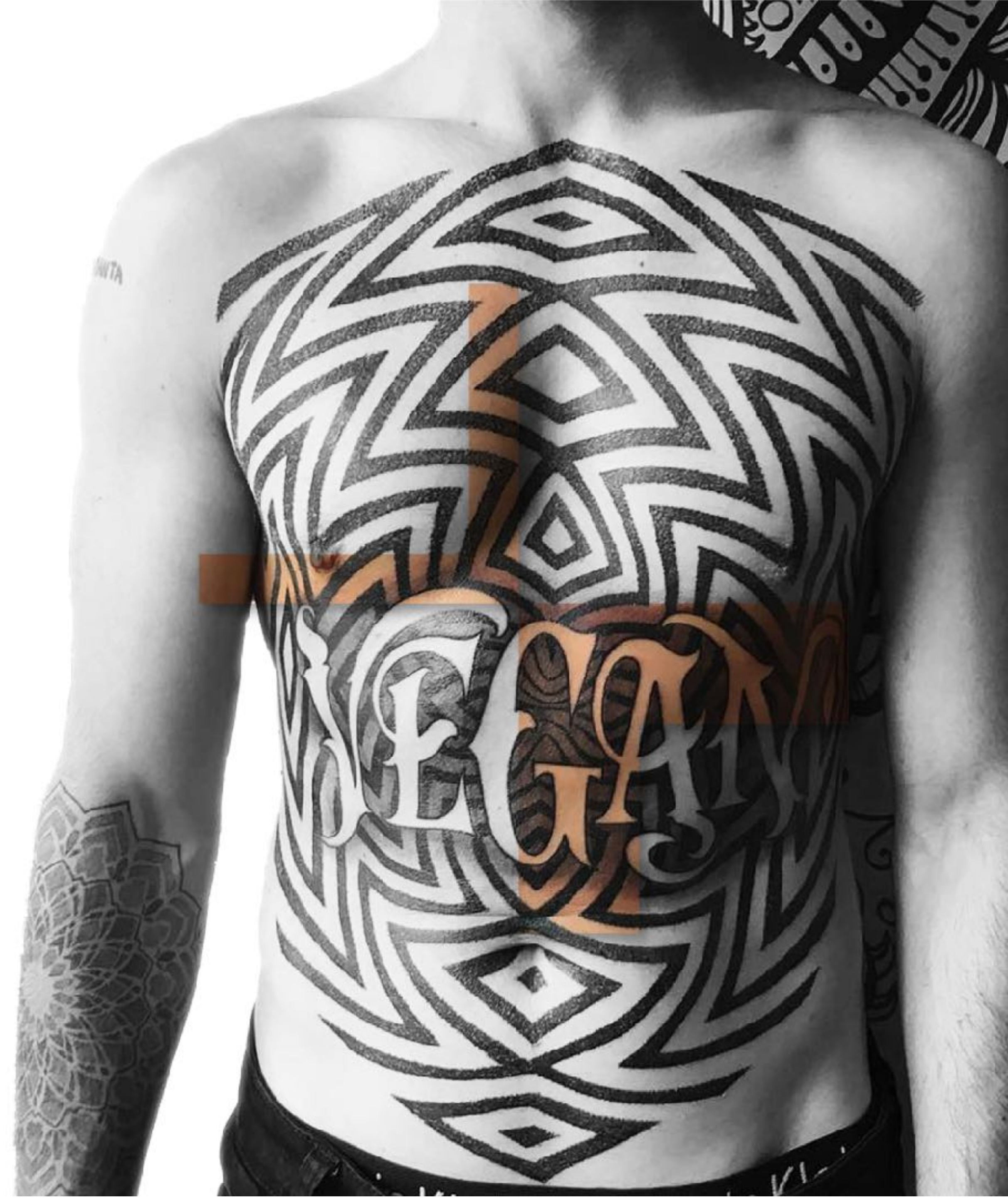


HART+JONES

# The Semiotics of Veganism



# What's really going on?

The cultural changes that are making veganism 'feel right' to so many people

How these issues are reflected in the coding of successful design:  
design that isn't just for vegans but resonates with wider cultural change

And how brands can capitalise on these codes





**1.2% of the UK  
population is Vegan**

**US: 0.4% - 3.0%**  
(depending on the source)



How did we get from here....





...to here?





**Why is veganism so  
attractive and  
aspirational?**





HART+JONES

Better design  
through decoding  
culture



**Culture determines  
how people  
respond to**

**‘stuff’.**

**That includes design**





**Consumers can't  
articulate  
culture**

**Stuff 'feels right'**



Consumers can't  
articulate  
culture

Stuff 'feels right'

So categories end up looking  
the same





Categories end up looking the same. The generic 'feels right'





Semiotics  
**articulates**  
culture



# Semiotics articulates culture



Adoration



Sensuality



Urban cool



Fresh



We integrate  
semiotics to dig  
**beneath** the code.

Decoding what's **really** going on:  
Why categories look the way they do  
The messages brands are really sending





# We integrate semiotics to encode cut through messages

Impactful, effective, unexplored ways  
to communicate



Why is Veganism so  
aspirational to many?

What are people  
really buying into?



