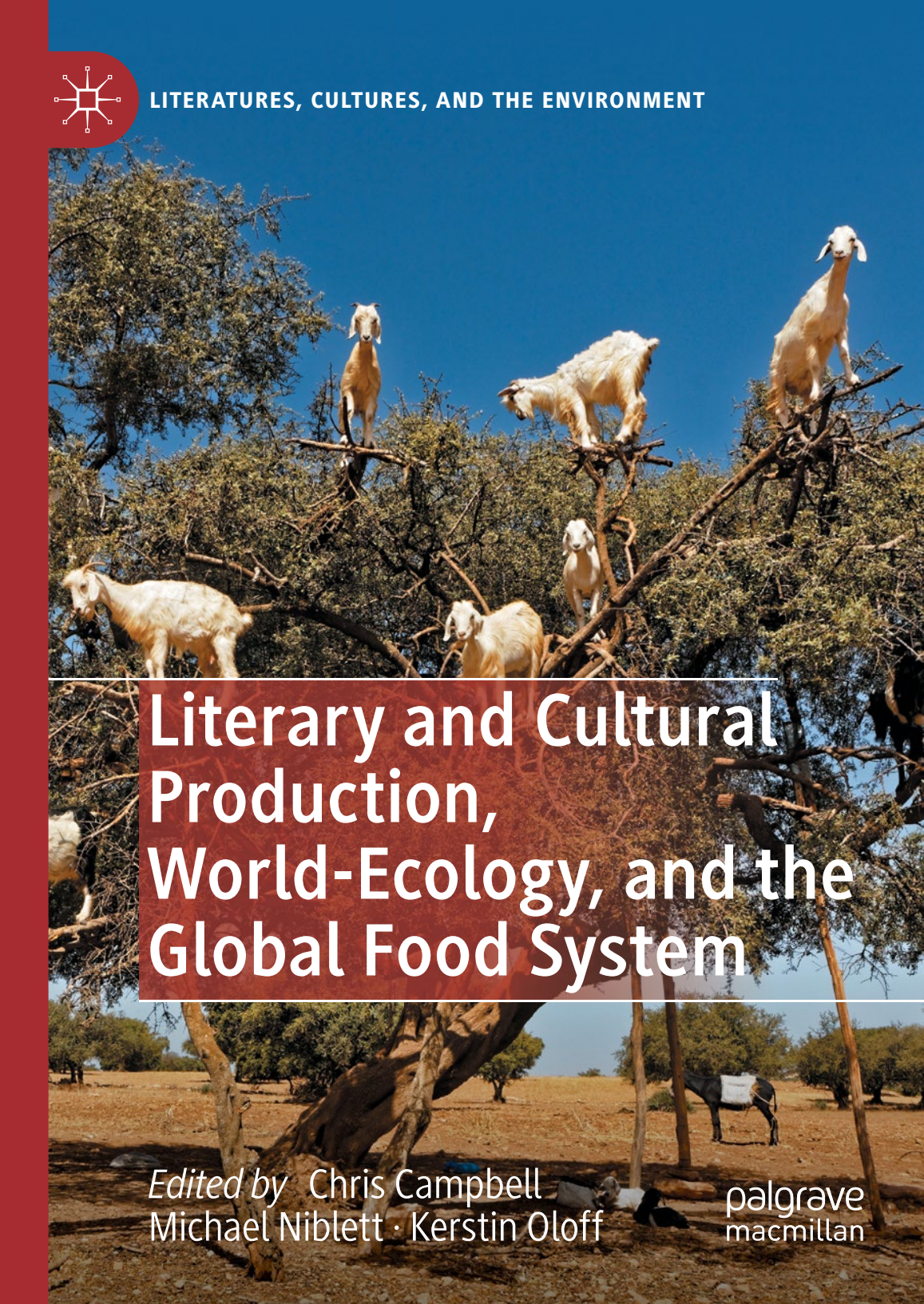
LITERATURES, CULTURES, AND THE ENVIRONMENT
Literary and Cultural Production, World-Ecology, and the Global Food System
Edited by Chris Campbell
Michael Niblett · Kerstin Oloff
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The editors gratefully acknowledge the generosity of The Felice Brothers in allowing us to quote from the song "Lion" (*Favourite Waitress*, 2014).

The cover image shows goats climbing an Argan tree in Morocco. The goats climb the tree to get to fresh fruit, spitting out the nuts which are crushed by local workers to produce Argan oil. Recently, it has been claimed that photos such as this are often staged by farmers for the benefit of tourists, with different groups of goats doing 'shifts' up the tree.

