

Philosopher-Chef purchasing the products he has gone to see, cooking them up, and serving them to patrons of Blue Hill. Albeit subtle, this is an intentional performativity, for “chefs . . . have an opportunity—and perhaps the responsibility—to use their cooking to shape culture, to manifest what’s possible, and in doing so, to inspire a new ethic of eating” (p.305).

Mr. Barber’s stories amount to a powerful, instructive vision. But who else, besides the earth and the affluent who dwell upon it, is this vision finally *for*? It is a question of which Mr. Barber himself is either dismissive, or self-conscious, or both: “The Third Plate, as I have come to envision it, [does not exist] solely within the world of haute cuisine” (p.305). The sentiment is not convincing; it evokes the oblivious optimism of trickle-down economics. But a just economy is precisely what we must talk about if the story of the three plates is to have a happy ending.

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The Insect Cookbook: Food for a Sustainable Planet
Arnold van Huis, Henk van Gurp, and Marcel Dicke
New York: Columbia University Press, 2014
xx + 196 pp. Illustrations. \$27.95/£19.95 (hardcover)

Eating insects—or *entomophagy*—has received considerable attention in recent years, not least as a result of the efforts of Wageningen University entomologists Arnold van Huis and Marcel Dicke, both leading figures in scientific and popular debates about the subject. *The Insect Cookbook*, written with chef Henk van Gurp, represents a further step in their attempts to normalize entomophagy and to outline an environmental case for the replacement of conventional sources of meat within Western diets.

Despite its title, *The Insect Cookbook* is in fact part recipe book, part information source, and part advocacy document. Only around a third of the volume is composed of recipes, which are woven together with other material that provides a practical and ethical context for the authors’ efforts to encourage the consumption of insects.

Information sections outline the nutritional content and resource efficiency of various insect species in comparison with livestock, and identify the many different food cultures of which insects of some description are already a part. Fifteen interviews offer the perspective of individuals who are all to some extent involved in the promotion of Western entomophagy. These include insect producers, political figures, and “tastemakers” such as chefs, designers, and online advocates.

The thirty-two recipes themselves are diverse, encompassing snacks, appetizers, mains, desserts, and “festive dishes”

(p.122). The assortment is clearly intended to illustrate the wide-ranging culinary applications of three of the main edible insect species that are already being commercially reared in the Netherlands: the migratory locust (typically referred to here and by edible insect suppliers more generally as a “grasshopper,” a taxonomically correct classification that also performs a helpful euphemistic function in positioning the species at a distance from ideas about biblical pestilence); the yellow mealworm (a particular beetle larva); and the buffalo worm, or lesser yellow mealworm (essentially a smaller mealworm).

In highlighting the broad potential of insects as an ingredient, the book is a success. The main dishes include Chinese and Mexican offerings as well as twists on European meals (such as the Dutch *bitterballen*) and international staples such as pizza. However, this diversity—a strength of the book in its role as an accessible and entertaining introduction to the topic of entomophagy—is also in another sense a limitation. How easy is it to integrate the mealworm into one’s culinary repertoire if it is a potential ingredient in such varied dishes as fried wonton, quiche, and *tarte tatin*?

A recent conversation with Grace Tan—whose PhD research at Wageningen University investigates consumer acceptance of edible insects—has affected my assessment of this book, and in this context her thoughts are worth reiterating. Grace expressed reservations about the sheer variety of dishes for which insects are being suggested as an ingredient. In her view, the lack of a history of cooking with insects in Europe means that information about their myriad possible uses may simply confuse people about what exactly they “are” and how we should classify them. Buffalo worms, for example, appear in *The Insect Cookbook* to be broadly congruent with peanuts, another small and crunchy protein source that conceivably could be used in both cakes and couscous dishes. But what of mealworms? Neither species is part of any existing world cuisine. It is this disconnection from any established cooking practices that, Grace argues, is among the difficulties that face efforts to integrate these insects into Western diets. Simply presenting recipes in which mealworms are incorporated into a range of familiar dishes may not be sufficient to lead to their widespread use, even among those who are strongly motivated.