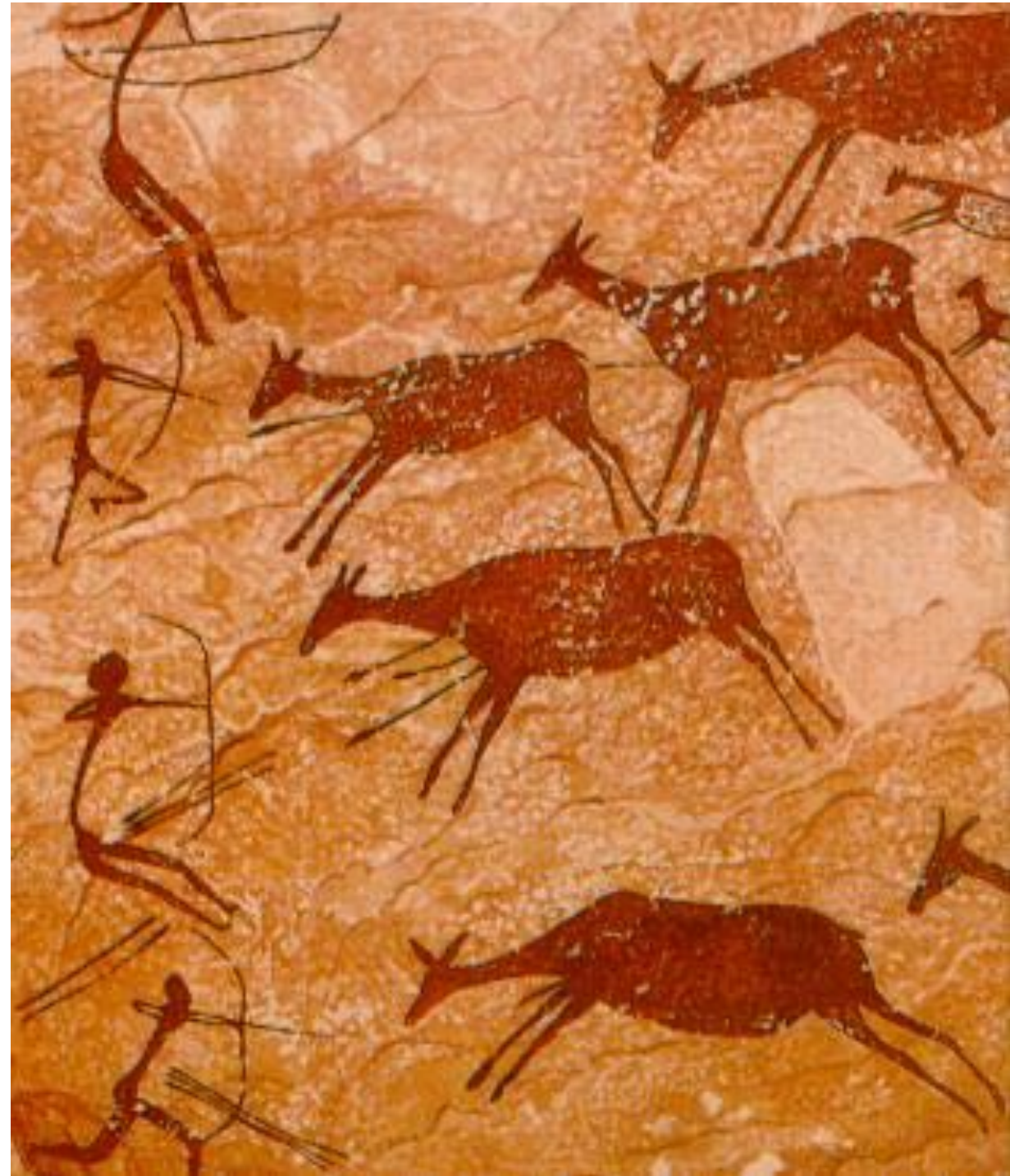


We need to look at meat before we look at Veganism.





Meat required courage and skill to acquire





Or the wealth to buy it



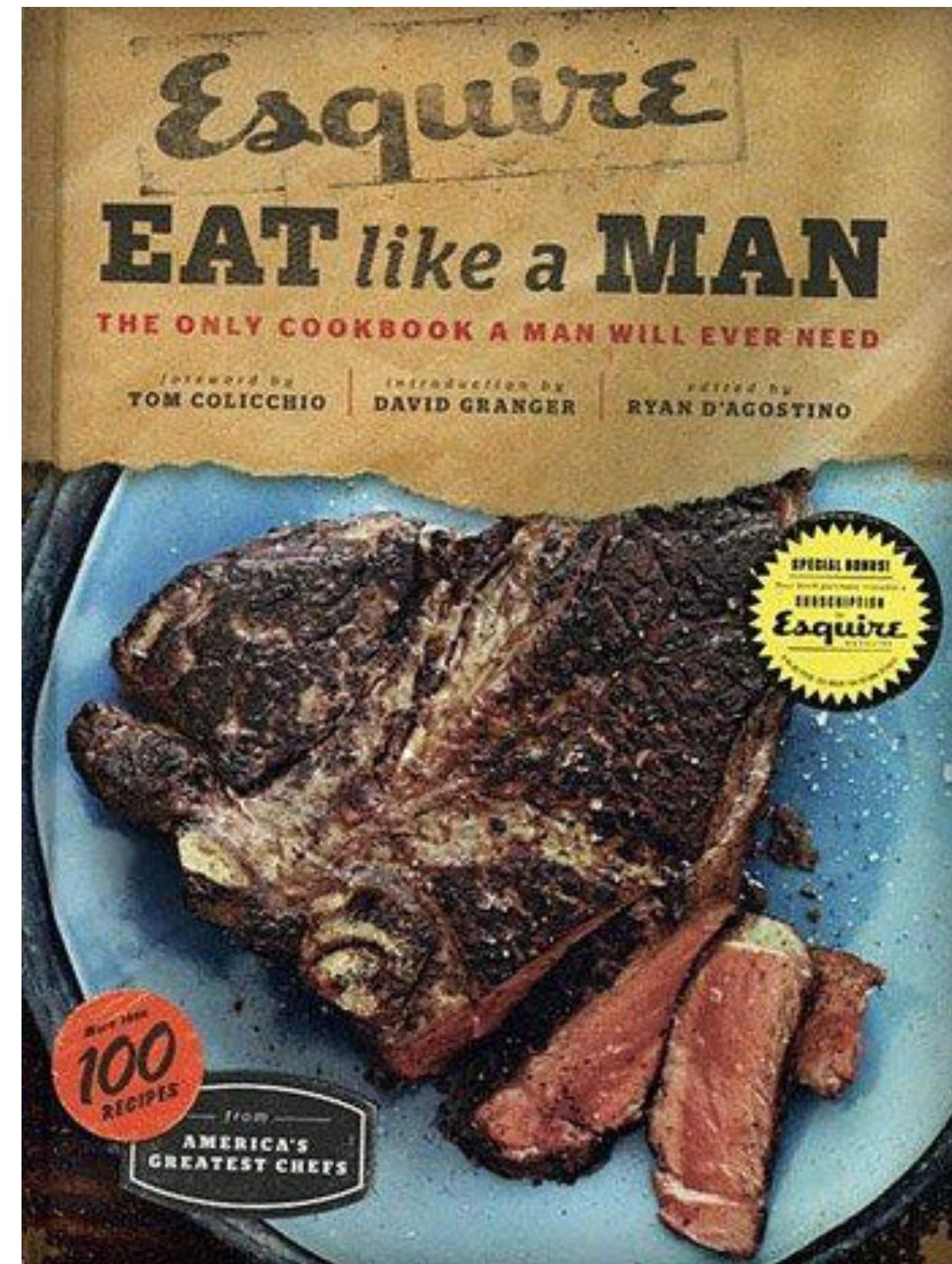
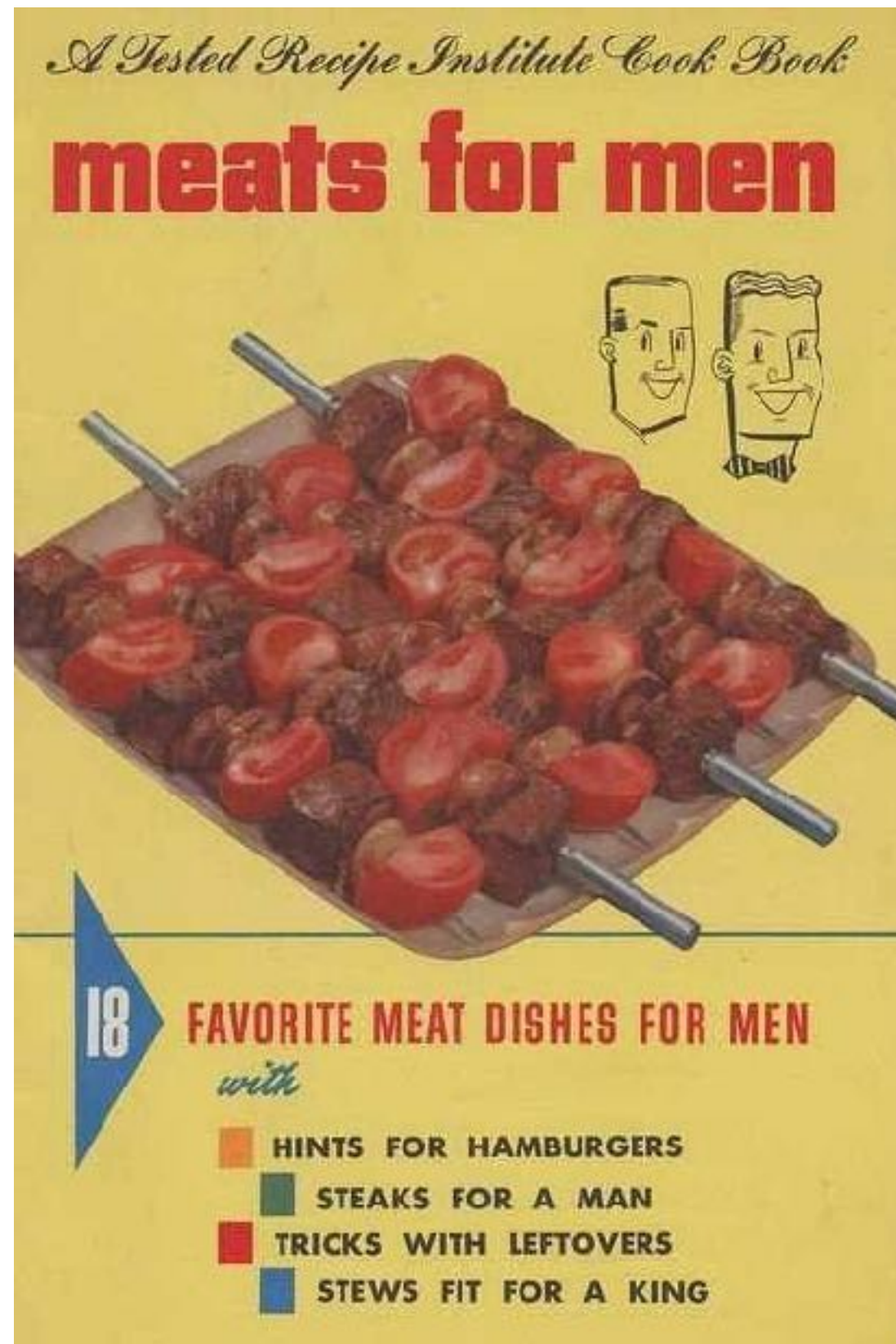