Contents

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction: Plotting the Crisis—World-Literature, World-Culture, and the World-Food-System

Chris Campbell, Michael Niblett, and Kerstin Oloff

The critics write the canon
The bankers bring the famine
There will always be
A little crumb for you and me
—The Felice Brothers, "Lion"

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This book unfolds from two major claims that have gained widespread currency with the maturing of agro-food studies in recent decades: (1) that agro-food relations are always, already, relations of power; and (2) that these relations of cultivation and power are irreducibly cultural. These claims are neatly encapsulated in the lines from The Felice Brothers' track "Lion" (off their 2014 album *Favourite Waitress*) that serve as the epigraph to this introduction. The folk-rock collective's witty couplets not only spotlight the misery and hunger caused by the financialization of food relations under capitalism, they also imply a relationship between the iniquities of the world-food-system and the dynamics of selection, exclusion, and consecration that structure the world-literary-system. Together, those critics who have traditionally safeguarded "the canon" and the bankers who bring the famine sit in opposition to "you and me," the masses forced to scrabble for the crumbs swept from the high-table of the world's financial and cultural elites. This pithy diagnosis of alimentary and class inequality can be contrasted with the message of solidarity to be found in another of the Felice Brothers' songs, "Take this Bread" (2008). Opening with a snippet from a recorded phone message that, in warning of the devastation caused by wildfires in California, conjures the spectre of climate breakdown, the song articulates a vision of community and cooperation predicated on the sharing of bread amongst the working poor. Ironically, Dow Chemical, a US multinational profoundly implicated in the socioecological violence of capitalism's corporate food regime, offered the Felice Brothers an "absolute shitload" of money to use "Take this Bread" in a commercial for gluten-free bread (Bernstein 2019: n.p.). The band promptly rejected the offer.

On the one hand, the contrast between the content of "Take this Bread" and the use to which Dow wanted to put the song indexes the tensions surrounding food under global capitalism. As a basic necessity of life and as an $8 trillion global industry, food sits at the crux of the conjoined yet contradictory logics of the reproduction of material life and the accumulation of surplus-value. It is for this reason that, historically, food has constituted a "decisive battleground of the world class struggle" (Moore 2015a: 318). On the other hand, the stand-off between the Felice Brothers and Dow over "Take this Bread" is indicative of the significance of issues of cultural representation to struggles over food-getting. More specifically, it suggests the capacity for artistic works to critique and contest the dominant socioeconomic logics governing the production, distribution, and consumption of food. For all that they, too, might be enmeshed in the

logic of the marketplace, cultural productions—whether songs, novels, poetry, film, drama, or the visual arts—have long provided an important means of imagining alternative ways of organizing the relationship between life, land, and labour.

The connections between food, social power, and cultural representation have been articulated in an equally suggestive fashion by the Barbadian author George Lamming. Commenting on the challenge posed by Jamaica's dietary shift towards food products from the First World grain-livestock complex in the latter half of the twentieth century, Lamming observes:

> This is not only a matter of agriculture or economics. There is a crisis of the cultural sovereignty of a people when patterns of consumption bear no relation to basic needs and cannot be supported by the productive base of the society. It may sound very strange but a Minister of Agriculture in our region, whether he [*sic*] knows it or not, is engaged in what is essentially a cultural problem: how do you de-colonize the eating habits of a people who have surrendered their very palates to foreign control? […] Unfortunately for us, there is this enormous separation, between the head and the belly of this society. (1996: 26–27)

The problems Lamming identifies have their roots in capitalist imperialism's violent transformation of food cultures in the Caribbean over the *longue durée*, beginning with the region's forcible integration into the world market and the rapid and devastating conversion of large swathes of land to cash-crop monocultures. This is a Caribbean history, but it is also, necessarily, a global one. For as is now well-recognized, the profits from the New World sugar plantations, extracted via the brutal exploitation of enslaved peoples taken from West Africa, provided capital to finance Europe's domestic industrialization (Williams 1944; Blackburn 1997). In addition, sugar and other plantation products such as coffee and cocoa, as well as tea from India and China, served as low-cost, high-energy food substitutes that helped cheapen the living costs of the metropolitan working classes (Mintz 1985). As Mimi Sheller puts it, "mass consumption of these Caribbean and Asian commodities fed into—and literally fed—a new capitalist world that tied together far-flung markets and created a new international division of labour, affecting the meaning of work, the definition of self, and the very nature of material things" (2003: 81).

