to within analytical chapters. Another important instance was asking

participants for their preferred pronoun.¹³ I actually did this as soon as I was given their contact information and contacted them to ask if they are willing to participate. Conducting interviews in English in a non-Anglophone country could have presented a limitation, yet I think Berlin's multiculturalism was helpful in overcoming this potential obstacle. All participants spoke fluent English, some were also native speakers, who have relocated to Berlin. Interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, after which the recordings were deleted.

Due to the sample of this research project being small, I cannot claim their narratives are vastly representative. However, I would suggest that their narratives could be considered as indicative of other meat non-consuming and gender non-conforming communities, which are situated within a context of Western countries with capitalist economies. The following chapters will provide analysis of the reoccurring narratives and notions from conducted interviews.

¹³ A preferred pronoun is, as its name implies, a pronoun an individual most prefers to be referred to while speaking to them or speaking about them. As this thesis is contextual to the binary gender system, where cisgender identities are considered compulsory, asking an individual about their preferred pronouns enables avoiding prescribing an individual a gender identity with which they do not identify.

Chapter 3: Meat Non-consumption as Agency and the Development of Ethical Self-reflexivity

"Think occasionally of the suffering of which you spare yourself the sight."

Albert Schweitzer

3.1 Introduction

Within this chapter I will present and analyze participants' narratives regarding their diet as meat non-consumers, and correlations of their diets and their ethical and political stances. I will couple participants' narratives and their implications with theoretical analysis, to present the notion of ethical self-reflexivity, which arises from meat non-consumption conceptualized as agency. Participants explicated that being meat non-consumers serves them as exemplification or a reminder of oppression, experienced by human and non-human animals. Building upon these realizations, they narrated how their ethical and political viewings and engagements with others have been re-formed. Diet is therefore a manifestation of politics, which expresses not only ethical considerations of other entities, but also re-creates bodies as materialities of ethical and political solidarity.

The overarching argument of this chapter is that juxtaposing diet and gender as analytical categories, can expand vegetarian eco-feminisms' ethical and political work with regards to notions of genders. Adams' canon encloses their argumentation into the cisnormative gender binary system, which results in overlooking empowerment for transcending gender identity politics that stems from material agency, such as diet. I will exemplify my argument upon the notion of ethical self-reflexivity, which is constituted through the intertwining of ethical meat non-consumption as agency and individuals' self-reflexivity. The notion of ethical self-reflexivity

will also be of great importance for the development of ‘ethical trans-feminism’, which I will present in Chapter 5.

To present the main argument of this chapter, I will follow concepts from Barad’s “Posthumanist Performativity” (2003). Barad’s concepts, and their situatedness within feminist new materialisms, are of great importance for the connections I am drawing between meat non-consumption as presented within vegetarian eco-feminisms and narratives of transgender individuals as delineated through notions of transgender studies. Barad (2003: 808) emphasizes the importance of understanding the nature of the production of bodies’ matter, and claims that no hierarchies should be deployed between materiality and discursivity. This is in alignment with transgender studies, which function as a framework within which gender, desire, embodiment, and identity are analyzed and interpreted (Stryker, 2006: 3). I will thus argue that both meat non-consumption, as a form of ethical and political resistance towards oppression, and transgender embodiments, offer a materialist and discursive contestation of feminisms, which analytically approach gender solely throughout gender identity politics. Now I will present how participants conceive meat non-consumption and its ethical and political implications.

3. 2 Meat Non-consumption as Agency of Ethics

Transgender individuals’ meat non-consumption will exemplify the relevance of materialities and embodied experiences for analysis and ethical and political implications of vegetarian eco-feminisms. Specific focus will be paid to Adams’ canon and their discursive conceptualizations. I will show how transgender individuals’ meat non-consumption can be considered as agency, and suggest that Adams’ canon can be expanded to manifest ‘feminism’s commitment to inclusiveness’ as presented by Gaard (delineated on p. 18). Gaard argues for re-shaping feminist theories in accordance with specificities that emerge from recognitions of disenfranchised social groups, in this case the group of transgender individuals.

All conducted interviews immediately provided information that participants' diets are either vegetarian or vegan due to ethical reasons.¹⁴ The average duration of participants' diets being vegetarian is 10.4 years. Many participants indicated there was a specific event they witnessed, which inspired their decision for beginning a diet which excludes meat consumption. These events included visiting a slaughter house (Katrin), befriending a vegetarian schoolmate (Liam), watching documentaries on meat production (Charli), being exposed to eating and cooking with a vegetarian (Jonna). Many participants became meat non-consumers at young age (e.g. Jonna at age 10, Liam at age 11, Finn at age 13), and they said that their decision then was based solely on very strong feelings of compassion and solidarity towards animals.¹⁵ Since then, however, participants' viewings of meat non-consumption have gained multiple levels of understanding its connectivity to oppression, industrialization and mass production of animals, and political implications, as Liam's thoughts indicate:

I see this role as an ethical choice. Not wanting to put a dead animal into my body. But it's evolved a lot over the years, it's become more political within me, because when I was 11, I didn't really think beyond animals being hurt at farms, but now it's more like a visceral disgust, putting an animal's dead body into my body.

Liam indicated that his diet is correlated with his political stances. Charli also elaborated upon the political importance of his diet, and expressed the important divide between ethical meat non-consumers and health / trend-following orientated consumers:

When I was 14 I saw a documentary on meat production. My decision was totally ethical. My relationship with food became more and more politicized; I then entered circles of leftist politics and started really thinking and reading about the human – animal relationship. From then on my diet is in accordance with animal liberation movements. This is very different than being vegan or vegetarian for health reasons. That has become very trendy in Berlin in the last years, eating a certain food for

¹⁴ My research focus and argument are built upon individuals' meat non-consumption, therefore the fact if one's diet is vegetarian or vegan is not of importance for my central claim. I am thus merely illustrating the fact that interviews were conducted with individuals whose diets are either vegetarian or vegan.

¹⁵ Their is an inflected form of the singular form of 'they', a gender neutral pronoun. A gender-neutral pronoun is a pronoun that is not associated with a particular gender, thus does not indicate female or male from within the binary gender system.

health and fitness. I don't like the vegan as a health orientated consumer, but an ethical one.

Participants' diets were thus inspirations for their developments of ethically and politically rooted opinions and stances towards treatment of animals. In accordance with participants' thoughts on meanings and implications arising from their meat / animal byproducts non-consumption, meat non-consumption enables agency of ethics. Let me elaborate.

When discussing the correlations of vegetarian / vegan food consumption with notions of identity, Ed said:

My diet is vegetarian, but I want to eat more vegan things and also freegan.¹⁶ I am not a fan of the word vegetarian though. I try not to label myself, so I rather say I do something rather than I am something.

Ed's words indicate his viewing of ethical food consumption as a performative - something he does, rather than something he is. This stance was also represented by other interview participants (Jonna, Finn, Aleks, Niki). Participants' diets are thus active manifestations of their ethical and political values, which I am considering as being central to feminist projects. "Our meals either embody or negate feminist principles by the food choices they enact," claims Adams (2013: 216). Following vegetarian eco-feminisms, I am showing that participants' diets are acts of political manifestations, which re-form bodies to be materialities of political commitments. Participants' viewing of meat non-consumption being something that is *done*, rather than something one *is*, is inextricably correlated with how Barad conceptualizes agency. Barad's "Posthumanist Performativity" (2003) is a work of new materialisms, which applies notions of performativity to concepts of natural science. Barad (2003) explicates agency as follows:

Agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has. Agency cannot be designated as an attribute of "subjects" or "objects" (as they do not preexist as such). Agency is

¹⁶ Freegan is a coupling of the words free and vegan. Freeganism refers to consumption of (vegan) foods that have been discarded and sought (e.g. in dumpsters) to be consumed by individuals whose engagements in such acts are correlated with anti-consumerism, alternative urban living styles and social concern.

not an attribute whatsoever – it is “doing” / “being” in its intra-activity (p. 826 – 827).

Agency is thus not an attribute of subjects, rather it is *doing*, it is about possibilities of reconfiguring material-discursive entities and notions (2003: 826 – 827). Entities therefore *become*, due to intra-actions, which Barad (2011) depicts as:

The notion of intra-actions (in contrast to the usual “interaction”, which presumes the prior existence of independent entities/relata) marks an important shift, re-opening and refiguring foundational notions of classical ontology such as causality, agency, space, time, matter, discourse, responsibility, and accountability (p. 125).

The notion of non-deterministic intra-actions also imply that human, non-human and post-human entities exist only as fully immersed within mutual relations to others (Barad, 2011: 125). Meat non-consumption as agency can therefore show how diet has potential for re-constituting material and discursive notions of to enhance ethical commitments of vegetarian eco-feminisms.

Barad’s notion of agency explicitly forwards instances of doing and being, rather than attributing or determining instances to entities solely within a realm of discourse. Her arguing for reworking of notions of materiality and discursivity, in ways where their mutual entailment is acknowledged (2003: 820), are instances upon which I will build my argument of meat non-consuming transgender embodiments’ agency of ethics, and their contributions to ethics of vegetarian eco-feminisms.¹⁷ For this moment, however, I am showing that meat non-consumption can be considered as agential manifestations of and with ethical and political implications. Meat non-consuming humans are thus in intra-relations with non-human animals who they have chosen not to consume based on their ethical stances. It is therefore not solely one’s diet – referring to the materiality of the food they ingest - but the complexity of the intra-relation of human and non-human animals which enables one’s diet to be considered as agency of ethics.

¹⁷ Barad’s implications of conceptualizing agency are of great importance for analysis of this thesis. In the following chapter I aim to delineate a new materialist and non-essentialist consideration of transgender embodiments.

