preface

POPULAR PHRASES SUCH AS "MOTHER'S MILK" and "Mother Earth" indicate long-standing and sometimes sentimental cultural associations between women, food, and the environment—even as concern grows about milk that may be poisoned and about ecological disasters wrought by Mother Earth. This special issue of *Feminist Studies* brings nuanced and critical perspectives to the topic of food and ecology, focusing both on global campaigns for gender justice regarding food and natural resources and on some unintended consequences of feminist ecological activism. Laura Anh Williams's opening essay encapsulates several contemporary themes in her queer ecofeminist engagement with the politics of meat eating. The mix of food and politics—in fact, the necessary if unseen connections between food and politics—is also foregrounded in two review essays that take intersectional approaches to their subjects, Arlene Avakian's discussion of feminist food memoirs and Psyche Williams-Forson and Jennifer Cognard-Black's essay on food politics. Melanie Dawson makes pedagogical use of such current scholarship in her interdisciplinary college course on literature and environmental feminism. Another cluster of articles engages with the labor of food production, tying it in innovative ways to consumption practices. Carolyn Sachs and Anouk Patel-Campillo's essay calls for a new vision of feminist food justice that incorporates food security, food sovereignty, and food justice in contrast to individualizing neoliberal approaches. Neoliberal approaches, even including supposedly progressive Fair Trade regulations, can sometimes have disruptive consequences for smallholder women tea farmers, as Debarati Sen describes. Eileen Boris and Jennifer N. Fish discuss

efforts to take the labor of maids and nannies out of isolating family contexts and to use international organizations and cultural representations to press for more egalitarian global labor standards for domestic workers. Creative work featured in this issue also engages the themes of food and ecology: Barbara Sjoholm's art essay about Emilie Demant Hatt describes Demant Hatt's growing affinity with indigenous Sami herders and hunters and their influence on her striking expressionist paintings. The featured poems by Lauren Camp and Kelly Conroy and the short story by Mecca Jamilah Sullivan expand our imaginative possibilities for engaging with eating and body image in unpredictable ways.

As Laura Anh Williams shows in "Gender, Race, and an Epistemology of the Abattoir in *My Year of Meats*," novelist Ruth Ozeki uses the story of a Japanese-American woman filmmaker hired to advertise US meat to Japanese consumers in order to dramatize the hidden dangers of the global food chain. Williams describes how Ozeki's novel "stages a queer ecofeminist critique of hegemonic cultural practices and modes of production and reproduction that prioritize capital over living bodies, both human and animal." Innovative in form and incorporating fragments, lists, memos, and faxes, the novel slowly reveals the hidden connections between the violence enacted upon farm animals by industrial food production and the abuses of humans, especially women and people of color. Ozeki exposes the interconnections between capitalist modes of production and reproduction that operate through willful ignorance of their effects, creating a startling novel that operates as a detective story and as a series of wide-ranging vignettes of American life. Williams concludes that Ozeki's fiction does more than urge her readers to eat differently; practicing an intersectional analysis, it moves beyond fictional conventions to denaturalize and disrupt the intersecting cultural and corporate practices that damage marginalized bodies.

In her review essay "Cooking Up Lives: Feminist Food Memoirs," Arlene Avakian also adopts an intersectional feminist approach, arguing that "a focus on food practices can help to bring specificity to examinations of cultures as well as revealing the power dynamics within them. Close attention to who is cooking what, for whom, and under what conditions can break down totalizing notions of gender, race, and class." At the same time, the memoirs show that cooking and eating are practices that can provide disparate women with a "consistent sense of home." The memoirs she discusses break with the expected mold of middle-class,

white authors and readers. Resisting the feel-good ethos implicit in many cookbooks and food writing, her essay discusses food memoirs by women from complex social locations.

In a similar vein, Psyche Williams-Forson and Jennifer Cognard-Black review recent books and films on food politics and the food industry that give voice to food activists outside the mainstream. They note the tendency of media versions of celebrity chefs to be male and masculine, while women in the mass-media foodscape are peripheral rather than central figures. In this essay as in others in this issue, Michael Pollan's popular form of environmental food activism comes in for critique for its ethnocentricity and class bias, in contrast to documentary texts that contextualize issues such as Native American or African American women's obesity in terms of economic constraints and cultural stereotypes.

Putting such understandings to pedagogical use, Melanie Dawson describes in detail her Interdisciplinary Course on Literature and Environmental Feminism, in which she motivates students to recognize the ways that the imaginative literature they read in English courses reflects the challenges that will affect their futures. Through documentary films and dystopian novels, for example, she urges students to consider what women's roles might be in caretaking for "a damaged world." Other favorite texts, such as the pioneering descriptions of Laura Ingalls Wilder, reveal colonial and dualistic thinking. These challenging texts, Dawson surmises, ask students to consider the ramifications and results of various environmental decisions they may make or imagine.