Such transformations, then, were a central moment in the emergence of the modern world-system, which (following Immanuel Wallerstein) can be defined as "a multicultural territorial division of labour in which the production and exchange of basic goods and raw materials is necessary for the everyday life of its inhabitants. It is thus by definition composed of culturally different societies that are vitally linked together through the exchange of food and raw materials" (Chase-Dunn and Grimes 1995: 389). Building on the work of world-system theorists such as Wallerstein and Christopher Chase-Dunn, Jason W. Moore has highlighted how the rise of the modern world-economy entailed an epochal reorganization of global natures such that "varied and heretofore largely isolated local and regional socio-ecological relations were incorporated into—and at the same moment became constituting agents of—a capitalist world-ecology" (2003: 447). The world-economy, in other words, is also a world-ecology. Moore's concept of world-ecology—the hyphenation of the phrase is intended to emphasize the systemic, world-historical character of the production of nature under capitalism—provides one of this book's guiding threads. Indeed, it is closely connected to what we refer to as the world-food-system, the hyphenation of which is similarly intended to call attention to the way the development of the capitalist world-ecology was inextricable from, and unfolded through, the development of a systemically integrated network of food production, distribution, and consumption. The nature of the change that occurred in food-getting following the transition to capitalism is neatly summarized by Harriet Friedmann. With the shift from self-renewing agronomy to regional specialization in crops and livestock, she writes, the "interdependence of species with local configurations of soil and water was, in part, substituted by interdependence of specialized regions linked by trade" (2000: 487–488).

The history of the modern world-food-system can be periodized through reference to the rise and fall of successive food regimes. The concept of "food regime" was first coined by Friedmann in 1987, before being formulated more systematically by Friedmann and Philip McMichael in a 1989 article in *Sociologia Ruralis*. In a useful overview, McMichael describes food regimes as demarcating

> stable periodic arrangements in the production and circulation of food on a world scale, associated with various forms of hegemony in the world economy: British, American, and corporate/neoliberal. In its original formulation, it also posited periods of transition, anticipated by tensions between

> social forms embedded in each hegemonic order—tensions resolved by regime demise and rebirth along a different historical trajectory. Subsequently, scholars […] have further specified and/or broadened the concept of the food regime to reinterpret its historical, social, ecological and nutritional dimensions. An additional dimension is that the food regime is an important pivot on which other capitalist relations depend, across time and space. For example, the large-scale dispossession of peasant agriculture under conditions of a 'corporate food regime' provides a reserve labour force for export-processing, and special economic, zones across the world, as neo-liberalism deepens the phenomenon of the 'world factory.' (2009: 281)

To the "historical, social, ecological and nutritional dimensions" of food regimes that McMichael identifies here, we would want to add "cultural." What role has culture played in stabilizing these "periodic arrangements in the production and circulation of food"? How have cultural forms contested or resisted such arrangements?

These questions are central to the present study, which combines the materialist and world-historical approach to agro-food studies evident in the work of Friedmann, Moore, McMichael, Tony Weis, Mindi Schneider, and others, with a materialist and world-systemic approach to literary and cultural studies. Specifically, the volume builds on recent efforts by members of the Warwick Research Collective (WReC) to reconstruct the concept of world literature in terms of its relationship to global capitalism. For WReC, world literature is to be understood, in the broadest terms, as the literature of the modern world-system: capitalist modernity is "both what 'world-literature' indexes or is 'about' and what gives 'world-literature' its distinguishing characteristics" (2015: 15). Underpinning this conception of world-literature is an insistence that modernity must be grasped, like capitalism itself, as a singular and simultaneous phenomenon, yet one that is everywhere heterogeneous and unique. In this view, modernity represents something like the space–time consciousness corresponding to capitalist modernization; it might be defined as "the way capitalist social relations are 'lived'—different in every given instance for the simple reason that no two social instances are the same" (WReC 2015: 12). Thus, for any territory integrated into the world-system, the shared experience of capitalist modernization provides "a certain baseline of universality" (Brown 2005: 2), even as this experience is lived differently in different locations. Hence the possibility of approaching world-literature in terms of its relationship to the uneven singularity of capitalist modernity. As

WReC puts it, the "effectivity of the world-system will *necessarily* be discernible in any modern literary work, since the world-system exists unforgoably as the matrix within which all modern literature takes shape and comes into being" (WReC 2015: 20). Accepting this proposition, our central wager here is that insofar as the development of the modern world-system necessarily implies the development of the modern world-food-system, the effectivity of the latter, too, will be discernible in any modern literary work.

