

# ANNALISE

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# Annalise Rodgers

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## SUMMARY

Highly-motivated post-undergrad looking to use their skills in environmental communication in the publishing industry. Quick learner who works well in a fast-paced, team environment and is passionate about writing and accessible communication.

## EDUCATION

**Carnegie Mellon University** Pittsburgh, PA  
Bachelor of Humanities and Arts in Environmental and Sustainability Studies and graduated 2023  
Music Performance (trumpet)  
- GPA: 3.79

## EMPLOYMENT

**Aritzia** New York, NY  
Senior Barista Oct. 2024-current  
- Train the barista team on drink prep, tasting, dialing espresso, teamwork, and hospitable client service interaction  
- Oversee day-to-day operations and manage cafe inventory  
- Cultivate the Aritzia A-Ok Cafe space with a welcoming attitude, responsible for opening, closing, and continued cleaning tasks

## INTERNSHIPS (paid)

**Oakland Planning and Development Corporation (OPDC)** Pittsburgh, PA  
Research Intern Summer, 2021  
- Categorized all street trees in the Central Oakland neighborhood and input information into a database for OPDC future use in caring for city trees, air quality, and equitable neighborhoods  
- Identified all suitable spaces that adhere to Pittsburgh street tree guidelines in Central Oakland, wrote and sent letters to property owners for permission to plant trees

## Center of Life, Hazelwood

Education Content Intern Pittsburgh, PA  
Spring, 2021  
- Compiled information and resources for parents and local residents about the Pittsburgh Public School system and equitable public education  
- Helped organize two remote discussions on anti-hate conversations and how to talk with kids about hate and discrimination

## PROJECTS

**BHA Capstone** Pittsburgh, PA  
Senior Thesis: On Being a Queer Vegan Spring, 2023  
- Wrote and presented articles and ideas surrounding arbitrary boundaries and limitations in US society  
- Presented at CMU Meeting of the Minds

## Summer Research

Student researcher at Steinbrenner Institute for Environmental Education and Research Pittsburgh, PA  
Summer, 2020  
- Worked on a research project on the intersectionality of environmental racism and public health with a focus on West Harlem Environmental Action

## VOLUNTEERING

**Jerry Dickinson for Congress** Pittsburgh, PA  
Communications Intern Spring, 2022  
- Reach out to constituents through phone banking and canvassing to gain support for the campaign  
- Collected political press clips once a week and cut turf to organize canvassing events and community outreach

To Whom It May Concern,

I was quite excited to see your listing for this position because it's exactly the type of job I've been looking for to grow my interest and skills in the industry. Much of my college education was centered around writing and communication since environmental studies is the humanitarian side of environmental science, with my concentration in food systems and research. My educational background is consequently focused on the intersections of sociology, politics, environmental issues, and writing. This has sparked my interest in the publishing industry as I saw the power of effective communication change stories and lives on environmental issues. I am looking for a chance to bring my skills and curiosity to a position I am passionate about.

In my senior capstone, *On Being a Queer Vegan*, I focused on ideas surrounding social boundaries that intersect with environmental challenges humanity is facing. This project taught me the process of researching and building out complex ideas that could become widely accessible. This is the goal I aim for in everything I do; I want to share exciting ideas in an accessible format that spark interest and excitement in my audience. To achieve this took strategic organization, thoughtful planning, and detailed work with narrative nonfiction. These are the skills I am excited to bring to a position like this.

Along with environment and sustainability, I also studied music performance and worked as a freelance musician. Through this, I learned meticulous attention to detail not only in writing but through sheet music editing. There is a unique attention to detail required so all reading musicians can easily understand their part. It is the essential job of the score editor to assist the musician by intentionally writing rhythms, dynamics, and any other markings in a clear and concise layout. This skill is highly transferable to any type of editing as it has trained my eye to catch precise markings and trained my critical thinking to catch bigger picture motivations and reader perceptions.

Though I have enjoyed my time as a barista, I am excited to find a chance to use my education and passion for written communication to contribute to a strong team that make real change through accessible written material. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Annalise Rodgers

# If You Have a Lawnmower, Share It

A review of Third Place Theory and an exploration of resistance in the mundane by **Annalise Rodgers**

1 Every week, like most of New York City, I head to the local laundromat. Down four flights of stairs and around the block with a bag of stinking socks and coffee stains. My laundry bag is big and red with white pigs on it. My grandma sewed it for me when I went to college so it has had quite a life and definitely needs some repairs. But shockingly, it's holding up so far. My barista weekend is Thursday-Friday so I'm there like clockwork every Thursday afternoon. I usually have about 20lbs of laundry (I once weighed it after my arms were sore the next day) and haul it up on my shoulder, swapping to the other side to wave to my barber on the way over. It's quite a sweaty ordeal, especially in the summer, and if it's raining you just have to embrace it. I end up there in the afternoon because I kind of dread it. It's not that hard but it's physical activity and if you know me at all that's really not my thing. I'd rather just be reading or watching Psych for the 200th time. So I put it off until 2 or 3pm so it will be done just in time for me to say "hey babe welcome home I did the laundry!" when my partner gets back from work. Sometimes my partner and I will go together and run to grab groceries before swapping a load to the dryer, or claim seats at the bar on the corner trying to make

our day off together a bit more aesthetic. In theory it's not a difficult process, but it's a chore all the same.