When linking Barad's notion of intra-actions in with one's ethical diet, the intertwining of both who is not being eaten and who is not eating is highlighted. In accordance with Barad's intra-actions is Overall's notion of ontological identity (2012: 337), which is relational and recognizes the importance and contribution of relating while individuals' ethical stances are being formed. For vegetarian eco-feminisms, diet is their central resource of political work, with which they aim to overcome speciesism and cis-sexism. Showing that meat non-consumption has agency of ethics, which is constantly re-created within ethical intra-actions, enables me to claim that one's ethical diet can thus be a source of exposing and transcending vegetarian eco-feminist usages of constructionist gender notions appropriated to identity politics. Barad's notions do not offer determinate answers of what (one's) matter is, but rather expose that there are various constant intra-actings of mattering and agency. I am therefore suggesting that meat non-consumption exemplifies ethical and solidary intra-actions of human and non-human animals, and does not conform to deterministic notions of identity politics. Rather, the central focus of theorizations of meat non-consumption is on doing and becoming - instance that are in close alignment with notions of embodiment within transgender studies, which I will address in Chapter 4. My reason for explicating this correlation in this moment, is for linking participants' personal circumstances of both meat non-consumption and cisgender non-conformance, upon which the central argument of this thesis is formed.

Another importance of articulating one's meat non-consumption in the form of acts, rather than notions of identity, was expressed by Katrin: "I say I don't eat dead animals. Many people ask about one's stamp or label, which vegetarianism can also be, but I think that saying that I don't eat animals has more power to make people think." Katrin's words indicate acts of engaging meat consumers into gaining information and awareness of the consequences of their food consumption. Correlated to Katrin's words, Ed's thoughts express how the agency of meat non/consumption is intra-relational with other notions:

Because it's not just about not eating meat, it's about life in a political scene, a leftist and queer circle and scene. The connection to all these groups is oppression and people notice it happens not only to them, but also to animals.

As in other social movements, which are forms of resistance towards oppression, feminism alike, there is an omnipresence of trying to engage others into considerations of their (privileged?) position. Considerations and implications of one's position for surrounding human and non-human animals and the environment dictate their acts and attitudes toward other entities. These considerations will now be delineated as ethical self-reflexivity.

3. 3 Developments of Ethical Self-Reflexivity

Building upon meat non-consumption as agency, ethical meat non-consumption can be considered an enabler or enhancer for developments of ethical self-reflexivity. I will now show how meatless diets can be, and for the interview participants are, a platform upon which ethical self-reflexivity develops. Participants' ethical self-reflexivity is not bound to considerations of well-being of animals, but also other socially constructed non-hegemonic and non-normative entities.

All participants expressed that their socially non-normative and ethical diet was a postulate, upon which they began recognizing and building awareness of others' needs for ethical treatment. As I have explicated in the previous sub-chapter, the common factor upon which developments of awareness and self-reflexivity take place is oppression. In "Five Faces of Oppression", Young (1990: 4) explicates oppression as: "In the most general sense, all oppressed people suffer some inhibition of their ability to develop and exercise their capacities and express their needs, thoughts, and feelings." Young argues for an inability to 'define a single set of criteria that describe the condition of oppression' as mutually experienced by all oppressed groups (1990: 4). She emphasizes that, while oppression can be caused by intentional acts of oppressors, there is also structural oppression, which is not a 'result of a few people's choices or policies' (1990: 4).

Structural oppression is ‘embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols in the assumption underlying institutional rules,’ claims Young (1990:4). When referring to oppression I am thus indicating any form of disrespect, discrimination, violence and exclusion, which is manifested structurally, through institutions or by social actors upon a social group, minority or individuals due to any of their personal circumstances. As the participants’ diet and gender disidentification (among other personal circumstances) are constructed as socially non-normative, and their social intelligibility is questioned by the hegemonic majority, they expressed the fact that they, too, are familiar with experiencing oppression. However, they also denoted that these very experiences of oppression are those which contribute to their ethical awareness.

Ed stated that his way of life is a means upon which his ethical self-reflexivity is developed: “I try to, in my personal life, question why I do things, and what things I do mean to me and others. Some people live life totally un-reflected.” Not only did Ed express a commitment to ethical self-reflexivity, he also indicated that some people, with which he was referring to socially normative majorities, are in lack of being ethically self-reflexive towards other entities.¹⁸ Liam elaborated the correlations of ethical self-reflexivity and meat consumption: “There is a cognitive dissonance behind food consumption. Eating meat means less mental effort.” As Liam’s words imply, meat non-consumption requires mental effort; one must critically consider their position in regards to the food they consume, which can, and in accordance with participants’ narratives does, inspire re-thinking various other socially constructed hegemonies. Simonsen (2012: 57) claims that becoming vegan enables learning to challenge and negate the inherited norms of anthropocentrism.¹⁹ I have shown that meat non-consumption is a form of agency, and being contextual to new materialisms, meat non-consumption can thus be viewed as contesting speciesism, the binary logic of human vs. non-human animal.

¹⁸ I am explicating this indication of Ed's based on narratives, which he presented all throughout the interview.

¹⁹ Anthropocentrism refers to the belief that humans are hierarchically positioned above all other living beings and that they are the most significant living species.

Manifesting contentions towards speciesism is central to the projects of vegetarian eco-feminisms politics. As diets are political, their contestations take form through meat / animal byproduct non-consumption. Vegetarian eco-feminists are very meticulous and sympathetic in acknowledging the objectification and suffering animals are exposed to, and it is through these very 'sympathetic connections' (Gaard, 2002: 120) that self-reflexivity with regards to one's own stance towards oppression takes place. Vegetarian ecofeminists actually argue that it is not solely reason, but rather the combination of sympathy and critical analysis of cultural and political contexts, which provide a reliable guide to ethics and their manifestations, elaborates Gaard (2002: 123). Since their projects emerged, vegetarian ecofeminists have recognized the conceptual and structural similarities among sexism, speciesism and racism (Gaard, 2002: 125). With these indications in mind, I then question how has the notion of genders beyond cisnormativity, seemed to bypass Adams' canon of vegetarian eco-feminists analyses and ethical self-reflexivity?

Participants were very passionate and emotionally engaged, when talking about their diet being a source of broadening their awareness for considerations of all individuals and social groups through a viewpoint of ethical self-reflexivity. In other words, they all explicated that being aware of oppression that happens to someone (e.g. animals), is an intense force of encouragement for being ethically and politically considerate of others' complex personal circumstances. Liam's words indicate he considers political work as inseparable from collaborations: "The core of politics is always acting with other people." Juxtaposing Liam's words with Jonna's following statement portrays the participants' stance being in favor of aiming to live as self-reflexively as possible. "Political work is having a critique and trying to change what you are critiquing. Everything is political, but it's hard to always include everyone's interest" said Jonna. Participants' therefore presented classical political tropes that forefront the aspect of community rather than individualism, which can also be traced in vegetarian eco-feminisms argumentation. The fact that participants did not express deliberations whether to present political characteristics, present also

in cisnormative argumentation, shows that workings of cisnormative exclusion have no political foundation; cisnormativity is not inherent to politics that express affinities to communities, it is rather a social construct of exclusionary gender identity politics.

As a previously presented statement from Jonna indicated, manifesting expectations of acknowledging all intersecting personal identifications and categories are challenging to achieve. In accordance with Jonna's insight, I suggest that the notion of ethical self-reflexivity, at minimum, calls for self-critical and self-reflexive theoretical analysis of all notions and concepts which are included in a certain analysis. Sandilands claims that women in movements of environmental justice and eco-feminism have not made issues of gender central to their political practices (1999: xv). Gaard's (2003: 128) depiction of 'feminism's commitment to inclusiveness' (p. 18) suggests that broadening inclusivity, and subsequent theoretical transformations, take place through recognitions of groups or individuals, who are being considered as socially unintelligible. However, a critique of eco-feminisms that Gaard (2011: 35) considers as legitimately grounded, was the exposing of essentialism of their notions.

There is presence of gender essentialism within Adams' canon. Nowhere in *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (2013) does Adams analytically interrogate the concept of binary gender, within which her arguments are encaptured. When explicating what the sexual politics of meat refer to, Adams (2013) states:

What is "the sexual politics of meat"? It is an attitude and action that animalizes women and sexualizes and feminizes animals. [...] *The Sexual Politics of Meat* is also the assumption that *men need meat*, have the right to meat, and that meat eating is a male activity associated with virility (p. 4).

The book's omnipresence of dichotomously dividing humans among women and men does not enter the discourse of questioning this division's construction. Rather, Adams' statements, such as "Men who decide to eschew meat eating are deemed effeminate; failure of men to eat meat announces that they are not masculine" (2013: 57), "One's maleness is reassured by the food one

eats” (2013: 58), “Men who become vegetarians challenge an essential part of the masculine role” (2013: 63), are supportive of her essentialistic appropriations of gender identity to biological sex. This could be explained by the fact that Adams situates herself within radical feminism (Tyler, 2006: 123). Queer eco-criticisms, new materialisms and transgender studies all contest essentialistic dichotomous notions of body / mind, nature / culture, sex / identity, which are appropriated to the cisnormative binary gender system. They do so by engaging in analyses which argues for applications of multiple material and discourse analytical categories.

I will now delineate possibilities for increasing the realm to which one’s ethical self-reflexivity is applied by juxtaposing transgender as an analytical category and Adams’ concept of absent referent. It is through such an increase that vegetarian eco-feminisms can transcend rooting their argumentation in cisgender normativity, and apply ethical commitments to contest gender identity politics. Transgender, when applied as an analytical category, highlights how formations and meanings about gender and sexuality are developing, claims Valentine (2007: 14).²⁰ Adams’ conceptualizations of developing a feminist-vegetarian critical theory indicate that overlapping experiences of oppression render women and animals absent referents (2013: 219). An absent referent allows forgetting about a human or non-human animal as an independent entity. When becoming an absent referent, that humans’ or non-human animals’ ‘fate is transmuted into a metaphor for someone else’s existence’ (2013: 66 – 67). Adams (2013) explicates the concept of absent referents as following:

The absent referent is both there and not there. It is there through inference, but its meaningfulness reflect only upon what it refers to because the originating, literal, experience that contributes the meaning is not there. We fail to accord this absent referent its own existence (p. 67).