And not just literary work. The current volume expands WReC's emphasis on world-literature to world-culture more broadly. Our use of the term world-culture owes something to Wallerstein's suggestive concept of geoculture. For Wallerstein, geoculture is not "the superstructure of [the] world-economy," but rather its "underside"; it represents "the cultural framework within which the world-system operates" (1991: 11). However, this concept remains a relatively under-theorized one in Wallerstein's work and lacks both the historical motility accorded to the analogous concept of geopolitics and an attentiveness to aesthetics. Noting this deficiency, Stephen Shapiro has suggested that the concept be reconceptualized, under the rubric of world-culture, as involving "the intersection between the desired social reproduction of class identities and relations, as the attempt to reinstall the order of one generation into the next, and the range of responses to the historical changes that are structurally and inescapably generated by capitalism's logistic" (2008: 36). World-culture, thus, should not be understood as representing some abstract notion of global culture or a "transcendental aesthetic" (Shapiro 2019: 16). Rather, it refers to "the manifold and many-sided culture of the capitalist world-system" (Shapiro 2019: 15). In analogy to the hyphenation of world-ecology and world-food-system, therefore, the hyphenated "world-culture" is used to indicate "the relationality of cultural production within a world-system that is both unifying and making unequal due to capitalist forces" (Shapiro 2019: 15).

The emphasis in this collection on the imbrication of world-ecology, the world-food-system, and world-culture is summed up by the word "plot," which can refer to a narrative device, parcel of land, cartographic practice, or conspiratorial activity. In her seminal article "Novel and History, Plot and Plantation" (1971), Jamaican writer and theorist Sylvia Wynter identified two competing organizational models for Caribbean literature: the plantation system and the plots of the enslaved and the peasantry. Whereas the plantation system's rationalized monocultures were

geared towards the production of non-sustainable cash-crops for external markets, the plots or provision grounds were organized around the growing of diverse subsistence foods such as yams, cassava, and sweet potatoes, which provided both edible staples and produce for sale in the internal markets. The plots, moreover, were sites in which plots of a different sort could be formulated and resistance to the plantation regime fostered. "Around the growing of yam, of food for survival," writes Wynter, the enslaved "created on the plot a folk culture—the basis of a social order […]. This folk culture became a source of cultural guerrilla resistance to the plantation system" (1971: 99–100). Emerging alongside and in opposition to the plantation system, therefore, the plot system's distinctive agro-ecology was connected to a set of sociocultural practices and values different to those embodied in the plantocracy. These in turn became a resource for Caribbean writers and artists, providing a rich repository of alter/native ways of seeing and being in the world that would inform the region's cultural production.

Wynter's essay, then, emphasizes the connections between agro-ecology, sociopolitical struggle, and cultural form. It is an essential reference point for the present volume's interest in how the dynamics of the world-food-system register in the forms, styles, images, motifs, and plots of literary and cultural texts. With Wynter's evocation of "cultural guerrilla resistance" in mind, moreover, it is important to stress that when we speak of the literary or cultural "registration" of the world-food-system, we are not suggesting that such texts merely reflect or passively record the dynamics of this system. Cultural practice is itself an ecological force, an integral pivot in humanity's capacity to rework life, land, and the body. In this regard, it is worth recalling Raymond Williams' exposition of Marx's concept of "productive forces": a "productive force", writes Williams, is "all and any of the means of the production and reproduction of real life. It may be seen as a particular kind of agricultural or industrial production, but any such kind is already a certain mode of social co-operation and the application and development of a certain body of social knowledge" (1977: 91). Artistic works can be grasped as productive forces in this sense, then: as a species of social knowledge fundamentally interwoven with the reproduction of material life. They may well supply narratives or tropes that enable particular social groups to adjust to existing socioecological formations or relations of power. But they might also sensitize their audience to new types of social practice (including new ways of organizing food-getting) and new analytical optics that foster resistant or counterhegemonic activities.