There's nowhere to sit in our laundromat. It's a small hallway with just enough space for six small washers and stacked dryers across, with a few creaky rolling baskets. And it's quarters only of course. The one guy working there, the owner I assume, will take tap-to-pay for quarters but it's an extra dollar charge if you get less than \$11 and each machine is \$4.50 so you really only need \$9...but of course you'll come back next week anyway so maybe it doesn't matter that much if you have extra quarters.

The laundromat was a laundromat for doing laundry and it served its purpose exactly. Nothing special and nothing more than it needed to be. Most places still in business fit their purpose, at least well enough to stay alive. But about four months into our regular, default use, we began to see new people appear. They had matching maroon scrubs and were welcoming everyone in and pointing them towards available washers as if they were hosts at a fancy restaurant. Next week there were new baskets that lightly skimmed the clean floor. Then a small tea/coffee station was set up, not fancy, just intentional. Seasonal decorations came and went, clean outdoor

benches appeared painted fire-engine red, indoor greenery, new washers, new dryers, a laundry menu, a business name on Google maps, a coin machine, air conditioning, and last but not least, merch.

One day a couple t-shirts appeared tacked up on the wall. One white with the new logo and colors of the Upper East Side Laundromat, the other red with a vintage design spelling out 'laundromat' in big letters on the back. They weren't just any t-shirts either. No top-of-the-search-bar Custom Ink shirt. If you scroll through far enough you'll find Comfort Colors 100% Cotton Pocket T-shirt (and unless you search those exact words it is at least four pages in). Comfy and high quality, intentional and personal. As soon as that paycheck landed in my account I bought one. It started to become a little bit fun to go to the laundromat (not to actually do the laundry, but stack a reward with a chore right). There was something new to look forward to every week, a new surprise. Getting to chat with new people was exciting and it started to feel like a neighborhood spot. We all had this collective experience of watching a beloved business get built.

The new owners were a family at first glance

but after an offering of fresh baked bread we got talking. Sylvia and her two daughters, Eli and Nara bought the place after the previous owner could no longer take care of it. Sylvia is often at the laundromat in her crispy maroon scrubs, always chatting with customers or poking her head out the door to say hi to anyone walking by and always checking in to see if anyone needs anything. She gives it that small family business feel and could just as easily have been the aunt you go to when you got yourself into a messy breakup you can't tell your mom about. Eli works occasionally when she's not running her own Paraguayan catering business. And last but not least there's Nara, recently graduated from college, with orange hair, dyed so you can see how dark it used to be underneath. Her style is a mix of pieces from her mom's closet with a masc-leaning aesthetic that come together in the way only a Gen Z lesbian can pull off. When things are slow, although running a business at 23 can't leave too much down time, she can be found building a Lego set or watching Formula 1 racing content (or building a Formula 1 Lego set). She's the brains and brawn behind the laundromat. And they are all the reason it is what it is now.



**2** Growing up, I had a friend named Julie. Her family lived in a development above my town called Stevenage Estates. Their house was around 2,700 square feet on 1.5 acres with a garage and a long driveway for their three cars. Her dad was an electrician and her mom did something in finance that she hated but required her to commute all the way into the city frequently. We'd play badminton in the backyard, if we could keep the birdie away from her dog, and ride bikes to the general store about a mile away. That was pretty much all you could get to without a car. That is, aside from the neighbors. Their huge houses were spaced out around the development with long driveways and manicured lawns. Some had pools in the backyard or movie theaters downstairs and they ALL gave out the best Halloween candy. The entire development was surrounded by woods and the properties were quite private. If you had driven past the entrance on a small backroad you would be too busy looking out for deer to notice the wide empty yards behind the tree line.

