

to Howard Schulz, Starbucks' CEO, recording their views on a range of contentious issues, including the debate over contract farming. Her discussion of the widely publicized dispute between Starbucks and the Ethiopian Intellectual Property Office (EIPO) over the latter's ultimately successful attempts to capture some of the intangible value in Ethiopian coffees is comprehensive. She found that as she delved ever more deeply into the company and its operations, many of her preconceptions were challenged, since "in the context of the corporate universe, Starbucks is above average as both an employer and an environmental citizen" (p.11). In the end Fellner concludes that, just maybe, "the Starbucks Coffee Company, the labor movement, and the global justice movement all want to make the world a better place" (p.11). The book's title is particularly apt, as it reflects her own wrestling match between her progressive convictions—in one corner—and, in the other, the evidence of her eyes, ears, and palate. However, it seems as though Starbucks wins every round, and the book may leave the reader wanting a more balanced critique.

The rise and fall of corporations, many of whose creators start out with the objective of making the world a better place as well as making money, is a topic well researched and documented in many disciplines. The sociological framework offered by Bonanno and Constance prompts the reader to question whether Fellner's generally positive perspectives on Starbucks are simply a consequence of the excellent access she was given to the company's senior executives and operations. Was she seduced by what Bonanno and Constance would refer to as their legitimization strategies? Fellner admits that her travel agendas were prepared if not by, then with considerable assistance from, Starbucks officers.

So, to whom can these books on such a relevant topic be recommended? *Stories of Globalization* is an important reference for any professional for whom food is a subject of study in a globalizing context. It belongs in any library, whether academic, corporate, or public. Although the authors' own political views can sometimes be confrontational, with such comments as "how much longer can global economic growth be based on the rampant and unchecked exploitation of natural resources?" (p.265), they do not obscure the more fully considered opinions that predominate in the book. *Wrestling with Starbucks* is a deeply personal and easy-to-read narrative that will appeal to the growing group of consumers concerned about how food gets to their plate—or coffee mug. But readers seeking an antiglobalization manifesto are likely to be disappointed.

Both books see globalization as a contested domain, and both serve to remind us that because outcomes are not always predictable, we generalize at our peril. Indeed, outcomes often seem only to obey the Law of Unintended Consequences.

—Heather Hunwick

NOTE

1. *From Columbus to ConAgra: The Globalization of Agriculture and Food*, ed. Alessandro Bonanno, Lawrence Busch, William H. Friedland, Lourdes Gouveia, and Enzo Mingione (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 1994), 15.

The Fight over Food: Producers, Consumers, and Activists Challenge the Global Food System
 Edited by Wynne Wright and Gerad Middendorf
 University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008
 viii + 301 pp. Illustrations. \$28.50 (paper)

Food and Globalization: Consumption, Markets and Politics in the Modern World
 Edited by Alexander Nutzenadel and Frank Trentmann
 New York: Berg Publishers, 2008
 xv + 284 pp. \$39.95 (paper)

Food for the Few: Neoliberal Globalism and Biotechnology in Latin America
 Edited by Gerardo Otero
 Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2008
 xiii + 321 pp. \$45.00 (cloth)

RECENT POPULAR LITERATURE has offered readers an abundant selection of books that prescribe what and how we should eat. Take, for example, Marion Nestle's *What to Eat* (2006) and Nina Planck's *Real Food: What to Eat and Why* (2007). Responding to widespread concern over environmental and health risks associated with the industrialized agriculture and food system, such books rarely address the complexities and contradictions of that system. It is our good fortune that the authors of the edited volumes under review here—all scholars in food studies—present more critical accounts of the modern agriculture and food system.

In *The Fight over Food* Wynne Wright and Gerad Middendorf present ten essays that illuminate both successful changes and obstacles to change within the system. To integrate the case studies they use the sociological concept of agency, or purposeful action. The book is divided into three sections. Part I begins with an introduction to the historical and conceptual approaches for understanding

agriculture and food system change. Part II includes four case studies that demonstrate successful contestations at local, national, and global levels. Part III presents case studies that document less-than-successful attempts at change.