Being considered an absent referent therefore indicates one’s original existence is no longer of value, or is only of value to indicate the value of hierarchically higher positioned beings. Animals,

²⁰ Transgender as an analytical category is broadly delineated in Chapter 1 (p. 24).

for instance, become meaningless, only providing meaning when considered within an anthropocentric hierarchy – giving value to humans, who consider consuming animal flesh as an indication of value, wealth, higher social positioning, health, and, in accordance with Adams, hegemonic masculinity.

Re-thinking Adams' concept of the absent referent in juxtaposition with Barad's agency, enables me to show that animals are thus never exclusively absent within discourse. While following Barad (2003), I conceptualized meat non-consumption as agency of ethics (p. 35 – 37). As previously stated, agency is a matter of intra-actions, which are both discursive and material. And building upon this, implications which stem from comprehensions of meat non-consumption are not merely discursive or one-directional. For Barad, materialities are always intra-active and not dependent solely on cultural discourse to denote their meanings. Therefore, an individuals' meat non-consumption can be conceptualized as influential in various intra-connected directions. Adams' central argument about the intertwining of feminism and vegetarianism being a form of contention towards patriarchy, does not provide indications of transferring the structure of her argument to highlight other forms of oppression with regards to notions of genders. "Dualism is central to interlocking oppression," Kemmerer (2011: 11), an eco-feminist from Adams' canon, explicates vegetarian eco-feminists' acknowledgement of exclusionary binary systems. I am thus showing that vegetarian eco-feminists' ethical self-reflexivity, manifests itself solely within the realm of the cisnormative gender binary system, which operates in accordance within logic of inclusion, inevitably implying exclusion.

How do Adams' deployments of cisnormative gender notions hamper her canon's manifestations of ethics? I am suggesting that individuals', who are not compliant with cisgender normatives, can be considered as being indicative of becoming an absent referent within Adams' canon. For one to become an absent referent, they must first be present. Animals become absent referents through butchering, and women become absent referents through cultural violence, rape, in

particular, claims Adams (2013: 66 – 68). Transgender / cisgender non-conforming individuals, who are neither mentioned nor discussed in Adams’ canon, can thus solely indicate their stance would be that of an absent referent. Transgender individuals are not present – to become absent. However, such absence, which stems from cisnormativity of Adams’ canon, hints to Butler’s (2004: 126) claim, that oppression can also work covertly. “Oppression works through the production of a domain of unthinkability and unnameability,” argues Butler (2004: 126). She indicates that being unthinkable within a realm that ‘regulates the real and the nameable,’ also disables one’s possibilities of disrupting political contexts (2004: 126 – 127). I am thus suggesting that appropriating argumentations solely to the cisnormative gender binary system, as Adams’ canon partakes in, contributes to transgender individuals being conceived as socially unintelligible. Transgender individuals are thus not absent referents within vegetarian eco-feminisms, yet their absence still has implications for vegetarian eco-feminists’ ethical and political commitments. “Thus, normative social spaces are structured around the presumed absence of disabled, queer, trans, and other marginalized subjects (. . .) claims Enke (2012: 75). Applying transgender as an analytical category to vegetarian eco-feminisms discourse could contribute to transcending these implications of invisibility and enhance ethical and political solidarity of Adams’ canon. This very invisibility consequently also disables transgender individuals’ meat non-consumption to be considered as agency of ethics within vegetarian eco-feminisms. Adams’ appropriations of meat non-consumption solely as a contestation of patriarchy, thus present merely a limited array of political implications arising from meat non-consumption.

Plumwood’s ‘Political Solidarity’ (2002) addresses this topic; her concept, similar to Barad’s intra-actions, implies relationality, yet does not claim identifications with the other are necessary for manifesting solidarity (Mallory, 2009: 8). Rather, those standing in solidarity are joined through recognitions of injustice and oppression and their engagements in trying to change and overcome

them (2009: 8). Vegetarian eco-feminisms political relevance amidst feminisms has potential to be expanded, if re-constituted as ethically self-reflexive amidst considering genders, diets and bodies as conceptualized within feminist new materialisms. Gaard (2011: 42), in dialogue with Alaimo and Heckman, suggests that rather than ‘the gendered and essentialist culture-nature dualism,’ nature’s agency and material feminisms should be forefronted. Nature is re-conceptualized as constitutive of Barad’s intra-actions, where relationalities among human and non-human, materialities and discourses are intertwined within analysis (Gaard, 2011: 42). Barad’s agency has enabled me to conceptualize meat non-consumption as agential, for which I argue fuels ethical self-reflexivity, which can be applied to re-thinking analytical approaches of feminisms.

Potential for re-formations of vegetarian eco-feminist theories, which I presented through Gaard’s notion of the ‘downfall of eco-feminisms’ (p. 18), may therefore be hidden within approaching essentialist gender notions with usages of ethical self-reflexivity in juxtaposition with transgender as an analytical category. Agency of transgender individuals’ meat non-consumption is an exemplifier of the possibility of ethical feminist projects to constantly be in a mode of re-constituting their theories and of re-questioning the scope of their ethical self-reflexivity. This notion can be contributonal to re-constructions of feminist projects; distancing themselves from essential notions of gender identities and rather than reiterating concepts of gender identity politics, providing political work permeated with commitments to ethics and solidarity when re-considering genders. This will enable transgressing essentialist cisnormative notions of gender with intra-actional ethical self-reflexivity arising from considering meat non-consumption as agency of ethics. Vegetarian eco-feminist ethics, which are already being applied to considerations of nonhuman animals and cisgender women, could thus be transferred to an array of diverse disidentifications, creating a visceral form of ethical feminism; ethical trans-feminism.²¹

²¹ Ethical trans-feminism will incorporate analyzed notions and arguments from Chapters 3 and 4, and the notion of ‘ethical trans-feminism’ will be broadly depicted in Chapter 5.

3. 4 Conclusion

Contextual to this thesis' central question, which explores the multi-directional ethical and political implications of meat non-consumption and cisgender non-conformity, this chapter's argument has delineated an analytical shift; inserting transgender as an analytical category into cisnormative argumentation of vegetarian eco-feminisms. Relevance of embodied experiences, narrated by transgender meat non-consuming individuals, are of importance for ethical and political implications of Adams' canon and their discursive conceptualizations of gender. Both new materialisms and transgender studies therefore contest notions of scholarship, which are appropriated to analysis solely on the level of discourse, and rather argue for incorporating embodied and material lived experiences into analysis.

This chapter forefronts meat non-consumption as agency of ethics. Agency is inseparable from relationality; no individual can view themselves solely as an entity, without regards to intra-relations with and among others. Meat non-consumption as agency enables individuals to develop ethical self-reflexivity with regards to acknowledging others' experiences of injustice and oppression. Adams' canon of vegetarian eco-feminisms are ethically self-reflexive in regards to acknowledging mutuality of (cisgender)-human and non-human animals' experiences oppression. Their contestations toward oppression are manifested by ethical meat non-consumption – diet is thus a resource for political work. I argued for juxtaposing diet and transgender as analytical categories, which both have immense power of exposing oppression arising from socially constructed hegemonies and normativities. Rather than perpetuating discourse of cisnormative binary gender notions, vegetarian eco-feminisms can deploy ethical self-reflexivity to re-thinking the notion of genders, and thus transcend usages of gender identity politics. This would enable agency of transgender individuals' meat non-consumption to be contributonal to enhancing vegetarian eco-feminisms' ethics when considering genders. Meat non-consumption as agency and its encouragements to manifest ethical self-reflexivity will thus be coupled with arguments

from Chapter 4, which suggest transgender meat non-consuming embodiments have agency to transcend hegemonic normativities, to finally present ethical trans-feminisms, a notion of ethical and political solidarity in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: (Gendered) Embodiment - Mind over Matter?

“Bodies have their own light which they consume to live: they burn, they are not lit from the outside.”

Egon Schiele

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present transgender meat non-consuming embodiments as materialities, which have agency to transcend hegemonic normativities, the cisnormative binary gender system among them. I will show how embodiment, as delineated through discourses of transgender meat non-consuming participants, is very much in alignment with new materialisms’ conceptualizations of embodiment. These interrelations will allow me to build upon my argument of transgender embodiments having agency, which can be incorporated into expanding ethical commitments of vegetarian eco-feminisms’ considerations of genders.

Agency of transgender meat non-consuming embodiments will be presented as a potential for transcending body essentialism; the binary logic of sex / gender, body / mind, and nature / culture, which are issues I have been addressing in relation to Adams’ canon throughout this thesis. Participants’ thoughts on correlations of embodiments and gender disidentifications provide an array of reflections. First I will outline how participants indicated that they do not consider (their) bodies to be compulsory representatives of gender identity. Rather, bodies can be means of representing one’s gender disidentification, but they can also be entities separate from inscribed gender identities. I will follow with delineating participants’ callings for overcoming body essentialism; a notion which posits bodies as inferior material signifiers of biological sex in regards to superior *compulsory* cisnormative gender identity.

I will then consider the intertwining of notions of embodiment and gender fluidity, which was articulated to be all participants’ disidentification. Gender fluidity and its (embodied) expressions

will be correlated with Butler's notion of gender performativity as depicted in *Bodies That Matter* (1993) and Davis' "Situating "Fluidity"" (2009). Following these works will show that transgender meat non-consuming embodiments have potential of contributing to ethical re-negotiations of socio-cultural intelligibilities of genders exemplified within Adams' canon. Central to my project of aiming to contribute to expanding feminisms' ethical projects, this chapter's argument will show that transgender meat non-consuming embodiments' have the ability to exemplify how the intertwining of materialities and discourse can contribute to enhancing vegetarian eco-feminisms ethical projects by transcending the cisnormative gender binary system. Chapter 3 showed how ethical meat non-consumption of transgender individuals fuels ethical self-reflexivity, which, when incorporated into analysis, argues for coupling materialities and discourse to contest binary logic within feminisms. Linking arguments from Chapters 3 and 4 will take place in Chapter 5, where I will present the notion of ethical trans-feminism.