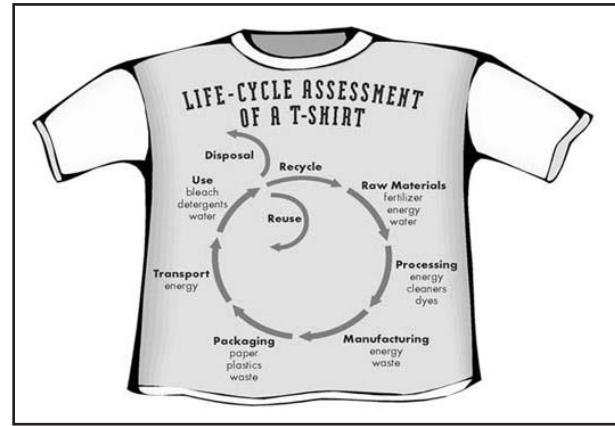
All the kids from this development grew up in the neighborhood, went to school together, and even occasionally married each other. Julie ended up becoming a physical therapist and her older sister earned her Doctor of Veterinary Medicine from Texas A&M. They had suburban hobbies like skiing and white-water kayaking and are still a tight family. They weren't the type of family that used 'summer' as a verb, but were comfortable I guess. I'm sure they weren't without their own trials and tribulations, but they were definitely an appetizer and drink family.

There were many developments just like this in the county. Kids grew up together, went through grade school, middle school, high school together. Went away to college then came back, married each other and moved into a house not too far away. Some became teachers in the very schools they went to.

This seems to be the American Dream, at least the one I was sold: the white picket fence, the 1.94 children. Everyone has their own lawnmower, even if they hire the neighbor kid to mow their lawn. Everyone has their own washer and dryer, probably in their basement or garage, maybe even a drying rack for their more temperamental clothing. There's no laundromat in sight. Instead, 20 minutes away, there is a giant concrete parking lot with a Walmart, Target, Starbucks drive through, and a Home Depot sprawling across it. Is it walkable? Absolutely not. But does anyone need to leave their home for a laundromat?

Never.

Think about the shirt you're wearing for a minute. Where did it come from, where is the fabric from, where was it made? What about the colors, where is the dye from and how was it extracted? Eventually it's time for a new shirt, either your style evolved and it doesn't feel right anymore or you wore it right through. Where does it go then? You might donate it, maybe someone will get a second use, and then what? To be honest, it's probably in a landfill. This is the lifecycle of a product. And with issues like planned obsolescence and fast fashion trends, more and more items are being used for less and less time and we are ending up with more and more garbage in landfills. This is not your problem, particularly. I mean it kind of is but it's a planned system by large companies to make more money off of you.



Now imagine a lawnmower instead, all the parts of a lawnmower, mined in another country, shipped together to be assembled and then shipped to Home Depot who then ships it to you. And after you're done with it or it breaks, maybe parts can be recycled but most of it will end up in a landfill and you will get a new one. In a place like Stevenage Estates, your neighbor has a perfectly good lawnmower. And your neighbor on the other side. And the neighbor behind you. The fact that a neighbor has a perfectly good lawnmower sitting unused in their garage never crosses one's mind. Do we all need a lawnmower?

**3** In 1932, a man named Ray was born in Henderson, Minnesota. He had an unremarkable childhood then ended up serving in the military for a short time in the South of France post-undergrad. When he returned, he attended graduate school at the

University of Minnesota studying sociology. Despite his PhD and international travel, he considered himself a man of the people, frequenting main street bars and taverns. He became a much sought after consultant for urban planning projects and businesses and taught at a number of universities. He's the professor who could be your grandpa, reminiscing about running the streets barefoot until the lights came on and surviving lead paint. He adopted a smirk and a pipe as his personality, but if you saw him on the street, you would forget.

In 1998, Ray published a book on his career-defining theory called *The Great Good Place*. You might have heard of it. The theory presented goes something like this: American towns and cities need more informal social spaces that are not home and not work, a Third Place, for rest, relaxation, and restoration. For some reason, this theory has taken hold of many and even become quite a colloquial term. It has the allure of community and, to those in my generation, disillusioned by capitalism and growing authoritarianism, has an irresistible, captivating pull. You have only to Google "third place" to find piles of articles, Substack musings, and tweets about this third place, that third place, or a dramatic Bushwick sonnet longing for more alternative third spaces.

In *The Great Good Place*, Oldenburg lays out eight criteria for a Third Place:

1. Must be on neutral ground
2. A Third Place is a leveler
3. Conversation is the main activity
4. The place ensures accessibility and accommodation
5. Is frequented by "the regulars"
6. The place itself has a low profile
7. The mood is playful
8. It is a home away from home

If you are at all familiar with the book or theory you may know a few of these as well and even enjoy the benefits of your own third place. Oldenburg believed in his theory even in practice and built a saloon in his garage in Pensacola, Florida to live it out.