The chapters that follow explore these possibilities through consideration of a wide variety of literary and cultural texts. They seek to map explicit representations and critical explorations of food cultures and food chains, as well as less conscious registrations of the impact of the world-food-system. They also reflect on alternatives to hegemonic food regimes as imagined by authors and activists. Writing in 1819, the radical English pamphleteer, journalist, and farmer William Cobbett declared: "if I wrote grammars, if I wrote on architecture; if I sowed, planted, or dealt in seeds; whatever I did had first in view the destruction of infamous tyrants." Some two hundred years later, with Cobbett's emphasis on the fundamental interconnection of culture, politics, and food in mind, what possibilities exist, today, for destroying the "infamous tyrants" of the corporate food regime and capitalist agribusiness? What alternatives are there to a world in which "the bankers bring the famine"?

Plotting the Field: Literary Food Studies and the World-Food-System

If the perspective we take on literary food studies is embedded in a long view of the world-food-system, we also understand it as profoundly shaped by the particularities of the current moment. The growth of Food Studies as a discipline in the 2000s has been spectacular, not only within its traditional confines of agricultural and nutritional studies, but also through its expansion into a range of subject areas, not least literature and film (Counihan and van Esterik 2013: 1). The emergence of literary and filmic food studies as distinctive fields is attested by the recent publication of important (and sizeable) edited collections and primers, including *Food and Literature* by Gitanjali G. Shahani (2018), *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Food* by Lorna Piatti-Farnell and Donna Lee Brien (2018), *A History of Food in Literature* (2017) by Charlotte Boyce and Joan Fitzpatrick, and *Literature and Food Studies* by Amy L. Tigner and Allison Carruth (2017). Within film studies, the appearance of a variety of individually authored texts, from James Keller's *Food, Film and Culture: A Genre Study* (2006) to Lorna Piatti-Farnell's *Consuming Gothic: Food and Horror in Film* (2017), has also established food as a staple of academic enquiry. The result has been to open up several new avenues for cultural critique. Thus, in her introduction to *Food and Literature*, Shanani highlights a set of questions that might guide the food-oriented scholar:

> What do food words and food scenes do for the literary text? How does food function as a formal device? Can we think in terms of a food ekphrasis in which we pause to read descriptions of feasts, banquets, kitchen scenes, and fictional dishes? What are characters really saying when they say things about food—food that they don't need to eat and food that the reader cannot really share? (2018: 3)

To approach cultural texts through this agro-alimentary optic is not, of course, to bracket the myriad other optics that we may wish to bring to the critical table. As the aforementioned volumes all emphasize, food and food-getting are thoroughly imbricated in issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, empire, and so forth. Hence essays such as that by Rita Mookerjee in *The Routledge Companion to Food and Literature* on the transmutation of black female bodies into objects of consumption; or that by Catherine Keyser in *Food and Literature* on how "US literature of the twentieth century dramatizes the process of race-making through the mouth and the stomach" (2018: 147).

The complex symbolic economies that surround the production and consumption of food have been eloquently summarized by Sidney Mintz:

> For us humans, […] eating is never a "purely biological" activity (whatever "purely biological" means). The foods eaten have histories associated with the pasts of those who eat them; the techniques employed to find, process, prepare, serve, and consume the foods are all culturally variable, with histories of their own. Nor is the food ever simply eaten; its consumption is always conditioned by meaning. The meanings are symbolic, and communicated symbolically; they also have histories. These are some of the ways we humans make so much more complicated this supposedly "simple" animal activity. (1996: 7–8)

In light of such symbolic economies, critics have highlighted the peculiarly resonant relationship between food and literary texts, which are very directly concerned, of course, with meaning and representation as such. Piatti-Farnell and Brien have emphasized "the multi-faceted nature of food as metaphor and, in turn, the ways in which food and consumption have the ability to channel and reflect a variety of contextual and historical preoccupations" (2018: 1). Alison Carruth, meanwhile, contends that "across genres, literature is a vehicle attuned to the modern food system due to the capacity of imaginative texts to shuttle between social and interpersonal registers and between symbolic and embodied expressions of power" (2013: 5).

Carruth's pinpointing of the ability of "imaginative texts" to "shuttle between" different registers and contexts is significant here and, we believe, might be emulated by the critic. But our sense is that within literary food studies, the balance has often tended to tip towards the symbolic at the expense of maintaining a dialectical approach that shuttles between the ways in which food is produced, shipped, sold, consumed, and dominated by extra-alimentary global forces, and its meaning-making symbolic dimension, which often finds expression through "the eating body" (Shahani 11). The present collection seeks to pursue just such a dialectical approach, emphasizing at every turn the "contextual and historical preoccupations" that shape and frame individual acts of consumption. Indeed, it is an approach that might be applied to the field of food studies itself.