4.2 Conceptualizing Embodiment: Transgender Bodies' Agency

Transgender embodiments must be understood as having agency, for the possibility of arguing for their ethical and political impacts on vegetarian eco-feminisms. Various feminist delineations of the categories of sex and gender have provided a dichotomy between the physical signifiers of sexual attributes and identificational notions of gender. West & Zimmerman (1987 in Schilt & Westbrook, 2009: 443) indicate people do not expect discrepancies between individuals' biological sex and gender presentations. Rather, they assume gender reflect biologically sexed bodies, which is in alignment with arguments of Adams' canon. This is inevitable; the canon is appropriated to the cisnormative gender binary system, which considers the dichotomy between sex as mandatory signifiers of one's gender, and gender identity as the compulsory identity attributed to a biological sex as inextricable. Adams (2013) discusses vegetarianism and binary notions of bodies as follows:

If the body becomes a special focus for women's struggle for freedom then what is ingested is a logical initial locus for announcing one's independence. Refusing the male order in food, women practiced the theory of feminism through their bodies and their choice of vegetarianism (p. 213).

While bodies are thus seen as having agency to manifest critiques of patriarchy, Adams' argumentation does not apply ethical self-reflexivity to analyzing genders.²² I suggest applying transgender as an analytical category can contribute to re-thinking genders within discourse. Transgender studies would disagree.

Noble (in Enke, 2012: 48) explicitly notes that *trans* bodies have always been present in feminism, even if these bodies have been ghosted by a belief that their presence has not been a part of feminisms or women's studies. Noble's statement correlates with Nagoshi's following elaboration. Feminist theories and analyses have widely questioned gender as a social construct, and its attributing of gender roles, indicates Nagoshi (2012: 407), yet points out that questioning of embodied female and male identity binaries has not undergone the same scrutiny. This means that concepts, which deploy cisgender identities as inextricably placed within the sexed body they appropriate, have not yet been broadly contested. Noble (2012: 48) indicates that processes of *trans* illiteracy take place, and elaborates these processes as folding *trans* entities into noncritical binarized sex systems, which are only capable of making sense of bodies that are viewed as either female or male. In regards to the hierarchies present within acknowledgements of cisnormative and non-normative identities, Liam's thoughts and (rhetorical) questionings indicated these discrepancies:

What does the word identity even mean, what is its use? There are political connotations in every identity, also in man and woman. But what even is the difference between gender and gender identity? What are they supposed to differentiate? There is a feeling that identity is not a choice, especially in trans terms, it just is what I am, what I feel I am. And it's something that people don't acknowledge.

²² Ethical self-reflexivity was widely delineated in Chapter 3 (p. 39 - 41).

Liam's deliberations upon the meanings of identity portray how transgender individuals and their disidentifications can be considered unintelligible among groups of social hegemonies. 'The correlations of 'bodily sex, gender role, and subjective gender identity are imagined to be strictly, mechanically, mimetic – a real thing and its reflections,' notes Stryker (2006: 9). 'Transgender studies call these correlations into questioning; 'the stability of the material referent 'sex' and the relationship of that unstable category to the linguistic, social, and physical categories of "gender"' (Stryker, 2006: 9). Similarly, new materialisms also question binary divisions.

Central to projects of new materialisms are contestations of the naturalization of the body / mind and sex / gender dichotomies, which were widely embraced within various feminists' argumentation for women's equality - vegetarian eco-feminisms being among them. New materialisms forefront the notion that material bodies and their representations are not separate, and rather suggest there are bi-directional causalities between culture and nature/matter (Grosz 1994: x – xi in Lane, 2009: 141).²³ Within new materialisms, matter and the body are considered not only as they are constituted by language, discourse, and politics but also as being constitutive, having a distinctive kind of agency, claims Frost (2011: 70).²⁴ Meat non-consumption can be considered as agential also within Adams' canon, but solely within the realm of patriarchy / cisgender normativities. "Women may code their criticism of the prevailing world order in the choice of female-identified foods. In this case, women's bodies become the texts upon which they inscribed their dissent through vegetarianism," claims Adams (2013: 213). Due to agency of transgender meat non-consuming embodiments, they can contribute to disrupting feminist project enclosed into gender binary systems. Bodies as an analytical instance are thus central to new materialisms, as I will now delineate.

²³ New materialisms challenge the fact that matter is being depicted as passive, with reasons to undo the oppositions between reason and passion, self and world, nature and culture. Biological instances are constituted to have active, transformative forces of and within themselves, and don't rely on culture to prescribe them power.

²⁴ I have provided a broad delineation of new materialisms and the notion of agency in previous chapters; Chapter 1 (p. 19 – 21), Chapter 3 (p. 35 – 37).

Feminist new materialisms have provided new conceptualizations of materiality and construction, within which biological bodies are not passively constructed in discourse (Haraway (1991), Grosz (1994), Barad (1996), Fausto-Sterling (2000) in Frost, 2009: 142). Rather, bodies are affective and provide analytical tools for researching distinctions of biology, sex, and bodies, also in relation to gender variance (2009: 142). Bodies *becoming* agents in discourse implies the participants' embodiments are also agential. 'Transgender meat non-consuming bodies' can be seen as agency, which partially stems from manifestations of cisgender non-conformity and meat non-consumption – material acts agential within themselves. While considering bodies in juxtaposition with genders, participants strongly advocated for their embodiment not being a fixed representation of their thoughts, minds, and disidentifications. "Bodies aren't correlated to one specific gender. Therefore body modification for gender acceptance isn't needed, isn't a must," said Jonna. Within processes of identities and self (un)making people are both subjects and objects, and their bodies are not merely symbolic, but also agentic, claims Socoliuc (2013: 2). This complexity posits considerations of power as decentred, contradictory and consequently an enabler of new potentialities for resistance and agency within destabilizing traditional power relations (2013: 2). Participants' thoughts on bodies and embodiments were in accordance with Socoliuc. Participants consistently delineated that their gender presentations, disidentifications and meat non-consumption, are their personal engagements in resistance toward socially constructed hegemonic social normativities. Analytically approaching genders and regulatory powers of social hegemonies within feminisms, calls for engaging with Butler.

In *Bodies That Matter* (1993: 2) Butler questions the linkage of bodies' materialities with gender performativity. She indicates sex is a normative category, which also provides regulatory forces upon bodies it controls (1993: 2). Not abiding to feminist separations of passive biological bodies vs. active socio-cultural minds, Butler claims that both bodies and gender are parts of discourse; the bodies' materiality is thus produced amidst culturally discursive realms. Biological sex is thus

inextricable from gender, both being social construct regulated by deployments of social normativities. Butler claims sex is no longer a bodily given upon which the constructs of gender are imposed, but rather a cultural norm which regulates the materialization of bodies (1993: 3). The heterosexual imperative is that which assumes sex will always be connected with questions of (gender) identification, indicates Butler (1993: 3), and adds that it is heteronormativity that enables social intelligibility of certain sexed identifications and disavows others. I will now correlate Butler to new materialisms, specifically Barad (2003), who has engaged with Butler's work with regards to materialities and discourse.

In "Posthumanist Performativity" Barad (2003: 808) specifies that understanding the nature of the production of materialization is of great importance. Barad links performativity to the formation of subjects and the production of the matter of bodies, and claims that any materialization of bodies thus also questions how matter and the body's materiality (become to) matter (2003: 808 – 809). Barad explicitly denotes that no priority should be given to materiality or discursivity (2003: 825). Barad's work poignantly aligns with my showing that transgender embodiments are in contestation of discursive regulatory regimes of the sex/gender system.

Applying notions of new materialisms to Butler's conceptualization suggests that both sex and gender are not merely given or assigned to the body, but are rather material representations of both cultural and biological power forces. While Butler locates all production of materialization and deployment of sex and gender normativities in cultural and linguistic discourse, new materialisms signify the inseparable and non-hierarchical intertwining of nature and culture. Participants' cisgender non-conformity and meat non-consumption can be seen as political progressive instances of bodies' materiality and matter. Bodies' agency thus stems beyond limits of discourse. This stance supports that transgender individuals' meat non-consumption, acts of producing bodies' as ethical and political materialities, can be contributory in ethical re-configurations of vegetarian eco-feminisms. Ethics of feminisms' theorizing transgender need to

recognize the discursive limits in regards to individuals' self-transformations, and aim not to deny agency to gendered subjects, claims Heyes (2003: 1096). 'Transgender meat non-consuming embodiments, constituted both of discursive productions and material bodies' agency, can be influential in contesting gender identity politics within vegetarian eco-feminisms, and offer a source upon which their ethical commitments can be expanded.

4.3 Transgressing Body Essentialism

Essentialism demands a quality to be perceived as inherent within an object, claims Krishnaraj (1996: 12) – an object is therefore reduced to an instance. Body essentialism demands normative correlations of symbiosis to take place between individuals' *sexed* bodies and *gendered* minds. Vegetarian eco-feminisms' complicity with body essentialism thus empowers reiterations of restrictive cisgender normativities.

Stone's (1992: 159 - 160) "Posttranssexual Manifesto", a quintessential work of transgender studies, argues for overcoming discursive violence inscribed onto transsexual bodies with means of reconstructive forces. Stone ironically notes that within the Western binary phallocentric system of bodies' authorization, 'only one body per gendered subject is 'right', all others are wrong.' Participants' expressions of wanting to overcome 'body essentialism', as referred to by Aleks, are in alignment with Stone's encouragements for self-expressions in regards to gendered self-constructions and embodied presentations. All participants expressed experienced frustration and discomfort in regards to cisnormative body ideals, which dictate how one's body should portray their gendered self. Their expressed frustration indicated how their (desired) gender expressions are not socially intelligible within cisnormative expectations regarding portrayals of gendered bodies.