Our art essay in this issue, by Barbara Sjoholm, introduces us to the trajectory of Danish artist Emilie Demant Hatt, whose work took a distinctive ethnographic turn after her encounter with Sami wolf-hunter trapper Johan Turi. Demant Hatt moved over the years from "nature tourist to participant observer and collaborative ethnographer," and her art also shifted "from realism to a form of expressionism … influenced by the animism, legends, and music of the indigenous people of the North." Sjoholm's account of a complex friendship between Demant Hatt and Turi enlivens our appreciation of Demant Hatt's art and her effort to counter the exoticization of the Sami people. Sjoholm notes, "Demant Hatt's depictions of camp life and migrations through the mountains and over the rivers were not ethnographic diagrams, but explorations of color, line, and dynamic movement." At a time when Nazi racial

biology was pervasive, such an orientation makes even more remarkable an artist whose paintings are said to represent the "strongest work in Danish Expressionism."

Food insecurity and malnutrition are massive global problems, and responses to these challenges take varied and sometimes risky directions. Carolyn Sachs and Anouk Patel-Campillo's schematic essay outlines three major approaches: food security, food sovereignty, and food justice, as it articulates a robust critique of neoliberalism. As Sachs and Patel-Campillo view it, the dominant UN-sponsored gender and food-security model is heavily top-down, and "the problem of hunger is principally addressed through market-based solutions that involve increases in global agricultural production, international trade, and market integration." They delineate the contrasting, more bottom-up, "feminist food-sovereignty" approach that is increasingly popular in the global South, which "seeks to gain some control over local agro-food systems" and "re-embed agro-food systems while recognizing the role of women in agriculture, family, and community agro-ecological production." Sachs and Patel-Campillo propose a third vision, "feminist food justice," incorporating the scale of food security approaches and the politics of food sovereignty approaches. "In addition to working at the local level," they note, "feminist food-justice efforts must also continue to work to transform agricultural, food, and development institutions including UN agencies, ministries of agriculture, and national and international agricultural research institutions."

"'Slaves No More': Making Global Labor Standards for Domestic Workers," by Eileen Boris and Jennifer N. Fish, discusses efforts to remove the domestic labor of maids and nannies from the ignored inequalities of isolated family employment and to use international organizations, cultural representations, and a "politics of affect linked to human rights claims" to press for more egalitarian global labor standards for domestic workers. The specific question they pursue is why did it take the International Labor Organization so long to adopt such global standards for this particular kind of work? For these authors and this campaign, international nongovernmental activist organizations are strong advocates for women's causes, and they trace their vital role in this case study.

Debarati Sen offers a more skeptical view of the role of NGO advocacy, in asking "how subjects of transnational justice regimes understand and mobilize around the governance practices of the ostensibly

ethical transnational justice regimes" when Fair Trade regulations "inadvertently strengthen gendered and patriarchal power relations in producer communities." Drawing on ethnographic research, she shows how smallholder women tea farmers in Darjeeling, India, navigate a fair trade regime by defending their own priorities and representing themselves as respectable housewives in order to disrupt the hold of local patriarchies.

Creative writing in this issue pushes the boundaries of the body, food, and imaginative possibilities as these topics are treated in the scholarly essays. In short lines and spare but tough imagery, Lauren Camp's poems describe a mastectomy patient contemplating her body, an ashamed woman with an unfaithful lover, and a self-damaging anorexic who wears "only the smallest wardrobe of self." More overtly political is Kelly Conroy's poem "WWII Factory," which speaks in the voice of a child damaged by industrial pollution to dramatize the lack of worker protections in US factories during World War II. Mecca Jamilah Sullivan's short story "The Anvil," in contrast, takes a surreal view of eating disorders and food fantasies as a stout black girl daydreams she swallows a gerbil, some paint, and an anvil.

In keeping with our journal's tradition of offering scholarly commentary on timely topics, this issue's News and Views section analyzes two recent events: the US Supreme Court's *Harris v. Quinn* June 2014 ruling affecting home care workers, and the May 2014 election of the Hindu right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in India. Eileen Boris and Jennifer Klein explain how the *Harris v. Quinn* decision affects the collective bargaining efforts of home care workers, who are disproportionately poor and immigrant women of color. Nivedita Menon recounts the complex reasons why feminists in India oppose the BJP's effort to introduce a uniform civil code on matters affecting marriage and inheritance laws of religious minorities. Both of these short articles make clear the necessity for a wider circulation of feminist critiques: these authors demonstrate how abstract understandings of the "worker" and the "citizen" each presume hegemonic identities at their core — the male industrial worker in the first case and the Hindu citizen in the second case. Effective feminist critique consists of identifying and undoing such presumptions, in order to broaden the possibilities of social justice.

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