And manly implements to prepare





# Meat is MANLY





# Meat is everything culture says a man should be

Brave and strong

Powerful

Rich and successful



# A vegetarian is an un-man, an inversion of nature

Not brave or strong

Not powerful

Not rich or successful





“Vegans and vegetarians are not widely depicted in literature, or in popular culture, but the representations are telling, as they often characterize vegans as malnourished, pitiable, misled, or crazed.”

Food, Literature, Philosophy. May 2009

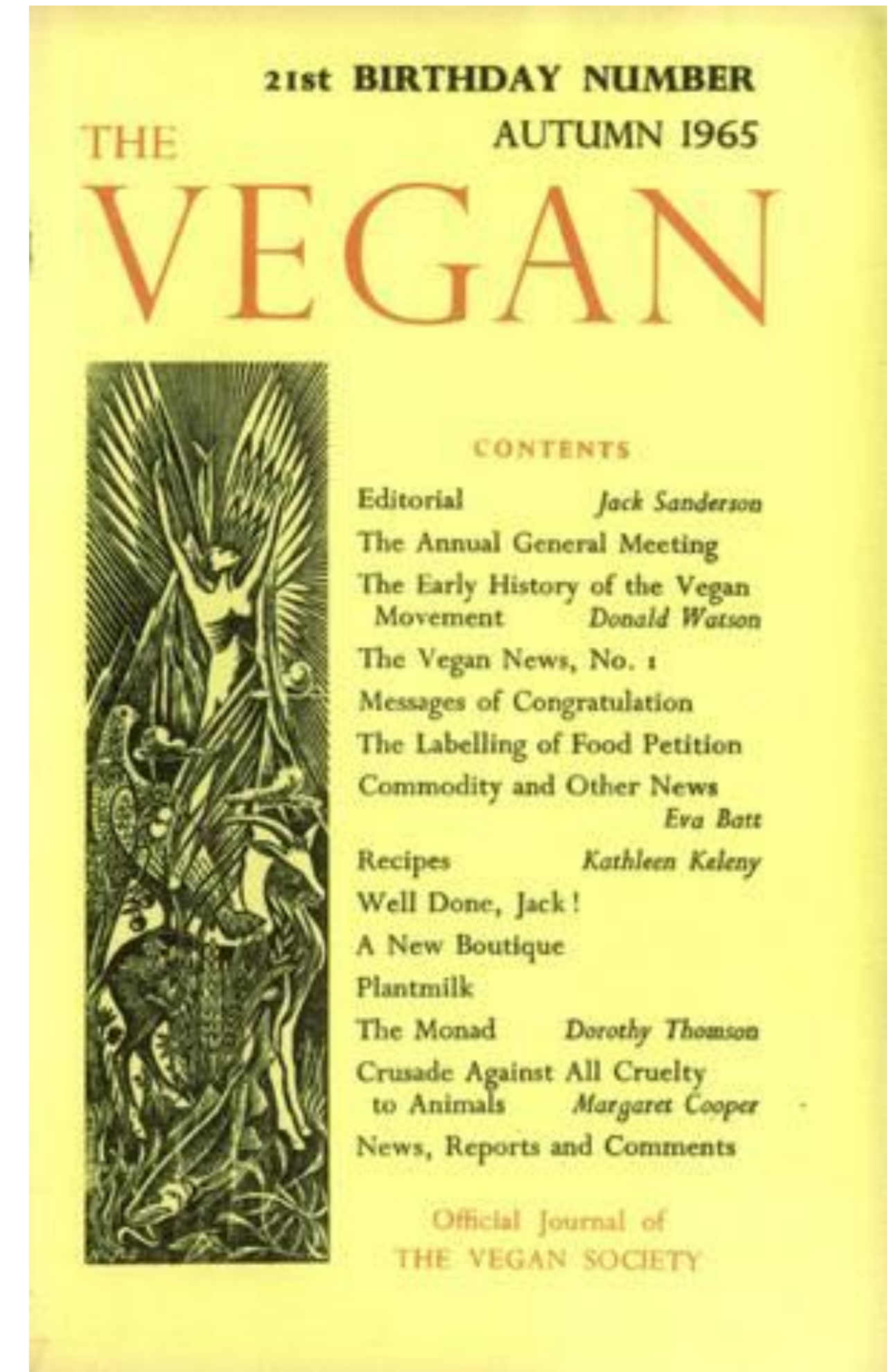




# Veganism was an odd subset of vegetarianism

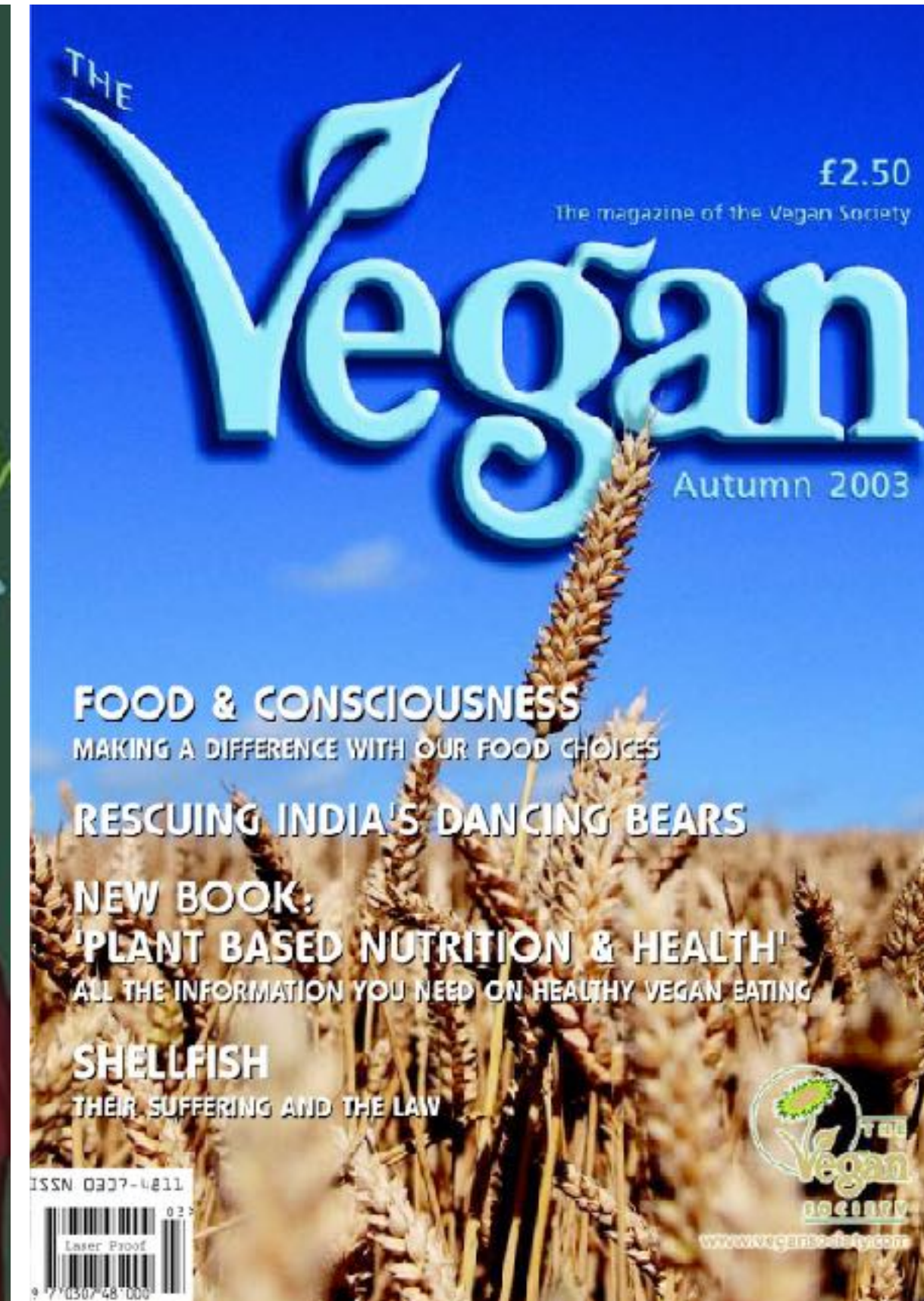
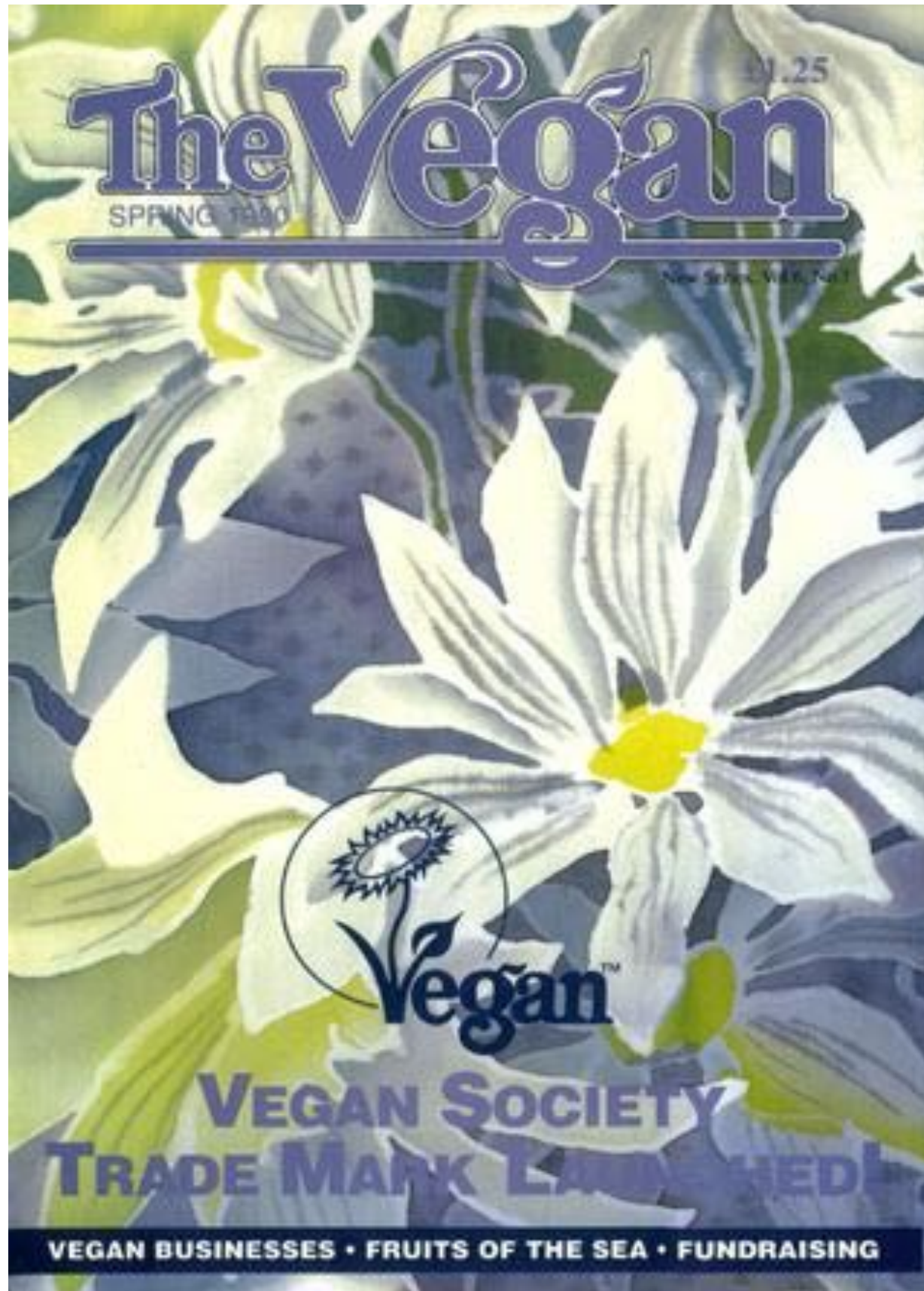
Driven primarily by animal welfare