But why are we still talking about this guy? If you read his entire book, you may happen to venture upon Chapter 12, "The Sexes and the Third Place." Now remember that he published this in 1998, after about eight rewrites, to ensure that it was exactly what he wanted to say. For context, here are just a few things that happened during his career as a sociologist that led up to this published work:

1932: Ray Oldenburg born

1965: Bloody Sunday

1971: Gloria Steinem launches Ms. Magazine

1981: The height of the AIDS epidemic

1963: Martin Luther King Jr. gives his famous 'I Had a Dream' speech

1970: Essence Magazine launched in May and The Mary Tyler Moore show aired the following September

1972: The Equal Rights Amendment passed in both the house and senate leading to the fight for ratification

1998: *Will and Grace* aired on national TV and marked the beginning of the end in the fight for marriage equality



Now let us tackle some of his Chapter 12 claims, because if we want more third places or at the very least like the sound of them, we should know what we are talking about. To start, he argues that only men really need a third place because women will be at home taking care of children and the household anyway. Bold start. Clearly, he leans heavily into...not reading history? Here is what he writes:

“...the separation of the sexes into male and female worlds does not require that each gender have a place of retreat. It is only necessary that one have a place in which to “escape” the other. That the male should have been the one to have a place apart is not mystery. Most societies (arguably, all of them) have been dominated by males; survival of the whole has depended far more on male cooperation and camaraderie than on that of females; child raising confined the woman, not the man.”

We can see from the jump there are a few problems with this assessment. No allowance for basic rights of women to decide what they want their own lives to look like and complete ignorance of their social needs is just a start. Seemingly, he is also loudly ignoring any historical movements at the time writing, “women have not complained about this state of affairs.”

Part of the allure of a third place in his theory is that it is a safe space for men away from their wives<sup>1</sup> and that gender integration is the death of a third place. He writes that “in the immediate presence of women, men begin to talk like them; in the immediate presence of women, men become increasingly aware that they are performing. Relaxation is more difficult.” And here we end up squarely in homophobic territory, learning as well that this PhD holding sociology professor is boldly conflating sex and gender in his eight-time revised, perfected, career-defining work.

Oldenburg devotes entire sections of his book to the importance of third places as a space for men to hang out with men because holding space for masculinity is apparently imperative to stopping the spread of homosexuality. I think we may comfortably argue that we are all performing all the time, no matter who is around. Not only this, but he seems quite uncomfortable with men taking on feminine mannerisms, even if only for a short time. Already giving us a taste of his homophobic ideas, he later gets quite into masculine spaces arguing that third places, where men can relax with other men, discourages homosexuality and encourages talk of women as sex objects writing, “same-sex association encourages interest in the opposite sex” and “women are sex objects to most men and it is important that they remain that.” And to round out his thoughts on minimal homosexuality he shares these completely unfounded claims:

“Heterosexual interest everywhere coexists with patterns of male bonding; where men are at ease and comfortable with one another, homosexual relationships are minimal. Where competition between men is great and institutionalized patterns of male bonding are weak or nonexistent, homosexuality becomes far more common.”

“Eroticism is almost always absent in all-male groups. There are no tensions. Lounging or rambling about in single-spirited camaraderie, men are as relaxed as one will find them in the wakened state. They are too much at ease and in tune with one another to engender those tensions necessary to erotic interest.”

<sup>1</sup> Oldenburg later argues that the rise in heteronormative relationships becoming more like partnerships is contributing to the downfall of third places since men will frequent third places less if they actually want to hang out with their wives and this in turn contributes to a rise in homosexuality because men are not experiencing masculine spaces enough. He also has a section where he implies that women are bad at pool and thus ruin it for men.



To me, it's giving gay bar. And it feels like Oldenburg has never frequented or dared to step toe into one. Just peeking in, any person can see that these claims are absolutely untrue<sup>2</sup>. And that, in fact, a queer club might be exactly the space, by definition, Oldenburg is describing. Queer bars and clubs, and even more accessible spaces like queer bookshops, coffee shops, and workspaces, are safe and inviting places that can fulfill all basic criteria of a third place. Except perhaps the criteria in Oldenburg's musings on gender, sex, and integration. And, one might argue, this is why they are functional third places in modern society and contribute to strong, communal, nurturing connections. Everyone should feel safe there (unless of course you are Oldenburg).

Third place theory, colloquially, has become this idea that third spaces are healing for the regulars and are safe spaces to recharge from the day. But reading Oldenburg's writing, he really argued that they are safe spaces for heterosexual men and should remain that way to keep society the way he believed it should be - traditionally heteronormative and gender-segregated - a quite questionable take from a highly educated sociologist. And why might this be an argument that makes sense to him? Perhaps the true threat is that spaces like this create villages, and villages are healing protection for their people. But villages are quite anti-capitalist in nature, and at the core of third place theory is the belief that third places are important because they serve as restoration for the working class, those who wake up early, workout, work a 9-5 or a 10-6, increasingly remotely, and are looking for restoration before they again repeat this same cycle to be as productive as possible and contribute to a system that values their labor above all else.