The recent surge of interest in the cultural registration of foodways can be situated in the context of growing anxiety and conflict over global food production. Of the difficulties now facing the world-food-system, the effects of anthropogenic climate breakdown are surely one of the most prominent. Global warming, for example, is implicated in failing harvests and the yield suppression of wheat, maize, rice, and soy (Moore 2010: 251). Recent years have also seen a flurry of reports highlighting the threat posed by global soil degradation as a result of climate change, chemical-heavy farming techniques, and deforestation. In 2014, the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization warned that the world on average has just sixty more years left of growing crops (Arsenault 2014). To these looming threats, we can add "rising energy costs; escalating competition for arable land from agrofuels; the proliferation of invasive species; the superweed effect; the end of cheap water, as global warming melts glaciers, rearranges precipitation patterns, and drives aquifer depletion; and the declining effectiveness of fertilizers on yield growth" (Moore 2010: 251).

The crisis in the world-food-system is one expression of the ongoing crisis in the capitalist world-system, which manifested itself with particular virulence in the 2000s (its roots go back to the long downturn that began in the 1970s). Indeed, the financial crisis and onset of the "long depression" in 2007/08 coincided with, and was inseparable from, "the return of one of the oldest forms of collective action, the food riot":

> Countries where protests occurred ranged from Italy, where "Pasta Protests" in September 2007 were directed at the failure of the Prodi government to prevent a 30% rise in the price of pasta, to Haiti, where protesters railed against President Préval's impassive response to the doubling in the price of

> rice over the course of a single week. Other countries in which riots were reported included Uzbekistan, Morocco, Guinea, Mauritania, Senegal, India, Indonesia, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Yemen, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Mexico, and Argentina, and some commentators have estimated that thirty countries experienced some sort of food protest over this period at the turn of the century. (Patel and McMichael 2009: 9)

The most obvious cause of the protests was the sudden and steep global rise in commodity prices, increases that were passed on directly to consumers, particularly those in urban areas. As Crystal Bartolovich notes, the price rises that led to the riots were "an effect of *global* forces, not merely local ones," with "competition for oil, the cost of commercial seeds, fertiliser and pesticide, speculation in commodities markets, shifting of grains to use for fuel rather than food, or for livestock rather than people, all […] identified as culprits" (2010: 42). As a "site of social struggle over *concrete* planetary resources," the food riots "raise[d] anew—and emphatically at a global level—the limits of the market in mediating the distribution of the most basic resources" (Bartolovich 2010: 42).

We think that the realities that came to a head in the food riots pose a very particular challenge to literary / cultural food studies, demanding a serious engagement with the world-food-system and its relationship to the convulsive development of global capitalism. Hence our emphasis in this volume on the cultural registration not just of certain foods or forms of food-getting, but of the more expansive and complex set of *food relations* through which the modern world-system is constituted. These relations are necessarily global and systemic, even as they find irreducibly specific expression in particular localized contexts. The chapters gathered here range across a variety of such contexts, from Thailand to Brazil, Cyprus to the Caribbean, and a variety of topics, from anxieties over imported meat in late Victorian Britain to food dependency in Puerto Rico. But all do so with an eye to the totalizing matrix that is the capitalist world-food-system.

Plotting the Collection

This volume is divided into three parts, each of which approaches the relationship between world-culture and the world-food-system from a different, if related, angle. Part I, "Imperial Appetites and the Development of the World-Food-System," comprises three chapters that each in their own

way address the literary and cultural ramifications of signal historical moments in the imperialist re-making of food relations on a global scale. Focusing on the regions enmeshed in the "triangular trade," the bloody networks of which were central to the emergence of the modern world-food-system, the chapters probe the imbrication of aesthetic practice with agro-food production and vernacular foodways.

In the opening chapter, Paul Young examines the relationship between late-Victorian romance and the meatification of diets in Britain. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, he notes, Britain's growing body of meat-eaters were increasingly devouring animals reared and slaughtered in the Americas and Australasia, the result of advances in preservation and transportation technologies that operated in tandem with extensive programmes of pastoralization. Contemporaneous with this rise in imported meat, H. Rider Haggard was entertaining his Victorian readers with lost-world romances punctuated by dramatically visceral acts of carnivory that were at times life-affirming, at times anxiety-inducing, and at times both at once. Accordingly, Young's chapter turns to three of Haggard's most popular adventure stories, *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), *She* (1886), and *Allan Quartermain* (1887), in order to argue that they worked in powerful, variously inflected ways to stimulate but also unsettle a carnivorous culinary culture that took hold within a nation looking increasingly to distant parts of the world to put meat on its tables.