Universally accepted that this was an inadequate diet -  
supplementation was a given





A gentle, green, nurturing world





# What changed?





Meat is no longer the highest form of food

# Supermarket apologises after food watchdog's findings **HORSE MEAT IN TESCO BURGERS**

By Sean Poulter



**Scottish Daily Mail**  
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 7, 2019 70p

**FREE INSIDE SUMMER GARDENING PULLOUT**  
with The Bonnie Gardener

**EATING LESS RED MEAT CUTS BREAST CANCER RISK**

Consuming chicken instead reduces risk of developing most aggressive form of disease

**Daily Mail**.com



**Meat Worse Than Smoking?**

**EATING** less red meat and more chicken can significantly cut a woman's odds of developing aggressive breast cancer, researchers have found. Women who consume a lot of meat could reduce their risk by 50 per cent if they ate more poultry, a study suggests. Breast cancer is the most common form of the disease in Scottish women, with more than 6,000 cases diagnosed every year. The new findings, published today, assessed the dietary habits of 22,000 women in the UK. All were between 50 and 75 and had either no history of breast cancer or had been diagnosed with breast cancer but were otherwise cancer-free at the start of the study. The women were tracked for eight years.

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- Royally good sports! Kate, Wills and Tom C. cruise is being
- Why fat people should be charged
- Bacon, burgers and sausages DO cause

## Bacon, burgers and sausages DO cause cancer and are as big a threat as cigarettes, says World Health Organisation

- Damning new report from the World Health Organisation released today
- Rulings will send shock waves through farming and fast food industries
- Experts said no need to cut out eating red and processed meat totally
- But people who eat a lot should think about cutting down, they added

By SOPHIE BORI AND HEALTH CORRESPONDENT FOR THE DAILY MAIL





# New moral certainties





**Animal welfare is now mainstream -  
but really complicated.**

**Veganism is the *highest form* of  
caring**

An aspirational and simple absolute - don't farm animals full stop





**Environmental concern is universal  
but solutions are really complicated.**

**Veganism is the *highest form* of  
action**

Extinction Rebellion has shown that old, gentle codes of sustainability are now outdated

Veganism is an aspirational and simple absolute: meat = heat.





**Cultures under pressure often respond with a desire to strive and to control, with self denial and willpower**

Think middle class joggers in the 70s, bankers and marathons, and Middle Aged Men in Lycra

**Veganism is a *high form* of control, self denial and willpower**

And this self control is associated with healthy living and slimness in an overweight world





Vegans are MORE healthy, morally responsible, progressive, self-controlled and rebellious

**What's not to like?**





# And everyone can have a bit of the dream whenever they want

You don't need to ride the Tour de France to buy a cycling top



You don't need to be a vegan to eat vegan





What does 'Vegan'  
look like?





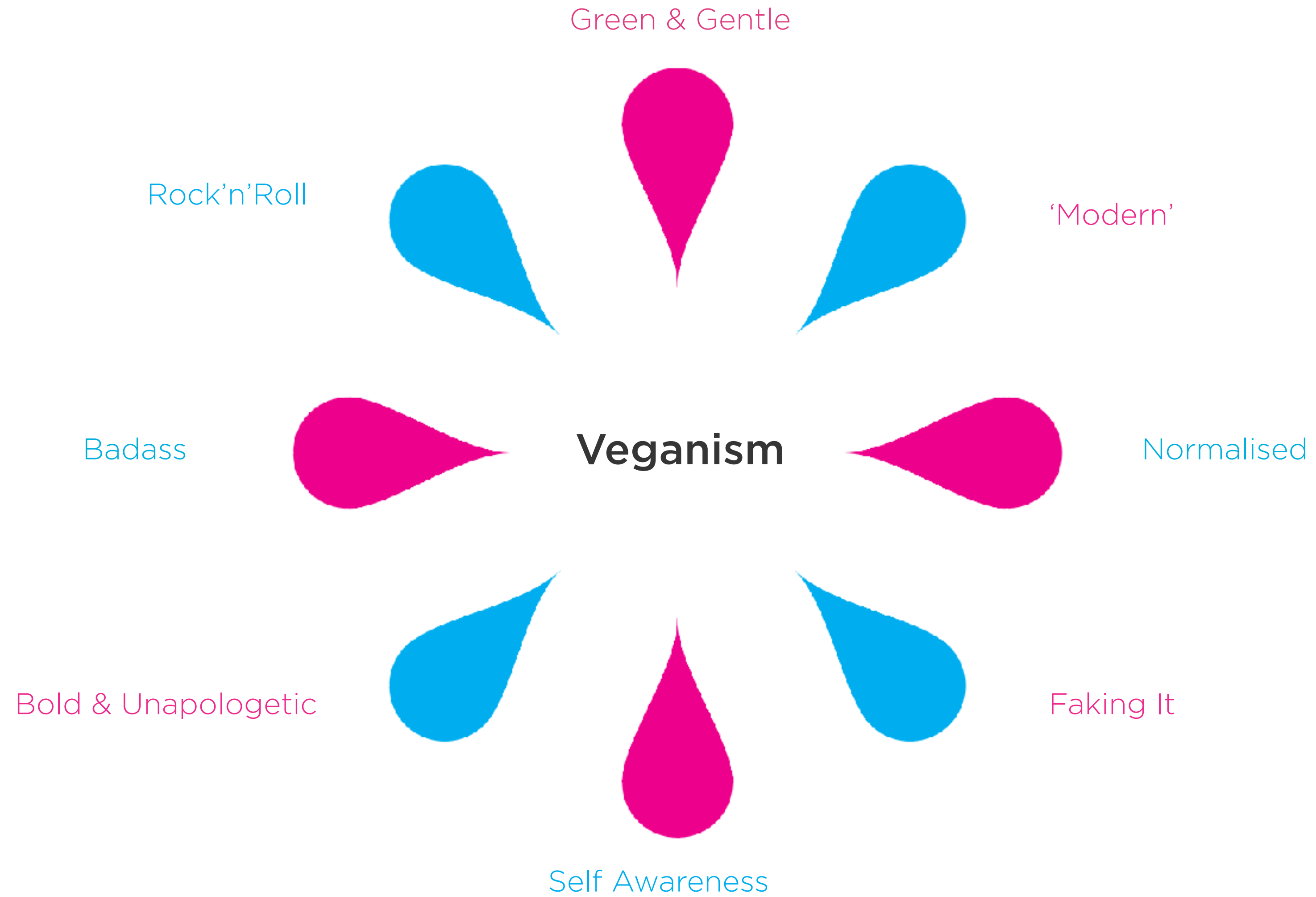
# Big themes in culture cannot be constrained within one or two design codes