**4** The thing about capitalism is, well...there's a lot there. But I do want to touch on part of third place theory that seems to be rubbing up on the capitalist agenda. Many left-leaning, liberal

<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, maybe he did step in and was afraid of what he felt

writers and tweeters love to talk (and tweet) about craving more third places and touting their power to strengthen and bring communities to life when in reality third place theory was born from a capitalist perspective. If we have thriving third places (specifically for men, as discussed) then we will have a space where middle class men go to recharge after a long day at work, avoid going home to their wives, and become ready for a long, productive work day tomorrow. Now we have ended up with a system that

supports workers surviving the hamster wheel of capitalism. In this way third place theory is helping to preserve capitalism and restore the worker for working.

However, this argument is intentionally hidden in abridged versions. Every once in a while when we

get fed up with capitalism, we have a soft and cozy story about third places to come home to. We snuggle up to a story of a bartender sorting through grief with someone that makes us feel all the warm fuzzies. We feel as though there is a solution! Ultimately, this is just an engineered placation to force conformity and comfortability in a capitalist system.

If this is an argument you agree with and want to argue for, Oldenburg is for you. But many people supporting and writing colloquially about third places are completely missing this bit of it and I don't think they want to. Oldenburg laments in *The Great Good Place* that there is a lack of places where men are singing and dancing together and blames it on the lack of third places. He need only to widen his view to other cultures around the world (and even within the US) to find examples of men singing and dancing together regularly. His western-centric view of the ideal American city is on full display here. For someone highly educated, he could have used a little American colonialism to look at other cultures and take some...notes.

Third place theory, as Oldenburg wrote it, seems to have served a purpose; it has motivated people to think about their own neighborhoods and neighbors through a different lens. However, this lens can only take you so far and needs a rewrite. "The one thing nobody seems to tell you is that as a country becomes more & more 'developed,' the major



thing that gets eroded is community. The village disappears and you have to buy the village back." Villages are intergenerational; they are built on reliance for survival. Reliance on each other, on ideas, on intergenerational knowledge. Villages are how people survive. Third places can help you find your village, but you don't have to stop there...or start there.

Buying back our villages can look like many different things and does not have to look like third

places. It can for sure! But it doesn't have to. It can look like mutual aid online groups. It can look like community fundraisers. It can look like sending your friend \$20 when their job drops their hours without warning (and getting your other friends to chip in). And many people have built spectacular community in many different forms, often because they had to, that may or may not involve third places. Anyone of the global majority living in America for any amount



of time can teach the rest of us something about this.

A development like Stevenage Estates can never be a village. As long as everyone has their own lawnmower and their own washer and dryer, they are missing the point. Even if you build a saloon in your garage, you are missing the point. Laundromats force you to have informal social connections for a period of time each week (maybe even with the same people) when you are forced to be there. Having to go to a laundromat forces you to share the lawnmower.

**5** There's nothing like a laundromat. A bodega or deli may be the closest, but there's no seating and no encouragement to wait there for an intermediate amount of time. Laundromats can be magic. You have to wait for your laundry, forcing you to at least stay in the vicinity for a while, the people who use them are literally your neighbors because no one is traveling to do their laundry, you have to be there at least once every week usually on a schedule (day off etc.), and with a little intentionality from an owner it can feel the neighborhood spot.

I began sitting on the benches outside while waiting for my laundry instead of running home to sit on my couch and press play on whatever Real Housewives show I was catching up on. The thing about sitting on a bench outside a small laundromat is that people will sit next to you who are from the neighborhood. And they aren't people from three or four blocks away, they are people one block away, or next door. And they are just doing life; reading, calling a parent, fielding a stressful call from a doctor about a blood test. Or they might chat with you, if you seem friendly enough, and these are informal social connections essential for belongingness, community, and invention.

There is much more to being a village than sitting next to your neighbors while waiting for your laundry. But there is much less too. Sitting on that red bench next to a neighbor who recognized my Dyke March 2025 t-shirt is my version of a third place, it's my version of resistance, my small version of weekly anti-capitalist resistance. A laundromat is a necessity, it has a low barrier to entry, you will be there every week if you can, and you are forced to sit and wait. Third place theory describes middle class America, not usually people who have to go to a laundromat. But in New York City, that is not the case since even expensive units are small and have no washer or dryer. The neighborhood needs a laundromat (maybe two) and it needs one close by.

An act of resistance to capitalism and modern productivity in society is always to do less, to produce less, to work less, and to consume less. A great way to do that is to invest your time in less economic productivity and just sit outside your laundromat and chat while you wait for your laundry. And maybe bake some bread, bring it, and break it.

**There's nothing like a laundromat  
and mine is the best. —**

# On Being a Queer Vegan

by Annalise Rodgers

“A modified practice of veganism includes forgiveness, understanding, and compassion for themselves. It also allows for space to be able to make mistakes while still claiming veganism as a prevalent identity even if they are not ‘perfect’ vegans.”