More discomfort was indicated by participants whose identifications are trans-masculine and prefer he as their chosen pronoun, in comparison with participants whose chosen pronoun is

they and correlate themselves more to the spectrum of gender-queer, non-binary gender disidentifications.²⁵ These distinctions can be seen as attributes of the omnipresence of prescribed norms for gender identities within the binary system – female and male.²⁶ Charli's words illustrate the inescapability of gender: "Gender is present all the time, it impacts all social interactions everyone has, everyone is constantly being seen and read through a gender specter." Even if the participants individuals do not experience themselves as coupled with cisnormative binary gender norms, the contexts of their and all our lives remain at least partially encaptured within the limiting gender dichotomy. "Gender is traditionally assumed to be based on a binary, mandatory system that attributes social characteristics to sexed anatomies," (Hausman, 2001 in Nagoshi *et al.*, 2012: 407). Thus, even if trans-males gender expressions and performativity are transgressions of cisgender-male normativities, their public embodied gender expressions might still receive critique from social hegemonies. In other words, cisgender normativities are those which dictate how transgender and trans-male bodies will be considered, and potentially critiqued and stigmatized, in regards to social intelligibility of genders.

Contrasting with these observations was the fact that most participants spoke about trans-masculine identifications and expressions being much more accepted within social realms. When questioning why they think it is so, Charli said: "Masculinity is the inherent norm and performing it is normative" and Jonna commented: "What is socially seen as male behavior and expression is stronger, given more acknowledgement, regardless of who the person performing this gender is." Ed introduced the discrepancies among accepting Berlin's transgender identifications:

²⁵ Gender-queer refers to all gender identifications outside of the gender binary and cisnormative gender regulations. Gender-queer identifications are thus non-binary and include an array of differentiations; being without gender (agender, neutrois), multiple genders (bigender, trigender, pangender), fluctuating gender (gender-fluid), etc.

²⁶ I must note that I am in no way suggesting that trans-masculinities are any less forms of non-binary gender disidentifications than gender-queer. In other words, I am not indicating any hierarchy of which gender disidentification is more socially non-conforming. The distinction between trans-masculine and gender-queer identity narratives is made solely for the analysis of more body discomfort being narrated by trans-masculine individuals.

I have seen that there is more focus on being masculine and if you pass as masculine that's very accepted and it's cool, but trans-femininity is very much more difficult, less accepted and less understood. There are many limits within the trans community. Trans-women are seen to be pretending and I don't know why. People can understand drag queens, but not trans women and that is very problematic. A lot of trans guys are accepted even if they aren't passing, it's the opposite for trans women.

The participants' narrations highlight how no socio-cultural realms, even subversive subcultures, are shielded from hegemonic cisgender normativities. I will elaborate this notion in the following sub-chapter (p. 59 – 60), where I will discuss political and performative potentials of transgressing cisnormativity of gender non-conforming and gender fluid embodiments.

Theorizing gender identity needs incorporating notions of non-deterministic 'fluid self-embodiment and a self construction of identity that would dynamically interact with this embodiment in the context of social expectations and lived experiences,' also amidst social cis-normatives (Nagoshi and Brzuzy, 2010: 435). While discussing how projects of feminisms (should) take place Aleks said: "Feminism and gender roles are inextricable." Their statement resonates with problematics of correlations of transgender studies and essential binary notions being used within feminisms - vegetarian eco-feminisms for instance - who, unlike transgender studies, consider one's body as a representative of one's gender (identity). Trans-feminisms can transcend normative identitarian gender notions.²⁷ For now, embodiment as considered within transgender studies supports my showing bodies as material agency of gender disidentifications. Ed said: "Some people can't really understand that our body just is who we are and we can be any gender we want in this body." His words signify an instance commonly represented in interviews; that one's gender disidentifications are not bound by the body they live in, nor is one's body limited by notions of genders. Rather, embodiments are multilayered materialities with inherent political value, as in alignment with new materialisms and transgender studies.

²⁷ This will be addressed and delineated in the following chapter.

The acknowledgement of transbodies as normal disrupts the binary of body-equals-sex, claims Cromwell (1999: 130). In accordance with Cromwell's claim, acknowledgements of transgender bodies, which take place amidst considerations of socio-cultural intelligibility of genders, have the potential to contribute to re-constituting notions of genders within discourse. Contesting *compulsory* linkages between embodiments and identities opens possibilities for individuals to re-constitute their gender disidentifications. Bodies can thus still be means through which individuals express their gender disidentification, but this coupling is not perceived as mandatory, rather a manifestation of one's agency. Having in mind that bodies have agency, the phenomenological body is also seen as that which is not merely constituted by society, but also an agent of re-producing social reality (Socoliuc, 2013: 12). I will now elaborate on political significances, which arise from agential transgender embodiments.

4.4 Embodied De-Regulations: Gender Fluidity vs. Gender Cis-Normativity

Fluidity indicates transcending the hegemonic gender system which produces and regulates its *compulsory* cisgender identities. Halberstam (2012: 340) suggests that gender fixity can indicate the rootedness of normative identifications, while gender flexibility indicates the limits of discourse and human diversity, which escape gender ideologies. All 10 participants consider their genders to be fluid and continuous. Ed indicated that much effort is needed to maintain gender fluidity: "I don't want to just go to the next box, I'm working hard not to, and I want to be without boxes, allow myself to be something completely different." The outcome of all participants articulating their gender fluidity is in alignment with Nagoshi *et al.* (2012: 415). Their study about understandings of gender identity transgender individuals showed that all 11 of their participants' gender identities were articulated as continuous and fluid. My interview participants conceive their genders as variable, regardless of their current gender disidentification. In other words, even if some participants currently consider themselves to be situated within a certain gender category (the re-appearing one were trans-masculinities), they nonetheless stated that their genders are

ever-evolving, 'influx' (Liam), without a 'final point' (Charli). However, many participants revealed how depicting one's disidentificational fluidity under the term transgender has certain limiting implications. "Transgender is a difficult word; it can be linked to a journey from A to B. It's the same with FTM.²⁸ But transitioning never ends, just like gender expression never ends." said Charli. Jonna, however, indicated the importance of exposing the potential of changeability present within the term transgender: "Transgender has political power. It doesn't mean merely transitioning from A to B, but a constant process of changing." As I will show below, a possible means of expressing one's gender fluidity is by (subversive) gender performativity.

While delineating their gender fluid expressions and presentations, all participants' thoughts indicated manifestations of gender performativity. They echoed Butler's concept of performativity, which she portrays not as a singular act, but rather as a reiteration, a constant of citationality, producing effects, which arise from befitting discourse (1993: 2). Butler posits gender as a compulsory performance within which no one has 'radical free agency' (2009: 102). Charli's words reflect Butler's claims: "I'm a queer trans-male. Since transitioning I've been very aware of (my) gender performativity." Charli's statement implies that since he has been actively engaged in wanting to pass as a trans-male, he has been re-negotiating his gender expressions by both abiding to and contesting normative notions for presenting masculineness. This suggests that within transgender / cisgender non-conforming communities, there is a possibility of stable identitarian notions being transgressed with self-reflexive manifestations of gender fluid performativity. However, only recognizing fluidity is not enough for the potential of disruption, claims Davis (2009: 102). In "Situating 'Fluidity'" (2009: 97 - 98) she notes that fluidity is a playful manifestation of rejecting normative gender and sexual identities, and overcoming normativities with unbound, unrestrictive queer self-presentations. Davis indicates that due to limits stemming from identity categories, queer post-modern theorists and transgender activists

²⁸ FTM indicates 'female to male'; a person who was assigned female at birth and identifies as male. The phrase indicates an individual is or has gone through a process of transitioning and / or (embodied) gender appropriation.

have emphasized biologically deterministic gender paradigms in order to destabilize gender categories, and forefront that gender is much more fluid than biological imperatives suggest (2009: 97 - 98). However, theoretical emphasis solely on fluidity, can overlook or unrecognized individuals' embodied experiences and implications of compulsory gender performances (Davis, 2009: 97 - 98). As previously stated, hegemonic regulatory regimes of gender identifications are omnipresent. Thus, where and how can transgressing cisgender normativities take place?

Potential for disrupting cisgender normativities lies within subversive gender performativity. Butler's notion of gender performativity is conceptualized as a site of active and agentic disruption, indicates Davis (2009: 102). Performative framings of fluidity situate the potential for disrupting normativities within moments of exceeding boundaries of cultural intelligibility (Davis, 2009: 102). Fluidity and transgressions are juxtaposed with intelligible, hegemonic notions, marking the site of transgender performatives. Gender performances have potential for re-negotiations of discursive notions. This is where Davis (2009: 103) situates transgender individuals' contestations and enlargements of domains of intelligibility, and adds (2009: 100) that forms of structural regulation are situational - based on interactions within and across hegemonic realms. As indicated above, Nagoshi and Brzuzy also argue for the importance of comprehending contextual social and lived dimensions while theorizing transgender embodiments and identities. While transgender individuals' fluidity and subversive embodiments contest hegemonic discourses of fixed identity categories, vegetarian eco-feminisms engage with identities as relationalities solely between cisgender men and women. Adams (2013) indicates the role of meat non-consuming embodiments as contesting hegemonic masculinity:

Perhaps women's meaning is spoken in a different way at that point when they find themselves muted. Is it possible that food becomes the spoken language of dissent? Since women are the main preparers of food in Western culture and meat is defined as men's food, vegetarianism may carry meaning within a female language which seeks to escape its own mutedness (p. 213).

Juxtaposing diet and gender as analytical categories within vegetarian eco-feminisms would enable expanding such argumentation to all other non-hegemonic genders disidentifications, whose meat non-consuming embodiments are agential.