Brands don't need to do what everyone in the category does. Their approach should be both relevant to the brand and differentiated from the competition





# Some of the codes of 'vegan'





**Example:**  
**Green & Gentle**





# Green & gentle: where it all began





# Veganism is **green and gentle**





Veganism is **green and gentle**





# Veganism is 'gentle'



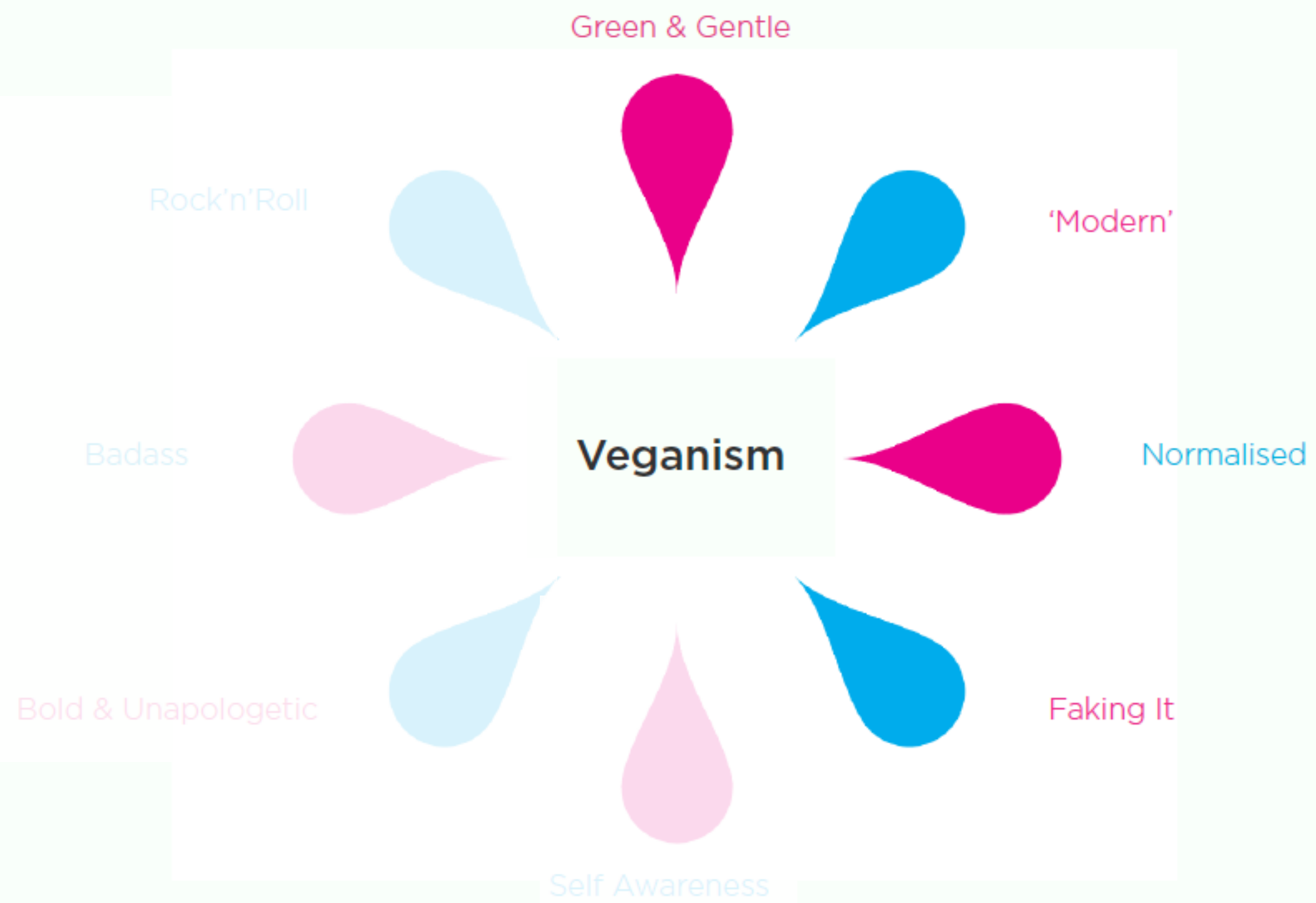


Populating some of  
the other narratives





# Outlining the codes of Veganism (1.)



Veganism is **'modern'**



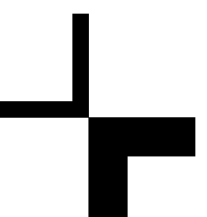
Veganism is **normalised**



Veganism is **normalised**



Veganism is **Faking it**



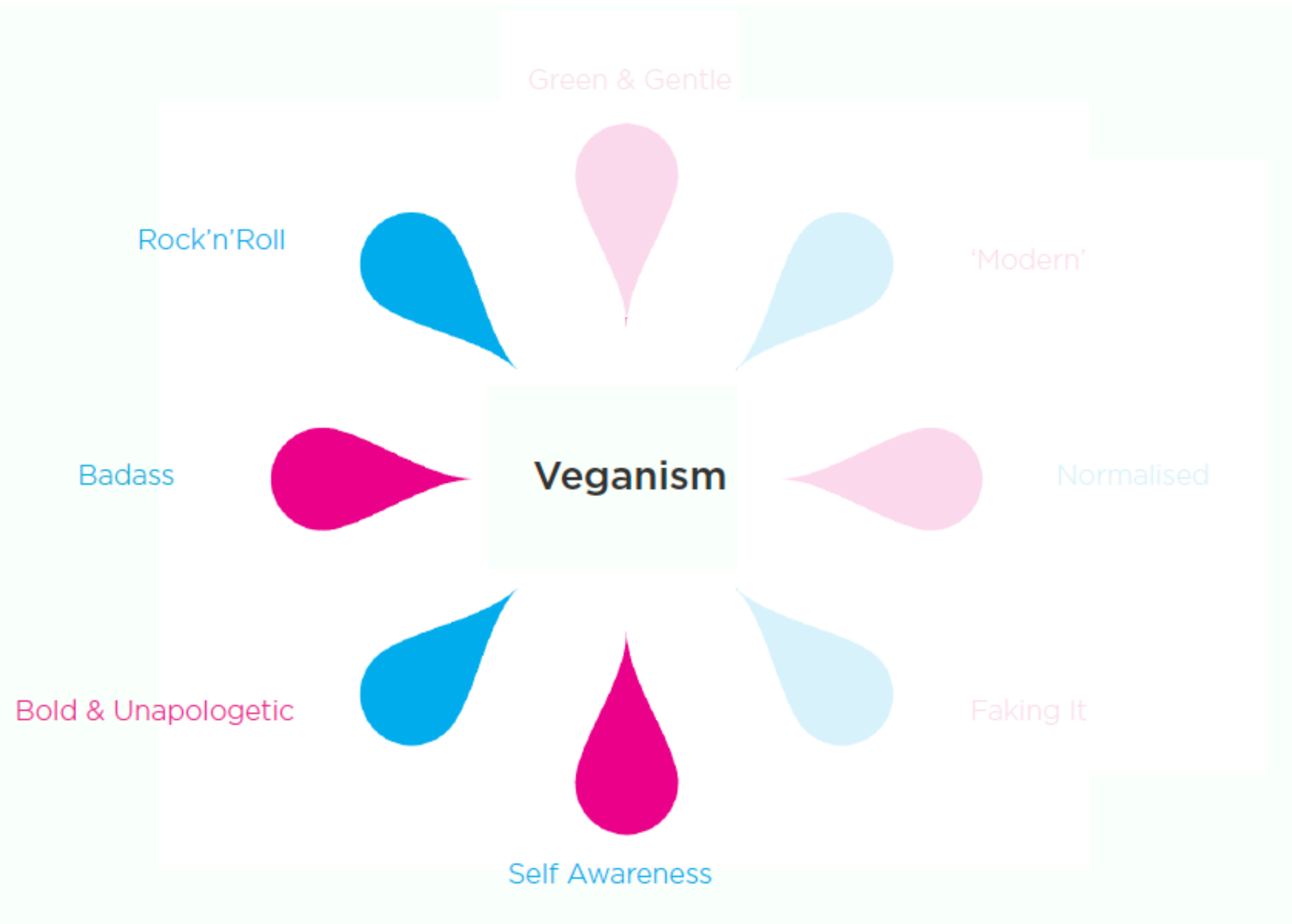


But there's more to it  
than green and  
gentle morphing to a  
new normal





# Outlining the codes of Veganism (2.)



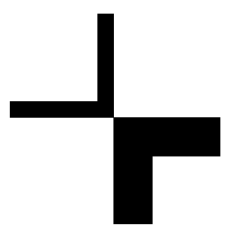
**Self awareness: A new confidence as brands mock themselves**

FLAVOUR THAT HITS THE HIGH NOTES