-- Naomi M. Kolb-Untinen

I’m vegan. Well, I’m mostly vegan. Chea-gan (cheating vegan). \*shiver\* Definitely not that. I don’t really view eating a croissant every once in a while as cheating. And I pretty much hate the socially constructed binary that is created around veganism; that you have to either be 100% vegan or you should never claim the label. I ate pizza today because it was free (and damn is free pizza good). And my partner made grilled cheese and tomato soup, definitely not gonna turn that down. Maybe I should label myself as a vegetarian with vegan tendencies. That takes way too long to say. What about environmental vegan? That at least includes some sort of utilitarian aspect to it; now I’m vegan but if I order at a restaurant and they accidentally include eggs in my Pad Thai I’ll still eat it rather than watch it go to waste. The label I’ve

been using most recently is habitual vegan. I habitually cook and consume vegan food.

I am lucky in all of this to be able to even have the option of being habitually vegan. I have no food allergies, I can walk to a grocery store and have some amount of time and resources to do so. I grew up mostly eating vegetarian so I have already built many of the habits I need to prepare vegan meals and never grew up with the idea that meat has to be the main course. I know how to cook, at least at a basic level. And I’m lowkey afraid of meat after watching documentaries on the U.S. agricultural system and reading Michael Pollan.

But I can’t just say I’m vegan. There is a binary surrounding being vegan; a weird militant feeling about it. I have had more than a few people respond

with “oh wow I could never do that” or “being chill about being vegan makes me want to actually try it.” To me, these sentiments seem to stem from the binary of being either ‘100% will not eat anything cooked in the same pan as a chicken’ vs habitually being mostly vegan. I’m not passing judgment either way, but I do want to point out why I am habitually vegan and want other people to at least feel empowered to try.

I saw chalk on my college campus the other day that read “meat is murder, stop eating animal products tomorrow” and I have a few things to point out. For one, I am not vegan because I am empathetic toward animals. I’m not saying I’m cold-hearted and apathetic to the plight of animals in our agricultural system, but I am saying I didn’t begin this journey because animals are suffering. I became vegan because humans are suffering.

1/4 to 1/3 of all carbon emissions around the world come from the agriculture industry. Not only that, the production of meat and animal products uses much more water than the production of vegetables. Even the production of chicken uses over four times more water than it takes to grow vegetables (Fig. 1). Animal products simply use more energy and more resources.

Not only are more resources used in production, but where they end up can be detrimental to human health. Concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs), a type of factory farm, are intensive feeding operations where meat and other animal products can be produced fast and in large quantities. 98% of all meat consumed in the US comes from CA-

FOs. The problems that stem from these operations are almost infinite. CAFOs produce 3 to 20 times the amount of human waste produced in a year with no sewage treatment requirements or regulations. They leach ammonia into surrounding waters which kills aquatic life and pollutes water sources. “The excess production of manure and problems with storage or manure management can affect ground and surface water quality. Emissions from degrading manure and livestock digestive processes produce air pollutants that often affect ambient air quality in communities surrounding CAFOs [Fig. 2]. CAFOs are also a source of greenhouse gases which contribute to global climate change.” Treating animals with antibiotics is greater in CAFOs because of the large number of animals in close confinement which increases the like-

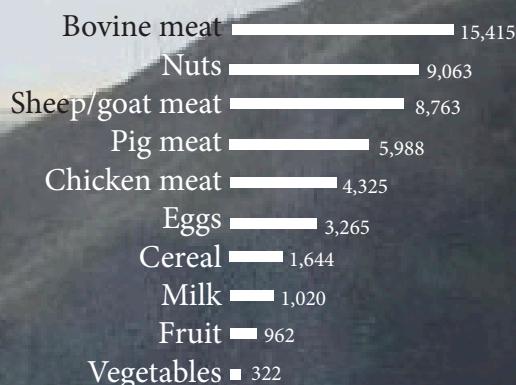
## Fig. 2

Table 1 Typical pollutants found in air surrounding CAFOs.

CAFO Emissions	Source	Traits	Health Risks
Ammonia	Formed when microbes decompose undigested organic nitrogen compounds in manure	Colorless, sharp pungent odor	Respiratory irritant, chemical burns to the respiratory tract, skin, and eyes, severe cough, chronic lung disease
Hydrogen Sulfide	Anaerobic bacterial decomposition of protein and other sulfur containing organic matter	Odor of rotten eggs	Inflammation of the moist membranes of eye and respiratory tract, olfactory neuron loss, death
Methane	Microbial degradation of organic matter under anaerobic conditions	Colorless, odorless, highly flammable	No health risks. Is a greenhouse gas and contributes to climate change.
Particulate Matter	Feed, bedding materials, dry manure, unpaved soil surfaces, animal dander, poultry feathers	Comprised of fecal matter, feed materials, pollen, bacteria, fungi, skin cells, silicates	Chronic bronchitis, chronic respiratory symptoms, declines in lung function, organic dust toxic syndrome

## Fig. 1

Liters of water required to produce one kilogram of the following food products\*



\*Global averages

Source: Water Footprint Network

lihood that disease and bacteria will spread rapidly. “Seventy percent of all antibiotics and related drugs in the U.S. each year are given to beef cattle, hogs, and chickens as feed additives,” and worse they are “identical to ones given to humans.” “There is strong evidence that the use of antibiotics in animal feed is contributing to an increase in antibiotic-resistant microbes and causing antibiotics to be less effective for humans.”