A major strength of this book is its organization. The chapters in Part I are extremely useful in helping the reader understand the concept and variant theories of agency, while the case studies in Parts II and III illuminate differences in the ways it is exercised. At the end of each chapter Wright and Middendorf provide resources for instructors, such as definitions of key concepts, discussion questions, suggested additional readings, and video resources, which are also invaluable for students and curious readers. This book will help students enter into discussions of agency in the sociology of agriculture; the issues it raises make it worthwhile reading for anyone interested in promoting real structural change within the agriculture and food system.

The essays in *Food and Globalization* are introduced by Alexander Nutzenadel and Frank Trentmann as an attempt to “recover the material, political, and moral dynamics of food [thereby] connecting early modern to contemporary processes of globalization” (p.5). This volume is divided into four parts: “Evolution and Diversity,” “Diffusion and Identities,” “Transnational Knowledge and Actors,” and “Trade and Moralities.” It is difficult, however, to differentiate the thematic distinctions among the essays in Parts I and II. Several of them focus only on a single foodstuff, thereby making the overall thrust of these sections a bit platitudinous, since they fail to offer novel insights into the dynamics of food in a global society. Part III does better by expanding the boundaries of what is typically presented in popular food studies books to draw attention to issues of global food governance and the role that transnational actors play in shaping food norms. The inclusion of an essay about the role of transnational food corporations would have made this section even stronger. The essays in Part IV explore the ways in which global food exchanges are embedded in complex settings, thereby reminding readers that food and globalization are as much about ethics as about taste and identity.

Although their book provides readers with a more nuanced understanding of the varied embodiments of the relationship between food and globalization, Nutzenadel and Trentmann fail to present a cohesive and focused selection of essays. In their introduction they suggest that “Ironically, the very centrality of food in human history has tended to make our understanding of these global dynamics more, not less, fractured” (p.2). Yet in their overly ambitious attempt to examine empire, markets,

and power; migration and diffusion; global actors; and food chains and moral geographies, they too present their readers with a fractured understanding of the global dynamics of food. However, precisely because this book offers such a rich collection of disciplinary perspectives, it will appeal to a wide range of readers.

In *Food for the Few* Gerardo Otero draws attention to the impact of agricultural biotechnology in Latin America. Despite this seemingly narrow theme, the volume is impressive for its breadth and depth. In addition to covering biotech issues in Latin America *Food for the Few* also discusses more generally the experiences of agricultural communities in the developing world. The first four chapters situate the diffusion of agricultural biotechnology in Latin America within the broader context of the Green Revolution, neoliberal globalism, and the global governance of biosafety. Chapters Five through Ten address a variety of national experiences in Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico; the final two chapters offer bottom-up approaches for developing an alternative to the Latin American biotechnology paradigm.

Otero presents the complexities of agricultural biotechnology very accessibly, and each chapter contributes to a composite picture of the development of modern agriculture across Latin America. The geographic perspective on Latin America enables readers to better comprehend the linkages among science, politics, and hunger, while the empirical emphasis of the various studies successfully assesses the actual impact of agricultural biotechnology on agrarian structures. This volume represents a valuable contribution to discussions of agricultural biotechnology in Latin America and beyond.

Despite their varied foci—the role of agency in facilitating change within the agriculture and food system (Wright and Middendorf), the relationship between food and globalization in the modern world (Nutzenadel and Trentmann), and the impact of biotechnology studies in Latin American agriculture and food systems (Otero)—each of these volumes similarly presents a critical account of the structure of our modern agriculture and food system. None prescribe what or how to eat. Together they offer both general and specialized readers a commendable collection of studies from a disciplinarily diverse group of social scientists. Any of these volumes would be an excellent addition to a food studies library. ◉

—Jessica Bagdonis