**Veganism is Bold & Unapologetic**

**Veganism is 'Badass'**

**Veganism is Rock'n'Roll**





Vegan rebrands



Before

wow no cow!



After





# Vegan rebrands



Before



After





# The Semiotics of Veganism

Veganism represents a higher form of many key shifts that are taking place in culture

It is aspirational and attractive to consumers and brand owners. It has specific codes but these are still fluid

The risk is to jump on the bandwagon: copying others without capitalising on the underlying cultural changes, or without linking to the brand meaning



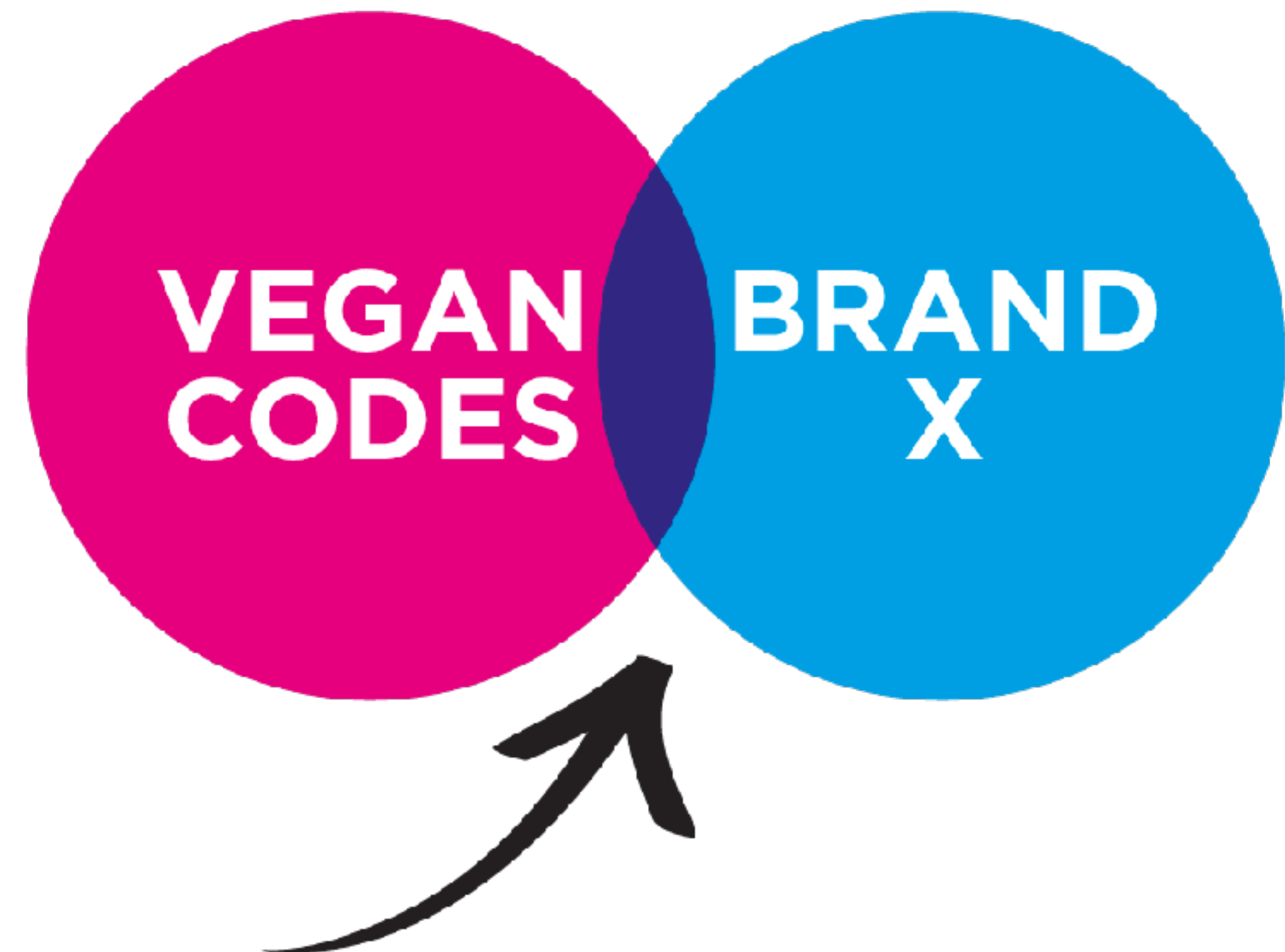


# So how do brands address the coding of veganism?

We need to understand the right approach for the brand, not a generic or cookie cutter approach.

The 'right one' is the vegan narrative that best intersects with the narratives of the brand itself

Identifying this intersection of the appropriate brand narrative and the right vegan narrative is a specific service that we call **Decoder**.