Groundwater pollution, surface water pollution, air quality decline, greenhouse gas emissions contributing to climate change, antibiotic contamination, insect vectors, pathogen spread, and falling property values. These are all side-effects of CAFOs which more intensely affect those living near them. And who has historically been systematically forced

to live near CAFOs? Poor people and communities systematically and historically marginalized by structures of power. The history of racism in the US agricultural system is deep. An article that goes more in-depth about it is linked [here](#), but basically: historic planned redlining has forced generations of Black and Native American farmers out of business and built large industrial CAFOs and waste facilities in these marginalized communities that are not afforded the resources to fight back. A case study of this recently happened in [North Carolina](#) where residents began pushing back against the water pollution caused by the CAFOs nearby. This case study was in regards to the company Smithfield Foods but [Monsanto](#) currently and historically has been terrorizing small-scale farmers and using their power to control the agricultural industry in their favor.

However, one person eating a more vegan diet won't fix climate change or water pollution, or the massive problems stemming from CAFOs. The myth of personal responsibility is already sold to us by oil companies and large corporations. But adopting vegan habits is the physical manifestation of the breaking of a boundary; a change in the way we can think about our values for community and who we want our community to be.

But it's not that easy to just 'stop eating meat tomorrow.' There's no binary switch to flick. Many people feel like a meal is not complete without meat as the center dish. It's hard to rewire our brains to see what eating can look like without it. It takes resources and education to learn what vegan cooking looks like; how to cook tofu or just that we can discard the

rhetoric tying masculinity to meat and protein in America and embrace beans.

A quick note here on food apartheid. Food apartheid in the US is a barrier to veganism or any type of intentional food consumption for many people, however interested and passionate they might be. Food apartheid is "a system of segregation that divides those with access to an abundance of nutritious food and those who have been denied that access due to systemic injustice." In other words, redlining and historically planned racist systems in the US deny marginalized groups, mostly along the basis of race but also economic status and the intersection of the two, access to plant foods. "Unequal access to healthy food contributes to hunger, obesity, and related diseases like diabetes and heart disease; it harms people of the global majority at higher rates than white people; and it is linked to the industrial animal agricultural system. In 2020, food insecurity affected just over 10% of households in the United States, with Black and Hispanic households experiencing the problem at rates of 21.7% and 17.2%, respectively - roughly double the national average." A case study demonstrating this exact problem can be seen in a [neighborhood in Jacksonville, FL](#) where fresh produce is hard to come by and many do not have the resources to travel and acquire them.

So how do we embrace beans? How do we embrace the values that eating vegan embraces and adopt community-minded intentional consumption? More than physical boundaries, this project is about the social construction of boundaries; how we view veganism as political consumption, as a way for those

*"Community is built around food.  
Our bodies digest food more efficiently  
when we eat with people."*





of us who can to exercise our privilege in an intentional, compassionate, way. This approach, from yet another discipline, provides a framework for unpacking what this can look like and how we can discuss it. Naomi M. Kolb-Untinen lays out a helpful concept in their thesis titled “The Disruptive Potential of a Queer Vegan Praxis.” They discuss how “arbitrary vegan-nonvegan binaries and notions of purity and perfection can be deconstructed using a queer framework.” This is exactly the problem that I have with the cultural and social boundaries that surround the idea of the “vegan” label. I have addressed some of the practical and accessibility issues around assuming everyone can just wake up tomorrow and choose to be 100% vegan. However, their focus is rather “to show the potential that veganism holds to further disrupt the normativity and binaries that the queer community is already so dedicated to dismantling.” I’m queer and I’m vegan. I never really put the two together but I guess my brain did in a way thanks to Standpoint Theory. There are few things I see as black and white, especially when it comes to identity. And when the label of vegan is being treated as a black-and-white identity I have a problem. Militant veganism and binary polarization are suppressing sustainable eating habits.

My favorite part about studying the environment and studying food and agricultural systems is that food is a social binder. Community is built around food. Our bodies digest food more efficiently when we eat with people. Culture is built around food. The foods you eat reflect social status (and often economic/class status). Some of these may be a choice, but many of them are the physical manifestation of planned social systems. It is an act of privilege and political consumption to intentionally change what we eat.