If Young's chapter highlights the relationship between imperial Britain and the African continent, Esthie Hugo's chapter on the literary inscription of the Caribbean plantation regime and African-diasporic food cultures focuses on the "second" and "third" legs of the triangular trade. Through a reading of the work of the Guyanese poet Grace Nichols, Hugo explores the racialized and gendered violence surrounding the sugar frontier and its brutal re-making of human and nonhuman relations. She suggests that we "might think of food less as a symbol and more as an '*archive*'" of the history of slavery. Nichols' collections *I Is A Long Memoried Woman* (1983) and *The Fat Black Women's Poems* (1984) script black women's painful and pleasurable associations with food, and in so doing, argues Hugo, manifest the horrors of the plantation system. Not only that, they also furnish a literary mode of dissent against the continued brutalities of the contemporary world-food-system, underscoring the latter's origins in capitalism's genocidal ransacking of the globe in the colonial era.

The final chapter in this section, by Michael Niblett, is similarly interested in the long history of colonial and imperial agro-food relations, as

well as the resistance engendered by capitalism's periodic restructuring of foodways. Offering a comparative analysis of work from England and the Caribbean, Niblett explores how the traumatic legacies of enclosure and the plantation system haunt the textual registration of ongoing transformations in the production and consumption of food. The chapter provides a brief overview of the historical connections between various radical movements for land redistribution and food sovereignty, before moving to consider an eclectic range of fiction, theatre, TV, and music. From Edgar Mittelholzer to David Rudkin, Fairport Convention to Gaika, Niblett analyses the "Weird" aesthetics through which violent convulsions in the world-food-system are manifested on both sides of the Atlantic.

The second part of the collection, "Cash-Crops and Agricultural Monarchs," focuses on the socioecological devastation wrought by plantation monocultures and cash-crop agriculture, as well as the resistance movements such devastation typically spawns. Ranging across the world-food-system—from Cyprus to Guatemala, Thailand to Paraguay—the chapters cover struggles over the reorganization of farming and the commodification of such crops as bananas, rice, and mate. Chris Campbell's chapter on agro-food relations in Cyprus in the 1940s throws light on a chapter of colonial history that remains peripheral to mainstream studies of empire in Anglophone academia. Campbell takes as his starting point the 1946 colonial propaganda documentary *Cyprus is an Island* (scripted by the English writer Laurie Lee), the discursive strategies of which work to obscure or symbolically contain the ecological fallout from the violent rationalization of Cyprus's agricultural system. Reading the film alongside Lee's journal of the film-making process, he shows how, by documenting things that fall outside the camera's field of vision, the journal provides a purview that frequently runs counter to or complicates an understanding of the principle aims of the colonial administration. In particular, Lee's text provides a fuller acknowledgement of the politics of anti-colonialism and a deeper engagement with the working lives of women on the island.

Campbell's analysis of Cyprus locates the island's agricultural transformation in the context of the waning of the first global food regime, which had been established during Britain's hegemony over the world-economy, and the emergence, post-1945, of the second global food regime, which coincided with the US's ascent to world-economic hegemony. This latter development provides the backdrop to Treasa De Loughry's chapter on revolution and rice in Thai literature. Here she examines the role of US imperialism in restructuring food relations in Thailand as part of a vast

programme of military spending, infrastructural development, and ecological programming from the 1950s to the 1970s. De Loughry's specific concern is with the literary registration of the struggle over rice as both a subsistence crop and an export commodity enmeshed in national and global circuits of distribution and consumption. Focusing on Seni Saowaphong's 1957 novel *Ghosts*, Khamsing Srinawk's short-story collection *The Politician and Other Stories* (2001), and Chart Korbjitti's collection *A Baker's Dozen* (2010), she shows how discontinuities in form and content index the estranging and alienating effects of disruptive changes to existing foodways.

