

their circumstances. A Food Justice Narrative acts instead as a “counterstory” and points to the wider context of structural economic and political factors. In the case of food insecurity, for example, a counterstory shows how low wages, limited social safety net benefits, and the lobbying power of big agricultural corporations play a role, pointing to the straightforward fact that “the right to food is a fundamental right” (p.82). Dixon stresses that counterstories reframe the metrics for assessing injustices, moving from the individualized (and misleading) language of unconstrained free choice, deservedness, and blameworthiness to the collective language of rights and structural constraints on free choice. They are a call to political action rather than individual behavioral change.

An intriguing opening for scholarly engagement with this work emerges from an idea Dixon raises and then sets aside: that of aesthetics and alternative forms of representation. Dixon chooses to focus on “the educative function of realistic narratives” (p.4), such as Kristi Jacobson and Lori Silverbush’s (2013) documentary *A Place at the Table* and Seth Holmes’s (2013) ethnographic study of migrant farmworkers in *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*. This offers a generative place from which to build outward. What would it mean to read or write poetry or literary fiction (or create artworks more generally) for ethical awareness and activism, particularly on the subject of food justice? What role could aesthetic form play in furthering the ethical and activist content of the works? Moreover, what do the cascading impacts of climate catastrophe or COVID-19 mean for the composition of food system narratives?

Much ethical, activist, narrative (and aesthetic) work remains, particularly considering the long-overdue realization with COVID-19 that food system workers are in fact essential workers. A travelogue surely is meant to be picked up again, the story and method carried forward and carried on by others, even more so in this time of emergent possibility.

—Eric Himmelfarb, *New York University*

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 Jacobson, Kristi and Lori Silverbush. 2013. *A Place at the Table*. DVD. Los Angeles: Magnolia Pictures.

Grain by Grain: A Quest to Revive Ancient Wheat, Rural Jobs, and Healthy Food

Bob Quinn and Liz Carlisle

Washington, DC: Island Press, 2019

288 pp. Illustrations. \$28.00 (hardcover); \$27.99 (eBook)

What do you value in a grain of wheat? For the average consumer, a grain of wheat holds almost no value at all. For

agribusiness firms and conventional farmers, this value is primarily defined by maximum yield and optimal loaf volume, or the maximum loaves of bread that can be made from a bag of flour. But for Bob Quinn, a fourth-generation Montana wheat farmer, each grain represents a window into the quality of soil, the biodiversity of the farm, the measure of community well-being and human health. *Grain by Grain* is the story of how Quinn, using his training as a scientist and farmer, embarks on a mission to reclaim the value of wheat and farming to build a business that is “fundamentally based on adding and regenerating value, not extracting it” (p.168). Through his story, Quinn demonstrates the power of an entrepreneurial spirit and a values-based business in creating sustainable solutions for his community, his land, and our food system. While Quinn and Carlisle, author of *Lentil Underground* and assistant professor in the environmental studies program at the University of California, Santa Barbara, share authorship of this book, the story is told from Quinn’s perspective. In these pages, Quinn elevates the voice and experience of farmers as he shares how he has worked to restore the land, his community, and the food that will sustain his family and many others for generations to come, one grain at a time.

Quinn warmly invites the reader to join him as he recounts his path from a conventional farmer to organic farmer, from a wheat farmer to an ancient wheat farmer to a diversified farmer, from fossil fuel reliance toward energy independence, and from the field to the laboratory. Quinn is very clear—you don’t need to be an environmental crusader to see the synergies between economic and environmental value. He certainly wasn’t. He explains how he approached taking over the family farm with an entrepreneurial mindset and a drive to support his family. Quinn describes how over the course of four years, organic grew from a side project to the bulk of his business. “By then,” he says, “I was philosophically committed too, but it wasn’t only my beliefs that drove my transition; it was also my customers” (p.70). It was this philosophy and business acumen that led Quinn to cultivate and then trademark an ancient grain, khorasan wheat, as Kamut. As the demand for organic, healthful foods has grown, so has Quinn’s enterprise and his vision for the role his community can play in supporting a more sustainable future.