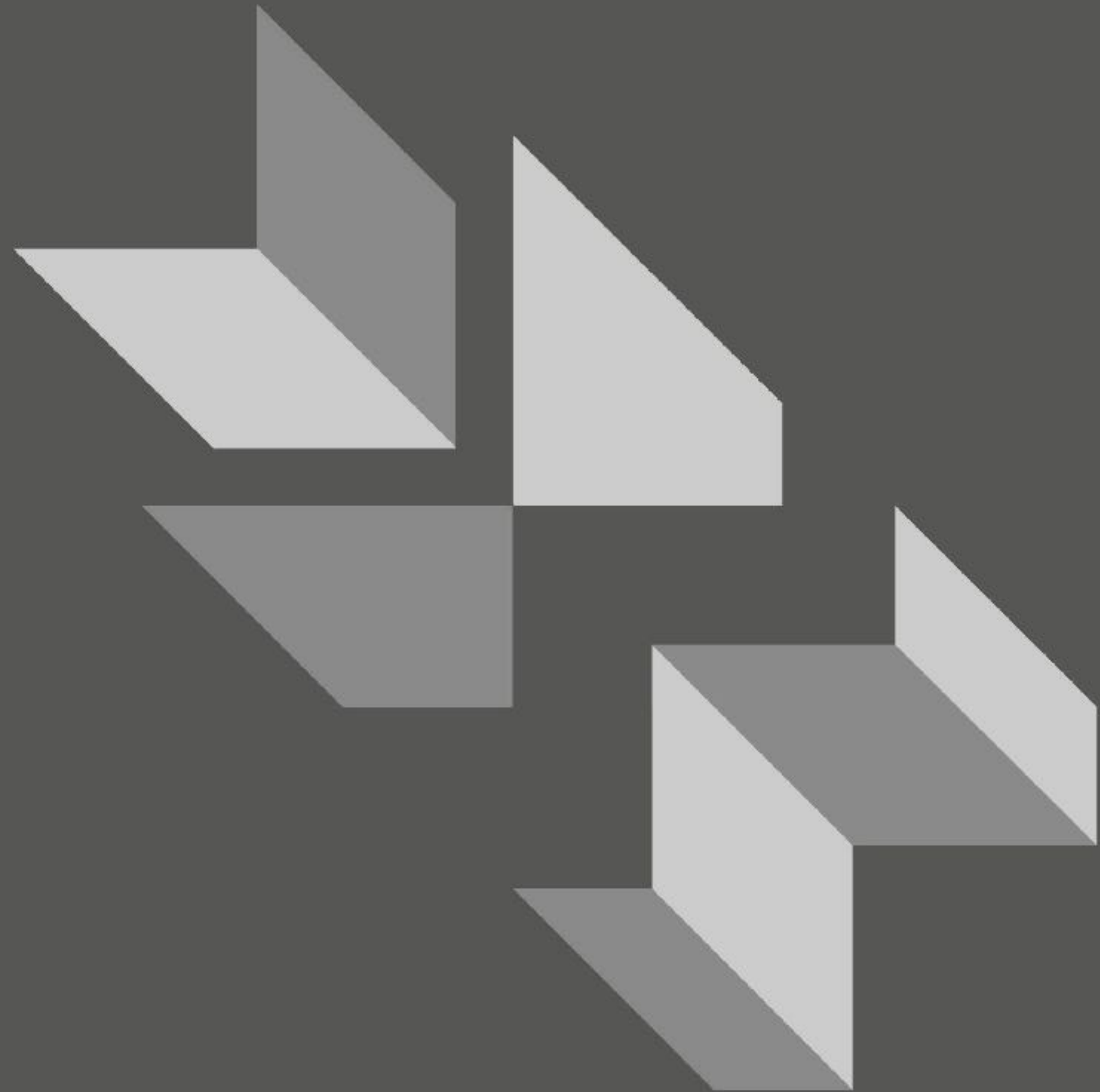


# Decoder

Small scale project format

Uses our integration of strategy, semiotics and design to reach actionable conclusions on a specific issue

Decoder is also a vehicle that allows clients to test drive working with Hart & Jones





**Retail: what does an  
ethical Christmas  
look like?**





# Generic Christmas - generic sustainability





What could  
Christmas look like?





# Needs to come from the brand:

A long term force for good. Campaigning - against animal testing, ethical sourcing, save the whales, feminism, rewilding...



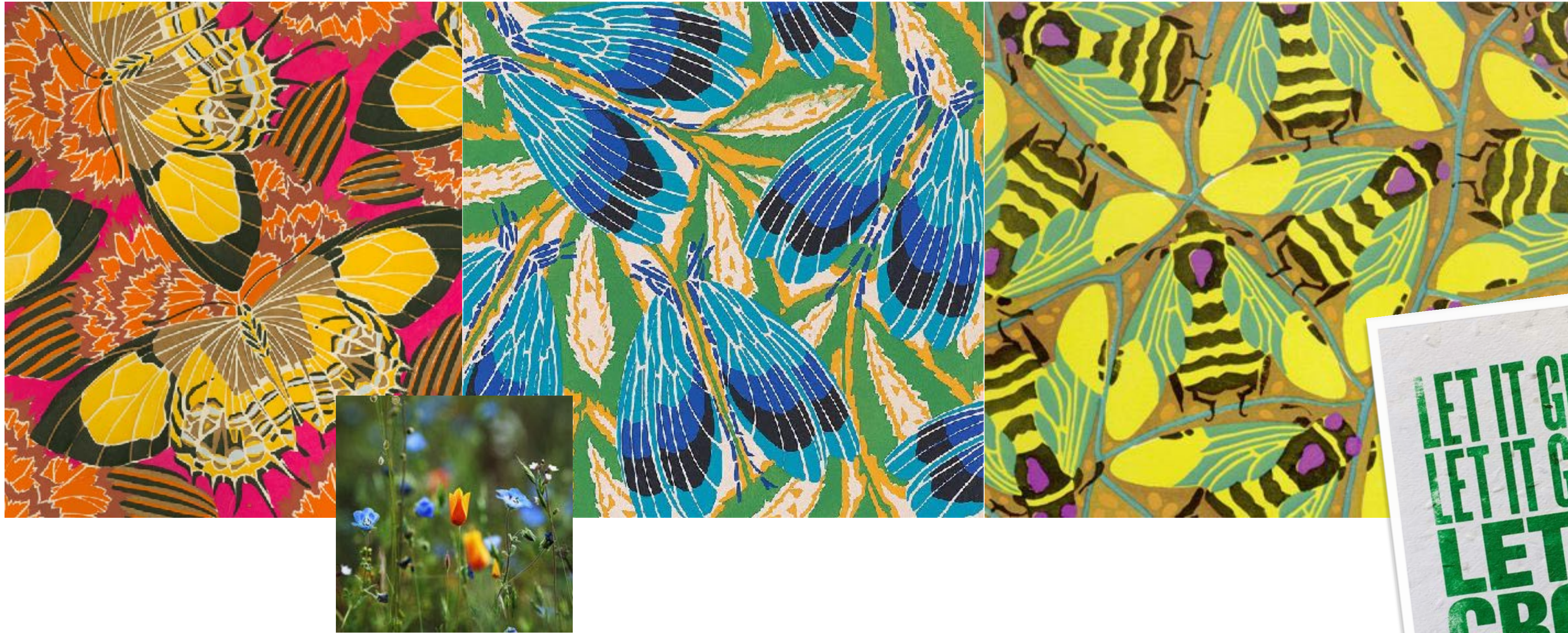


# What an ethical Christmas might look like: Ocean





# What an ethical Christmas might look like: Rewilding





# Thank you

[Simon.Jones@HartandJones.com](mailto:Simon.Jones@HartandJones.com)