Similarly interested in the sense of disequilibrium and estrangement caused by the commodification of staple foods, Axel Pérez Trujillo's chapter explores the material ecologies of mate plantations and their literary inscription in *Hijo de Hombre* (1960) by Augusto Roa Bastos, and the short story "Los Mensú" (1914) by Horacio Quiroga. Perhaps one of the most iconic plants of South America, *ilex paraguariensis* or yerba mate is implicated in a long history of monoculture exploitation that began with the arrival of the Jesuits at the Rio de la Plata basin in the seventeenth century and continued on through Brazil's annexation of large parcels of land from Paraguay after the War of the Triple Alliance (1864–1870). Although the plant was first consumed by Guaraní communities—known to them by the name Ka'a—subsequent conflicts in the region turned the production of mate into a lucrative business, monopolized by the Brazilian company Mate Laranjeira. Situated in the borderlands between Paraguay, Brazil, and Argentina, Roa Bastos' and Quiroga's narratives expose the nightmarish effects of mate monoculture on landscapes and labouring bodies.

In light of the sheer destructive quality of this monoculture, concludes Pérez Trujillo, the ontology of the mate plantations could be said to be built on necrosis. Similarly concerned with the death-dealing logic of monoculture, Stephanie Lambert and Lucy Potter's chapter examines the bloody history of the Guatemalan banana frontier via an analysis of Miguel Ángel Asturias' *Banana Trilogy* (1950–1960). The trilogy, they argue, registers and resists the latent accumulation of "negative-value" that underwrites the plantation regime in Latin America. Disjunctive temporal overlaps and recurring formal patterns capture the radical unevenness and accumulated violence of the banana enclave, whilst self-negating generic tropes and surreal motifs link cumulative toxicity and ecological exhaustion with systemic turbulence and resurgent collective uprising. In this

way, Lambert and Potter suggest, Asturias' work uncannily pre-empts what Jason Moore (2015b) describes as the emergence of "new limits" to capital accumulation, whose increasingly "costly, toxic, and dangerous strategies" signal capitalism's terminal crisis but also the potential for radical alternatives.

The possibility that we are now witnessing capitalism's terminal crisis as its voracious appetite for natural resources wreaks havoc on the planetary biosphere underpins the volume's final part, "Consuming the Crisis." That agro-food relations are at the heart of this crisis is amply demonstrated by the Covid-19 pandemic, the emergence and spread of which has everything to do with agro-industrialization, large-scale factory farms, deforestation, and the globalization of supply chains (Wallace et al. 2020). The chapters in this section are concerned with different moments and modalities of crisis across the world-food system. Kerstin Oloff's chapter on what she terms the "alimentary Gothic" considers the case of Puerto Rico, an island long subject to "US food power." Organized around two key moments of crisis—that of new imperialism and of the first global food regime of the 1930s, and the crisis initiated by the global economic downturn of 2007/08—Oloff's chapter focuses on the short-stories of one of the key members of the Puerto Rican *generación del treinta*, Emilio S. Belaval, alongside the recent gothic sci-fi narratives of Jotacé López and Alexandra Pagán Vélez. Across these works, the systematic exploitation of landscapes and labouring bodies, as well as the delocalization of food production and dietary underdevelopment inflicted on Puerto Rico, register in monstrous figures, dystopian environments, and disturbed psyches.

In the chapter that follows, Michael Paye highlights the crisis-ridden dynamics that structure our fossil-fuelled present, examining the link between food and energy regimes via a reading of Michael Crummey's 2014 novel, *Sweetland*. This novel, he argues, is part of a more general cultural recognition of the post-peak North Atlantic fishery, narrating the erasure of small island communities following the twentieth-century North Atlantic cod boom and 1992 moratorium. Paye interprets the novel as registering a moment of world-ecological breakdown: as the narrative moves from a sense of growing entropy to permanent apocalypse, its starkly articulated irrealist and gothic descriptions of individual survival in an island turned wasteland draw the connection between oil dependency and foodway decline.

The concluding chapter of the volume shows how efforts to think beyond our current moment too often fail to escape from the logics of

exploitation through which global capitalism operates. Focusing on the 2014 Hollywood blockbuster *Interstellar* (directed by Christopher Nolan), Michelle Yates examines the narrative strategies through which agricultural crisis is understood and symbolically managed. She shows how the movie offers a compelling and seemingly progressive visual representation of capitalism's crisis state in the era of the end of cheap food. It does so, however, through a call to recuperate white privilege, a discursive manoeuvre that underscores the historic imbrication of food and racial regimes. To paraphrase Fredric Jameson, then, it would seem that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than it is to imagine the end of the capitalist world-food-system. And yet as the chapters in this volume repeatedly attest, artists, critics, and activists have time and again not only imagined what it would mean to put an end to the domination of foodways by the commodity form, but have struggled to enact new kinds of food relations in a bid to nurture alternatives to the violence and misery of the capitalist lifeworld.

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