With previously delineated participants' callings and manifestations for contesting body essentialism, inadequacies of inscribing unitary identity notions upon individuals and their bodies are exposed. Lloyd (2005 in Socoliuc, 2013: 4) argues for hegemonic identity paradigms to be rethought and challenged. Identities should be treated as political effects rather than deterministic notions constructed prior to political activity, claims Lloyd (2013: 4). Lloyd's argument can be extended to individuals' disidentifications and embodiments. Considering bodies as conceptualized in new materialisms, disidentifications and embodiments can be manifestations of political effects. And, in accordance with Davis, domains of gender intelligibility can be enlarged, also among theories and projects of feminisms. Forefronting agency of transgender meat non-consuming individuals' thus has potential to contribute to decoupling gender identity politics and vegetarian eco-feminisms and enhancing manifestations of their ethical commitments.

4.5 Conclusion: Political Effects of Theorizing Embodiment

This chapter has presented transgender embodiments as considered within transgender studies and new materialisms. I showed transgender bodies have agency, and are not merely loci upon which social constructs of expected correlations of sex and genders are appropriated. Rather, their agency transcends body essentialism. However, as Davis has reminded us, no bodies are situated without hegemonic regulatory regimes and their cis-normative discourses. Therefore, disidentifications are contextually variable; they depend on the negotiations that take place between complexities of hegemonic cultural intelligibility and subversive powers of performative gender non-conformity. However, these negotiations do not omit their ability of exemplifying the importance of coupling materialities and discourse to expose constrictions of gender identity

politics within feminisms.

Amidst forefronting feminisms as project of ethics, I have suggested that transgender meat non-consuming individuals' embodiments have the ability to highlight vegetarian eco-feminisms' usages of gender identity politics, which can indicate where they can expand their commitments of ethical and political solidarity. Relying on arguments depicted in this chapter, the following and final chapter will show how applying transgender as an analytical category to argumentation of vegetarian eco-feminism, can contribute to their works transcending usages of gender identity politics and rather partaking in re-forming notions of ethical trans-feminisms.

Chapter 5: Re-thinking Feminisms, Genders and the Development of Ethical Trans-feminism

“I will love the light for it shows me the way, yet I will endure the darkness because it shows me the stars.”

Og Mandino

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter will elaborate participants’ viewings of feminisms and genders. Notions participants’ consider important and empowering will be included, alongside notions they consider as problematics of feminisms. In accordance with participants’ narratives, I will argue that feminisms, as projects of ethics and solidarity, can enhance their ethical and political commitments, when decoupling themselves from (gender) identity politics. Participants’ thoughts on cisgender normativity will indicate reasons why the usage of the notion of cisgender is crucial will be explicated, alongside concerns regarding the implications of its usage. These notions will be linked to Butler’s “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” (1990), which viscerally questions identity politics and coincides with participants’ thoughts about notions of identity. For Butler there is no inherent gender identity and she argues for transcending binary identity logic with open-ended identifications, elaborated upon lesbian identity category.

I would like to show that transgender disidentifications can contribute in re-negotiating limits of socio-cultural intelligibility with regards to genders. Combining ethical self-reflexivity stemming from individuals’ ethical meat non-consumption, and agency of transgender embodiments contesting hegemonic gender norms, I will show how vegetarian eco-feminisms can transcend usages of notions of gender identity politics. Finally, arguments delineated in previous chapters will be merged in tracing the notion of ‘ethical trans-feminism’. I will argue that ethical trans-feminism, exemplified by transgender individuals’ ethical meat non-consumption, offers a

framework of feminist politics constituted by ethics and solidarity and transgresses usages of gender identity politics. Possibilities of material and discursive transcending of identity politics will now be presented.

5.2 Re-Thinking Feminisms: Beyond Identity Politics

Identity politics are political manifestations where social groups' identities are central to calling for legislative and legitimate recognition. Identity politics engage in socio-political organization based on a specific identificational category such as gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc. Socoliuc (2013: 3) indicates that identities are, of course, social and cultural constructions, yet emphasizes that bodies are not only represented differently, but they are lived differently and embody various practices and identities that are constitutive of selves. Transgender studies and new materialisms contest conceptual dichotomies - present in social constructionist arguments of vegetarian eco-feminisms.²⁹ Following transgender studies and new materialisms, usages of identity politics within vegetarian eco-feminist projects can re-create discursive binaries, and not consider complexities of embodied experiences within analysis. My interview analysis thus forefronts considerations of arrays of expressions, experiences and disidentifications. This focus on *being* calls for feminist projects to be contentious towards usages of identity politics within conceptualizations and argumentations, which have expectancies of unitary experiences of identity. Rather, I am arguing for feminists' analysis to be committed to ethical self-reflexivity with regards to notions from material and discursive realms, as such feminisms are more consistent with ethical values, rather than feminisms based on identity politics. Transgender individuals' meat non-consumption in juxtaposition with cisnormativity of vegetarian eco-feminisms exemplifies this argument.

²⁹ Vegetarian eco-feminisms conceptual dichotomies have been presented in Chapters 3 and 4.

I questioned participants about their viewings and opinions of feminism, through which much affinity was expressed. “Feminism is awesome. I love feminism. The way in which I see the world now is totally different because of feminism. It’s the only political thought, theory that totally changed my world views, in so many ways,” said Liam. As Liam’s words indicate, and others’ narratives were similar, feminism has (had) immense impacts on how participants consider social categories, politics, and concepts of genders. Their narratives are best delineated in juxtaposition with Socoliuc’s (2013: 3) conceptualizations of feminism; feminism can be thought of as a dynamic, alternative model of thinking that is at ease with an unstable and intersectional subject. Its analytical approaches should exceed paradigmatic and deterministic relations of object – subject, female – male, passive – active, continues Socoliuc (2013: 3). When discussing problematic aspects of feminism, participants voiced that certain manifestations of feminisms are working against what they consider to be central postulates of feminism – ethics, recognition and solidarity. “Some forms of feminist activities are actually anti-feminist, because they are not involving actually people, but taking their agency, they are controlling them and acting as self-efficient. That is not empowerment,” said Jonna. Their words are correlated with Charli’s opinion of feminism’s need of expansion: “Feminism should be rethought; it shouldn’t just focus on white and cis women. There should be more intersectionality and interdependency. Feminism should also try to go into spaces more, where it’s really needed, not just in academia.” Participants’ narratives again echo Socoliuc’s (2013: 3) claim, that feminism, as a means of maintaining political consciousness, needs to reinvent its epistemology through alternative ways of understanding connections. Ethical self-reflexivity, acknowledgements and considerations of others (human / non-human animal alike), are notions which have been arising as central throughout participants’ narratives and analytical outcomes. It is therefore these notions of relationality, which I am forwarding as central within feminist projects with ethics as their prominent focus. Socoliuc (2013) provides a suggestion for transcending identity politics within feminisms:

What I propose is to replace the dominant/minority model of identity politics with a new understanding of politics which is empowering both at the individual and collective level through the production of non-hierarchical and inter-dependent relationships of power (p. 3).

Amidst elaborating which instances of feminist theories and politics participants consider problematic, notions correlated to identity politics were assigned the leading detrimental role. Many participants explicitly denoted radical feminism as most problematic, and Ed said:

There are many problematic things in radical feminism, calling yourself a radical feminist and being so exclusive of trans communities and trans masculinities. I believe that radical feminism should be something including everyone and being against patriarchy and the male privilege, but not against trans people.

Ed explicated radical feminists' exclusionary attitude towards transgender subjectivities. Socoliuc (2013: 4) claims that while radical feminism shifted the realm of politics from the public into the private, they also operate with traditional understandings of politics and, as Lloyd (2005: 4) remarks, they do not realize their own considerations of subjects are itself *political* constructions. "While rightfully claiming a common experience of oppression and injustice, feminisms were engaging a politics that assumed a unitary and univocal experience and identity," (Socoliuc, 2013: 4). Transgender disidentifications transcend the notion univocal identities, and contribute to re-questioning gender identity politics.

In "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" (1990) Butler questions the stability and value of gender identity categories. Through arguing that categories are in need of repetitions to confirm themselves, Butler explicates there is actually no identity before repetitions - manifestations of performativity, which contribute to affirming identities (2004: 124 – 125). Amidst contemplating on political relevance of identities for representation of 'oppressed political constituency' she questions: "Which use will be legislated, and what play will there be between legislation and use such that the instrumental uses of "identity" do not become regulatory imperatives?" (2004: 123). Regulatory identity politics operate within hierarchies, which feminisms committed to constant

re-questioning of their ethics can transcend. Rather, due to no identity being inherent, maintaining identification categories permeable would acknowledge all identifications, including transgender disidentifications. Feminisms' immense possibilities to be sources of empowerment and mutual solidarity are not dependant on notions of identity politics. Rather, feminism can be for everyone, as Jonna indicates: "Feminism is a fight everyone should be taking a part in, regardless of their gender, not only women. But no one should be superior within this; everyone should acknowledge other's different socio-political positions." Individuals are calling for feminisms to engage in political projects of forwarding notions of gender as plural.

Enke's *Transfeminist Perspectives* (2012: 3) critique limiting identitarian investments, and argue for forwarding a coupling of 'trans' and 'feminist' where works of both notions are flexible, open to and beyond each other. In accordance with all depicted notions, both from interview participants' and scholarship, I claim that feminist ethics are not and need not be rooted within conceptualizing gender through identity politics. The importance of this claim shows that vegetarian eco-feminist notions, whose ethical diets are a form of manifesting resistance towards oppressions, do not need to appropriate their pro-vegetarian argumentation solely within the limiting gender binary system. Actually, by engaging in ethical self-reflexivity, fueled by one's ethical meat non-consumption, vegetarian eco-feminisms' ethical and political solidarity can only be(come) expanded and not in confined, (even) if they allow not enclosing their theoretizations within identitarian concepts of gender.³⁰ I will now address how genders as a notion of plurality and stemming beyond identitarian binary logic can be considered.