Quinn avoids overly romanticizing agrarian life by acknowledging the many hardships and trials and errors involved in farming, and especially when farming against the status quo of chemically intensive, extractive, short-term practices. Quinn provides an accessible, relatable, and comprehensive analysis of the damages to the environment, rural communities, farmers, and health wrought by an increasingly

concentrated agribusiness sector. Rather than being worn down by the challenges of pests, weeds, and variable weather and driven back to the short-term, reductionist solutions of conventional industrial farming, Quinn draws on his patience as a farmer and analytical intellect as a scientist to examine his farm systems and methodically identify sustainable, long-term solutions. What he offers here is a chance to see what it means to choose the solutions that recognize and restore our health, environment, and communities. Quinn's approach harnesses the do-it-yourself attitude and self-sufficiency of rural communities to create new enterprises and jobs anchored in the place where they were inspired. The quest that began with making a decent living and led to a multimillion-dollar ancient grain company has, for example, involved the development of a reliable, high value market for organic grain from his neighboring farmers and the creation of both a renewable energy company and a snack company, Big Sandy Organics, that sources local grain and safflower oil.

Those looking for food systems reading material, whether for an introductory course or general interest, will find that this book's smooth and effective navigation of ecology, history, sociology, and political economy provides a comprehensive overview of agriculture in America as well as a provocative questioning of conventional farming. What is less clear is whether Quinn's story is applicable or available to the vast majority of people. As a white man with a family legacy of farming and education, with access to land and resources, including a PhD in plant biochemistry, he presents a unique and perhaps singular approach to farming, business, and research. It is difficult to imagine those without these resources and knowledge having access to the same business opportunities as Quinn. And while Quinn's entrepreneurial approach has undoubtedly created healthy and sustainable food system alternatives, it is unclear whether these alternatives challenge the power dynamics and structures entrenched in our current food system that prevent these opportunities and solutions from being available and accessible to those who need them the most. For readers who believe it will take more than market forces to resolve racial, gender, and class discrimination and disrupt dominant agrichemical interests, the ultimate recommendations in *Grain by Grain* will fall short. Quinn's story is as instructive in its shortcomings as it is in its moments of inspiration. In a time of division and tribalism, however, the open-mindedness and passion of a Republican farmer who manages to gracefully maneuver between the Montana Organic Association and the American Farm Bureau is hopeful and refreshing. So grab a bag of Kracklin' Kamut (it's delicious) and get reading.

—Carolyn Hricko, University of Vermont

How the Shopping Cart Explains Global Consumerism

Andrew Warnes

Oakland: University of California Press, 2019

176 pp. Illustrations. \$85.00 (hardcover); \$24.95 (paper); \$24.95 (eBook)

You would think that with all the current developments in food shopping—online options, drone delivery services, food box and instant meal prep services—the physical metal shopping cart would fall out of use and disappear. It hasn't. If anything, the iconic cart is more pervasive in our life than ever. Shopping carts are everywhere—stranded in parking lots, ditched along the side of the road, and sitting upside down in snowbanks. Even when you buy online, the final step is confirming the items in your virtual cart (shaped like an actual shopping cart) before checking out. Despite the proliferation of carts, however, we never really notice one until we have a cart with a wonky wheel. But as Andrew Warnes explains in *How the Shopping Cart Explains Global Consumerism*, the quotidian shopping cart represents an intersection of complex global food issues and consumer buying habits. By tracing the history and development of the shopping cart, Warnes shows us how globalization, mechanized farming, refrigeration, and mass consumerism affect the way world consumers shop for food in supermarkets and how the global industrial food system encourages consumers to overeat.

Warnes, a professor of American studies at Leeds University, uses extensive excerpts from literature and cultural studies to show how the shopping cart developed into an iconic representation of excessive consumerism. Shopping carts were not necessary before the early twentieth century. People bought food and other household items by exchanging business with a person, usually behind a counter or in a kiosk. People never bought more than they could carry and often a basket or bag sufficed to transport their goods home. As Warnes explains, when Clarence Saunders changed the supermarket layout space from one focused on a counter clerk who filled consumers' food orders to a self-serving store organized around aisles and customer autonomy, he also created a need for a basket on wheels to make the mobility of food items easier. Recognizing this need, in 1937 Sylvan Goldman submitted his patent for such a basket on wheels and the shopping cart has not changed much in design or purpose ever since. Shopping carts, bigger than the handheld baskets originally used in food shopping before the advent of the supermarket, encouraged customers to buy more and to buy more faster. As Warnes points out, it was the proliferation of the shopping cart along with an advancing North American automobile culture that began the journey of changing citizens into consumers. In real life, and now in the digital world, the empty