So I’m habitually vegan because of humans, and because the act of being habitually vegan reminds me of personal actions that uplift communities and values through sharing food and common experience. This also allows me to focus on my own values and habits around veganism instead of trying to evangelize or guilt others into eating a certain way. I don’t really care what you do. There are so many factors I don’t know and can’t control, I only know what works for me. So, I am constantly trying to adopt personal habits for intentional consumption. My passion for studying the intersection of the environment and agricultural systems has led me to a habitually vegan conclusion. —

# Lottery-Style Elections

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## *lottery as representation reform*

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by Annalise Rodgers

**Think back to high school.** Maybe you played sports, were a teacher's pet, or got way too involved in drama club. Maybe you even ran for class president, handing out donuts with an attached flyer reading: "Donut delay! Vote for Hannah today!" As early as middle school we are taught the fundamentals of a democratic system. But is this really the best way to represent constituents, either in student body government or the United States government? I write this to argue for a bolder representation system and, although it involves many considerations and longer discussions than can be had here, the idea of change is fundamental to its success.

To begin, the current voting system has a couple of representation issues. One problem is that it severely limits the people who can run for office. These limits are manifested in two ways. The first is that access to some kind of wealth is needed in order to run for office. Either the individual must have enough wealth and resources to distinguish themselves as a philanthropist/public figure or they must have enough wealth to fund their own campaign. The second is that people who want to serve in public office must have the time and energy to run a campaign first. Not only does this limit people who have a family, especially single parents, but also people whose strengths don't lie in campaigning. Someone may not be particularly charismatic or outgoing but have plenty of skills to be an amazing leader in public office and interact with their constituents one-on-one.

Another contributing issue, although mostly a symptom of the two-party system, is that voters are more often than not voting against a candidate rather than voting in support of a candidate. Instead of using a democratic voting system to weigh the representation of each voter equally, this results in greater polarization and less diverse representation in all bodies of government.

I am proposing the use of lottery-style elections. This system is set up so that essentially anyone can put their name down to "run" for a public office. These names are then shuffled and a single person is randomly chosen for the job.

There are three main points of discussion when it comes to representation and lottery-style elections. The first is that voters are no good at determining who will make a great leader. As voters look at candidates, the nuances of bias and social norms play a huge part in influencing our decisions, however objective we believe them to be. Not only have 44/45 US presidents been white men, not to mention 100% of them being men, only two have been shorter than average suggesting that voters find it comforting that their leader match a social norm of masculinity. Social norms play into unconscious gender bias, bias against candidates of color, and bias against those in the LGBTQ+ community.

Comments on the appearance of women are never made about their male colleagues. The unconscious bias of voters play into social norms which inhibit solid decision-making regarding who will

make a strong political leader.

The second discussion point is that lottery-style elections cut out the resources involved in campaigning. Money is a barrier for a large portion of the population, especially those who need representation the most. Generally, this population is mostly made up of people from minority groups. Using a lottery-style election would allow people from these communities to think about themselves as leaders differently and have the chance to hold a government position. This is the first step in representing people who have historically been left out due to inequitable systems.

The third discussion is around the skills needed to run a campaign. This skillset is different from the skills needed to represent constituents on anything from a school board position to a senate seat. This means that it is possible, and happens, that a candidate can run a solid campaign, reach out to voters, woo them to their side, win the election, and do not have as incredible a skillset for actually representing those voters' needs.

Although this system overcomes quite a

few barriers, there are a few considerations to make when thinking about its implementation. The first is a conversation around qualifications for submitting yourself as a candidate for the lottery. Do aspiring candidates need a certain level of education or experience to put in their name? This discussion is much longer than can be laid out here; however, keep in mind that the current qualifications for running for public office are essentially just access to resources (money, connections, people with high socio-economic status and influence, etc).

A second consideration for implementation is the "buy-in" from voters. When voters cast a ballot they have a personal connection to the winner of that election. Maybe they canvassed for them or upheld their name in a political conversation. Even if they didn't participate other than fulfilling their civic duty to vote, they still "bought-in" to either

voting for a candidate or voting against a candidate.

A last note on lottery-style elections is that they change the way the job of an elected public official is viewed. Instead of something a candidate earned (or maybe even felt that they deserved), it becomes more of a privilege. Instead of perpetuating the myth of the American Dream to further representation, it pushes those randomly chosen to rise to the occasion and hold themselves accountable to their constituents.

This is a very different system for representation but our current system is full of problems that inhibit fair representation. It's no secret that voter suppression and gerrymandering, among other strategies, are used to swing votes for or against candidates. To change this we have to champion bold change: lottery-style elections. —



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Annalise Rodgers** is a writer, musician, and environmentalist working in New York City. They write about the absurd and the mundane. They like to bake bread, drink really really good coffee, and want a dog.

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