5.3 Re-Thinking Genders: Beyond the Cisgender vs. Transgender Binary

The notion of cisgender has an important role within discourses regarding transgender subjectivities. I will elaborate two impacts of cisgender; the potentials of exposing hegemonic

³⁰ The notion of ethical self-reflexivity was broadly delineated in Chapter 3 (p. 39 – 41).

gender normativity, and re-creating a new binary between cisgender and transgender. Deliberations of transgender can hardly take place without including cisgender. After all, the history of cisgender began with transgender activism (Enke, 2012: 63). For Elias cisgender indicates ‘someone whose sex and gender match’, while Jonna said cisgender can be applied ‘to make a differentiation, this word must be used to signify a difference.’ All participants strongly agreed with the need of the concept of cisgender to become widely recognized. Ed expressed why the need of exposing the concept of cisgender is so dire: “Through cisgender maybe people could understand more what trans means and just what gender means. And also, it could help in creating awareness, because the oppression of cis norms is very limiting.” Ed’s words articulate a stance articulated by many participants; exposing and forefronting the notion of cisgender can be contributonal for understanding and de-stigmatizing the notion of transgender. By using the word, cisgender, a de-centralization of the social hegemonic group takes place, it is being exposed merely as one possible alternative, rather than the norm, against which trans people are being defined, claims Koyama (2002 in Enke, 2012: 64 – 65). Articulations of the notion of cisgender enabling re-thinking gender norms, were accompanied by cisgender being considered to be a privilege, as elaborated by Liam:

There must be an awareness of the cisgender privilege, and this isn’t present now. It helps set up a norm, and put others on the side of non-normal. And also it helps set up the fact that also within cis people there are instances, like gender identity, sexual identity, sex ... and they should be aware it’s like that.

Cisgender thus conceals complexities which are its constitutive elements. Instances of *biological* sex, appropriated gender norms, self-identification of gender and embodied gender expressions are present among cisgender and transgender individuals alike. Gender normativities are constituted upon the fact that for social majorities these instances align with hegemonic social norms. Enke (2012) explicates the poignancy of articulating cisgender and its accompanying privilege:

The distinction between living a life in congruence with static medico-juridical determinations of one's sex/gender and living a life in defiance of that congruence is a highly consequential one, because our social institutions are structured to uphold and to privilege the former. It is hard to overstate how dramatically sex/gender congruence, legibility, and consistency within a binary gender system buy a privileged pass to social existence, particularly when accompanied by the appearance of normative race, class, ability, and nationality. The term "cisgender" was to name that privileged pass (p. 64).

As Enke indicates, cisgender privileges are intertwined with concepts of sex and gender. Acknowledgements of stigmatizations, which arise from hegemonic sex/gender congruence, are also articulated by cisgender privilege. Based on transgender studies and new materialisms, re-thinking the dichotomous sex / gender binary system is of immense importance. "The concept of cisgender privilege provides a necessary critique of structural hierarchies build around binary sex/gender . . ." (Enke, 2012: 69). The binary logic was already critiqued by feminists with regards to masculine privilege. Vegetarian eco-feminisms support those critiques, and contest hegemonic privileges (also) with meat non-consumption. Adams' canon can thus only expand and not limit their contributions to ethical feminist projects, with addressing the notion of cisgender within their analytical argumentation. Participants' narratives indicated they aim to ethically contest privilege, rather than contribute to their manifestations. They do so in accordance with ethical self-reflexivity, partially developed due to their meat non-consumption.³¹

All participants noted that while exposing the norm of cisgender is crucial for enhancing its visibility and accompanied privileges, they acknowledge potential re-creations of a binary between cisgender and transgender. Charli elaborated upon conflicting impacts of articulating the concept of cisgender:

Exposing cisgender can be seen as a reinforcement of the trans – cis binary. But it's very important to have a word, because not all norms are visible, their privilege isn't visible; it's the same with masculinity. I was

³¹ My argument of meat non-consumption empowering the development of ethical self-reflexivity was presented in Chapter 3 (p. 39 – 41).

very relieved when I discovered the concept of cisgender. It exposes norms. But can also create them.

Alongside relief, which transgender individuals experience due to the concept of cisgender being forefronted, they recognize this very forefronting enables reinforcements of identitarian notions attributed to a binary system. Butler (2004: 121) claims ‘identity categories tend to be instruments of regulatory regimes,’ correlated either with ‘normalizing categories of oppressive structures’ or ‘liberatory contestation of that very oppression.’ “What does it mean to *avow* a category that can only maintain its specificity and coherence by performing a prior set of *disavowals*?” questions Butler (2004: 123). If categories need interdependency and separation from other categories, in order to confirm their *originality*, this shows that there is actually no inherent original category prior to its performance. Therefore, cisgender is not an original and transgender is not its deviant. Rather, cisgender’s coinciding with social hegemonies posits it as a *natural*, while in actuality both cisgender and transgender are permeable categories. If transgender – as a category, a disidentification, a contestation – can be a re-source for highlighting diversity, self-identifications and freedom of expression, it must also aim to transcend operating within a system of binary logic. In other words, if transgender as an analytical category aims to critique gender identity politics, it should not be contributory in re-creating a cisgender / transgender binary.

Participants’ ethical self-reflexivity can be a resource when trying to comprehend the conflicting attribute of cisgender. Participants’ narratives regarding their personal gender disidentifications are in alignment with their concerns about cisnormativity enforcing a new oppositional binary. All participants articulated their genders to be fluid, not fixed or determined, and through this their gender disidentifications and gender expressions echoed gender performativity.³² Upon an example of drag, Butler (2004) explicates there are no pre-given or inherent genders:

There is no “proper” gender, a gender proper to one sex rather than another, which is in some sense that sex’s cultural property. Where that

³² This was broadly delineated in Chapter 4 (p. 57 – 59).

notion of the “proper” operates, it is always and only improperly installed as the effect of a compulsory system (p. 127).³³

Following Butler; gender being a performative indicates that there is actually no pre-existing / pre-discursive identity. Butler delineates her argument upon the lesbian sexuality, which can be seen as a re-formation within the privileged heterosexual matrix (2004: 124). Political problematics of such understanding show that viewing a category as a ‘bad copy’ of a privileged framework still reproduces the hegemonic normativities (2004: 124). Butler’s argumentation enables showing that cisgender is not a base upon which all other gender disidentifications take form, but rather a privileged hegemonic matrix which aims to *naturalize* itself to maintain its prominent regulatory power position. Transgender is not cisgender’s ‘bad copy’ – if considered as such it would appropriate cisgender normativities. Rather, it is through repetitions and performativity that all genders are being recognized and confirmed.

Based on all participants’ narratives, both meat non-consumption and transgender embodiments contest regulatory regimes in discursive and material realms. Participants’ genders and disidentifications can be considered as subverting gender as appropriated to a binary system, be it the sex/gender system or the cisgender/transgender dichotomy. Due to the fact that there is no inherent gender identity, materialities of transgender individuals’ meat non-consumption can discursively contest gender binary systems, which need to privilege certain instances, in their case cisnormativity, as their original in order to work. These very manifestations present possibilities of meat non-consuming transgender individuals contributing to re-negotiations of socio-cultural intelligibilities of genders.

³³ Drag refers to acts of appropriating one’s expressions and attire to that of another gender. Clothes, accessories, gestures, mimics, etc. are used to ‘do drag’. Usually drag is referred to presenting another gender within the gender binary (therefore a woman doing drag to represent a man or vice versa), but drag can be done regardless of individuals’ sex, sexual identity, genders or gender identification.

5.4 The Development of Ethical Trans-feminism

Developing the notion of ‘ethical trans-feminism’ will intertwine ethical self-reflexivity with feminisms, considered as projects which contest essentialist normativities and argumentations encapsured in binary systems. Instances from participants’ aspirations regarding genders and feminisms will be incorporated into ethical trans-feminism.

Participants’ narratives included their yearnings for future developments and achievements of genders and feminisms. Almost all participants explicitly said there should be no essentialism, regarding embodiments / identities. Jonna specified that there should be ‘no assumptions in means of correlating behaviors to genders’, while Charli highlighted the importance of ‘being political in your everyday life and community.’ Delineations also indicated that ‘all awesome different genders should be advocated for’ (Liam), and that self-reflexivity and mutually expressed respect should take place: “Everyone should simply care about each other and also be aware of how much space they take up in society and be considerate so they don’t take others space” (Jonna). Reoccurring instances regarding participants’ anticipations and hopes for the future of genders are expressed through Liam’s words:

I guess I would like to see a world of so many genders that it’s impossible to put anyone in any category. And my politics of gender are that I wish to work towards a world where this would be possible without negative precautions, but rather something that is awesome and we can celebrate.

Correlations can be drawn between Liam’s aspirations for the future of gender and Socoliuc’s (2013) elaborations of feminism transcending identity politics:

I think the symbolic value of “feminist” is bigger than imagined and it has to do with an approach that envisions the possibility of changing hierarchical structures of thinking from one of the vulnerable categories that act towards all of the categories as equally vulnerable. To be engaged in fighting all kinds of injustice is more empowering, more politically conscious, and more efficient towards changing abusive structures of hierarchic mentalities instead of a self and ego-centred attitude that

relates only in reference to a dominant category. The end of identity politics is not the end of feminism but a new step towards fighting sexism and racism by developing new modes of thinking that replace identity with identification . . . (p. 16 – 17).

Socoliuc argues that feminisms should shift from the usage of ‘identity’, enclosed within identity politics, to ‘identification’, which rather than solely contesting a hegemonic category within discourse, concerns itself with fighting various forms of injustice. My usage of the term disidentification (p. 25 - 26) follows similar argumentation, and adds incorporating material instances with discursive contestations.

Drawing upon theoretical notions and participants’ narratives I have shown and / or argued for, the concept of ‘ethical trans-feminism’ has developed. Ethical trans-feminism incorporates and intertwines instances of discourse and materialities in order to contribute to feminist projects committed to ethical self-reflexivity and critical analysis. Intertwinings of matters, which are both discursive and materialist, show that feminisms need not enclose their political projects to notions of identity politics. Rather, receptiveness to re-formations of oneself and others are pursued, and these ethically oriented processes are not based on abiding to binary identitarian notions.