The Insect Cookbook’s Mexican-inspired recipes, such as *chapulines* (edible grasshoppers, popular in certain parts of Mexico) and the *Bugito* (a burrito-style dish containing grasshoppers), indicate a direction in which efforts to promote Western entomophagy could be developed further: by the creation of more specialized recipe collections that have a greater association with existing insect-based dishes and modes of preparation. The UK restaurant chain Wahaca has

already attempted something of this sort with the introduction of its *chapulines fundido*. Associating insect consumption with established cuisines may offer Westerners a clearer frame of reference through which to make sense of edible insects and to integrate them into their culinary regimes.

Reservations notwithstanding, *The Insect Cookbook* is a fascinating read and an excellent introduction to the topic of entomophagy. It offers not only an unusual lens through which to view broader debates about food security and the resource efficiency of our current food system, but also a recipe for fried tarantulas.

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Alternative Food Networks: Knowledge, Practice, and Politics

David Goodman, E. Melanie DuPuis, and

Michael K. Goodman

New York: Routledge, 2011

320 pp. \$47.98 (paper)

What does justice look like when applied to the global industrial food system? For whom and by whom is justice enacted? What does an alternative food network look like, and what, in fact, constitutes alternative? Is food justice compatible with the neoliberal capitalist system? How can alternative food networks expand, in order to include *all* groups at the table? These questions are raised and masterfully elaborated upon in *Alternative Food Networks: Knowledge, Practice and Politics*.

More significantly, David Goodman, E. Melanie DuPuis, and Michael K. Goodman provide readers with an expansive theoretical toolkit to tackle these questions, and others, on their own. The book is separated into four sections—reflexivity and alternative food networks; alternative food provisioning in the United Kingdom and Western Europe; alternative food movements in the United States; and globalizing alternative food movements—and each of these sections draws together diverse bodies of literature and offers novel case studies in service of better understanding the diverse incarnations of alternative food networks today.

The authors provide an important and necessary intervention in critical food justice scholarship, which has historically bifurcated into critical analyses of food justice projects as neoliberal tools of governmentality, and, conversely, celebrations of utopian communitarianism and analyses of food justice as a radical social movement. They situate themselves between these two positions, instead arguing for a “reflexive localism” through which they “envision a localism that is more socially just while leaving open a definition of social

justice” (p.14). Practically, they argue that reflexive localism admits the complexity of everyday life, emphasizes process rather than vision, does not favor any one particular scale of political practice, and “works within multiple notions of privilege and economy” (p.31). Thus, the authors push us to move past prevailing paradigms in the food justice movement that celebrate universalized visions of what food systems and “good” food might look like.

Of particular interest in *Alternative Food Networks* is the discussion of institutional constraints on the spread of alternative agriculture practice and knowledge. The authors’ intervention is important, as many extant studies focus on the differences between “sustainable” and “conventional” agricultural knowledge, while here the focus is on the dialectic relationship between these ways of knowing (p.192). Specifically, Chapter 9, “Sustainable Agriculture as Knowing and Growing,” offers fascinating insight into the process of organic strawberry production knowledge at the University of California extension office (p.175). It illustrates that university researchers struggle to balance “scientific” facts and contextual, tacit knowledge favored by organic agriculture (p.186). Because the university system of peer review and data collection lends itself to reproducing certain kinds of “scientific” testable facts, alternative ways of knowing and growing become excluded from dominant institutions and disseminators of knowledge (p.187). In this discussion, the authors highlight important institutional constraints on the expansion of organic agriculture and point toward tangible reforms and ways forward.

Alternative Food Networks, unfortunately, spends little time discussing alternative food networks as manifested in the global south. While a quarter of the book is devoted to discussing “globalizing alternative food movements,” this topic is manifested as three chapters focusing on the politics of fair trade, which mainly emphasize institutional networks and Western corporations. No attention is paid to alternative food network innovations occurring in the global south—particularly absent is any discussion of food system restructuring in Latin America. This neglect seems particularly egregious, since actors in Latin America have been at the vanguard of creating unique, alternative, contextually situated food systems.

Regardless of this significant oversight, this book would be a well-suited addition to the bookshelves of both critical food justice scholars and practitioners. *Alternative Food Networks: Knowledge, Practice and Politics* provides activists and scholar activists alike with the impetus and skills to interrogate and improve alternative food networks, and food justice efforts globally.

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