Ethical trans-feminism posits ethics as the central postulate upon which trans-feminist projects are constituted. The notion of ethics stems from one’s manifestations of ethical self-reflexivity – exemplified by a diet of ethical meat non-consumption and its implications for meat non-consumers. Ethics are thus manifested both in relation to oneself and to other human and non-human others, as presented in Chapter 3 (p. 39 – 41), when the notion of ethical self-reflexivity was introduced. Ethical trans-feminism does not argue for individuals to be meat non-consumers. Rather, ethical meat non-consumption is an exemplification of how material instances can be of great importance for expanding feminist discursive notions based on ethical values, and overcoming feminist usages of identity politics. The exposing of cisnormativity of Adams’ canon

was also used as an example of how appropriating argumentations to identitarian notions and the gender binary system can only impede ethical commitments of feminist projects. Ethical self-reflexivity forefronts self-critical and self-analytical to be applied to feminists' considerations of genders.

Following the direct meaning of *trans-* as a prefix which is 'beyond', I am suggesting the meaning of 'trans' to be twofold. When in reference to concepts of genders, *trans* within ethical trans-feminism implies all gender disidentifications, embodiments and expressions, which aim not to engage in perpetuating or reiterating restrictive and exclusionary binary gender concepts. Alongside openness to all genders, *trans* is indicative of other personal circumstances and categories, due to which individuals and groups can experience oppression and be considered socially unintelligible. However, the postulate upon which genders are included into ethical trans-feminist conceptualizations and argumentations are non-negotiable. As Enke (2012: 73) indicates: "Trans (. . .) movements suggest that we should not assume anything about a person's gender identity, sex, desires, abilities, personal history *or* future." In other words, *trans-* within ethical trans-feminism indicates openness and acknowledgement of both an array of gender disidentifications, and also other personal / social categories, which are not in alignment with normatives of hegemonic regulatory regimes and thus do not offer a position of privilege.

Ethical trans-feminism in no way intends to imply that other projects of feminisms are not in accordance with ethical values, but rather forward ethical self-reflexivity as central to feminists' political work, and highlight how juxtaposing materialities and discourse enhance ethics and solidarity. Openness to re-conceptualizations of identitarian notions are sought, for feminist argumentations to be as ethically self-reflexive as possible. "*Transfeminists* confront our own privileges . . ." notes Koyama (2006: 247). Ethical trans-feminism argues for re-formations and re-appropriations of discursive notions to take place with regards to personal and communal wellbeing. Recognitions of individual and communal lived experiences are enabled through

ethical trans-feminism being constitutive of intertwining discursive and material instances. Material instances imply taking individuals' tangible embodied *doings* and *beings* into analytical and theoretical considerations.³⁴ As Enke claims, trans theories insist that we challenge a cultural logic that believes that "the physical body is a site of identic intelligibility" (Ginsburg, 1996: 4 in Enke, 2012: 75). The power of material instances and embodiments being considered as agency, is a postulate upon which cisgender non-conforming gender performativities have potential to contribute to re-negotiations of discursive notions of gender concepts. It is through recognitions of genders and gender disidentifications as material and embodied agency that constricting identitarian gender notions are transgressed.

To sum up; ethical trans-feminism argues for transgressing binary systems and usages of gender identity politics to enable enhancing ethical commitments within feminist projects. Recognitions of the importance of applying ethical self-reflexivity to comprehensions of personal socially non-intelligible categories are forefronted. Ethical self-reflexivity arises from any form of embodied agency of ethics; material manifestations of ethical being or doing, which aim to contest social hegemonies. Comprehensions of anyone's experiences of oppression can give fuel to contribute to formations of politically solidary ethical trans-feminism, which are committed to being ethically self-reflexive and analytical within their political work. Within such contexts transcendence of the dichotomous gender system are possible. Complexities of intra-related social categories, and arrays of gender disidentifications, are exposed to ethical self-reflexivity and self-critical analysis, which enables ethical trans-feminism to be contributonal in re-negotiations of socio-cultural intelligibilities of genders. Ethical trans-feminism therefore argues for correlations of discursive notions and lived embodied experiences to be constitutive of feminist concepts and political projects. Such intertwining enables overcoming the usages of essentialism and gender identity politics, and broadening ethical and political solidarity within feminisms.

³⁴ These instances can include diet, dis/ability, gender, sexuality, body weight, ethic and / or cultural expressions etc.

Conclusion

This thesis has stressed feminisms as potentially being primarily commitments and projects of ethical and political inclusivity and solidarity, rather than forefronting them as projects of advocacy for binary gender categories and gender identity politics. Exemplification of my argument was built upon Adams' canon of vegetarian eco-feminisms, who appropriate diet as their essential resource of political work with which they contest speciesism, cis-sexism, and patriarchy. Through showing that meat non-consumption can be seen as agency, I have argued that comprehensions of anyone's - human or non-human animal alike - experiences of oppression are contributory to re-formations of ethical self-reflexivity.³⁵ Ethical self-reflexivity thus arises from any form of embodied agency of ethics; material manifestations of ethical acts of being or doing, which aim to contest oppressions. While exposing vegetarian eco-feminisms usages of gender, as normatively appropriated solely to limiting realms of social constructivism and cisnormative discourse, I have showed that alongside diet, gender, which is also central to vegetarian eco-feminist argumentation, can also be a resource of political work to contest oppression. I have argued for all concepts used within a line of feminists' argumentation to be considered as analytical categories, and shown how such analyses can contribute to transcending gender identity politics and enhance feminisms' manifestation of ethical and political solidarity.

Juxtaposing a canon of vegetarian eco-feminisms with narrative interviews conducted with members of Berlin's subculture of transgender / cisgender non-conforming ethical meat non-consumers, allowed me to show the ethical and political correlations of intertwining diet and gender as analytical categories. I sought theoretical support in feminist new materialisms and transgender studies, which call for including materialities, embodiments and lived experiences into analyses of socio-cultural and political notions. Embodiments were shown to be agential loci of individuals' socio-political stances, constituted by their consumption and gender

³⁵ Meat non-consumption is considered as contextual to Western capitalist and consumerist societies.

disidentifications, which reflect their ethical and political positionings. Upon this I have shown how materialities of transgender meat non-consuming individuals enable a discursive critique of usages of gender identity politics within vegetarian eco-feminisms. Acknowledging the correlations of material instances and discursive notions, as exemplified by meat non-consumption and transgender disidentifications, can therefore enhance ethical and political solidarity of feminisms, and enable transcending limiting gender binary systems and usages of gender identity politics.

Whilst re-thinking feminisms and genders, the notion of ethical trans-feminisms emerged. Arising from ethical commitments, which aim to transcend binary systems and hegemonic normativities, ethical trans-feminisms argues for feminist analysis to be ethically self-reflexive, and inclusive of all notions and concepts which are constitutive to specific argumentations. Ethical trans-feminism also argues for correlations of discursive notions and lived embodied experiences to be considered within feminist argumentations and political work. When exposed to ethical self-reflexivity and critical analysis, complexities of gender disidentifications with various other material and discursive personal identifications, fuel contributions and re-negotiations of socio-cultural intelligibilities of genders. It is within these intersections that overcoming usages of essentialism and gender identity politics within feminisms is enabled.

I consider the main contribution to be the development of a notion that aspires to forefront ethics as central to projects of feminisms, doing so by intertwining materialities with discursive analysis, presented as a notion of 'ethical trans-feminism'. The importance of this notion lies in delineating how applying materialities, embodiments and biological entities as analytical categories to feminist discourse regarding socio-political notions, can provide outcomes that are beneficial to enhancing ethical and politically solidary commitments of feminisms. This contribution is inextricable from indicating the bridging of fields of scholarship – vegetarian eco-feminisms, feminist new materialisms and transgender studies – with which I have analytically engaged.

Another significance I would like to specify is the relevance of this project for considerations of transgender subjectivities. While stepping aside from queer theory and engaging with transgender studies, I have mostly analyzed transgender disidentifications and embodiments from material perspectives; their tangible lived experiences being highlighted and considered valuable analytical resources. This significance is also supported through correlations of transgender studies and new materialisms, which I traced by juxtaposing diet – meat non-consumption and transgender disidentifications as analytical categories. Both fields of scholarship call for agency of materialities to be acknowledged as immensely relevant in socio-political analysis.

Due to limitations of time and space which bounded my project, I did not analyze distinctions between vegetarian and vegan food consumption as consumerism in relation to individuals' ethical and political commitments.³⁶ Further research with regards to these distinctions could provide more detailed and nuanced insights into individuals' ethical manifestations.

I did also not engage with ethics from a non-humanist / post humanist perspective. In other words, I did not examine questions which would consider new materialisms, being concepts arising from human minds, and their deployment of matter and agency to non-human and post-human entities and the potentials of new materialisms therefore being slightly ethically contradictory. For the scope of the argument of this thesis such deliberations were not relevant, as I was arguing for expanding ethics of human individuals discourse in the form of vegetarian eco-feminisms. New materialisms certainly have contributions to re-formations of notions of ethics. However, I am unsure about new materialisms' transcendence of the binary of human / non-human and / or post-human, amidst aiming to be constitutive of ethical notions, as ethics are considered to be a derivate from human morality. I am not implying or suggesting new materialisms should not continue to call for reconsiderations and reformations of all entities,

³⁶ Veganism stems beyond food consumption, including omitting any usage of animal byproducts or products which contain their substances or are tested on animals (e.g. leather, wool, cosmetic / hygiene products, certain alcohol and condoms etc.).

which are normatively divided among the dichotomous nature and culture. Rather, I am questioning if the assessment of ethics of notions of new materialisms might be causing certain frictions and suggest for these frictions to be examined in further research.

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