From the Co-Editors: Let’s Refocus

Catherine Peters, Katherine Hysmith, Jessica Fagin, Maya Hey, Cormac Cleary

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Welcome to the ninth issue of the Graduate Journal of Food Studies, in which we reflect upon our past as a journal, our conversations in the present, and our provocations for the future. This issue features essays drawn from the Graduate Association for Food Studies’ biennial conference, “The Future of Food Studies,” held last fall at UNC-Chapel Hill. Although we recognize that “the future of” connotes wishful thinking, we operationalize it to signal a critical and necessary grappling with our past and future in order to refocus the present.

Pursuant to this grounded focus, we are delighted to be publishing the keynote remarks of Professor Psyche Williams-Forson, who draws our attention to intersectionality as an analytical framework, critical tool, and direction for the field of food studies. As Professor Williams-Forson notes, lawyer and scholar of critical race studies Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term in 1989 to “describe how the interlocking systems of gender, race, and class serve to oppress, depress, and repress.” At the same time, this issue coincides with the 50th anniversary of the founding of the first College of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University. It marks a history in which students, faculty, and community activists created a space to consider the situation of people of color in the United States as connected to peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. With this in mind, we take seriously Professor Williams-Forson’s imperative to “always remember histories,” especially the history of intersectionality, as we engage with questions of power, access, and agency in and through food.

One such history becomes the focus of a research article written by Frederico de Oliveira Toscano, who examines the construction of Brazilian and U.S. hunger in relation to shifting ideologies of abundance. Additionally, Rhiannon Scharnhorst presents an original research article weaving together narratives of feminist writers and their everyday practices in and around the kitchen table. Together, these two articles examine questions of access and agency in historically and socially diverse perspectives. They are joined by one final proceeding from the 2018 GAFS conference: a Food-Stuff piece by Alanna Higgins, who explores the ethical concerns of ethnographic work by considering whose knowledge is being represented and how.

Building upon our previous issue—in which graduate students contributed to the growing conversation about who ought to be included in food studies curricula and critical scholarship—we continue our analyses of citational practices, knowledge production, and its problematic power relations. We invited Professors Ashanté Reese and Hanna Garth to comment on the long and rich histories of Black food scholarship. As this issue marks the fifth anniversary of our publication, we also invited previous Editors-in-Chief—Brad Jones, Carla Cevasco, and Emily Contois—to critically reflect on their respective time with GJFS.

Our diverse and thoughtful range of book reviews points readers to recent works which highlight issues of history, intersectionality, gender, race, and the state. These, notably, include Jennifer Jensen Wallach’s Every Nation Has Its Dish (2018), an exploration of twentieth-century Black American
foodways and their intersections with nationalism, and Rachel Louise Moran’s *Governing Bodies* (2018), in which we find an examination of twentieth-century U.S. state projects to shape its citizens’ physiques, highlighting the disproportionate effects of such projects on women and people of color. In Sarah Bowen, Joslyn Brenton, and Sinikka Elliott’s *Pressure Cooker* (2019), we learn about how non-state narratives of resistance against the mainstream food system serve to silence or even compound existing inequalities, while Carole Counihan’s *Italian Food Activism in Urban Sardinia* (2018), shows us the flipside: the ways in which these narratives can still serve to empower communities in non-elitist ways, refracting food sovereignty and access politics through the concept of *territorio* or terroir.

Moving beyond the explicitly political, other book reviews include Marion Demossier’s *Burgundy* (2018) for those interested in a deep-dive into the concept of terroir as explored through wine production. Kevin Kosar’s *Moonshine* (2017) offers further material for those engaged in the study of alcohol, investigating illegal spirit production as a locus of state regulation and resistance. Finally, Gitanjali G. Shahani’s edited collection, *Food and Literature* (2018), offers perspectives from the study of literature, which will be informative reading for those seeking to grapple with the theoretical and representational aspects of food and eating.

As we remember the history of this journal, we look forward to carving out new paths within our editorial team and across the many disciplines which feed into food scholarship. This issue, for the first time, has been co-edited, which demanded a consideration of, and care for, difference. We wanted to see if we could collapse the hierarchical structures of an editorial board in order to reimagine labor distribution. Our editorial letter is co-written, in time if not in place—for instance, over the course of working on this particular issue, our editorial board has spanned the time zones of Eastern Standard Time, British Summer Time, Japan Standard Time, and India Standard Time, reflecting both the sprawl and the future hope of a more transnational approach to the field. In spreading workloads, we needed to communicate more and negotiate new roles, a process that opened up productive misunderstandings, support, and respite at the same time. As former Editor-in-Chief Carla Cevasco reminds us, GJFS started with a pedagogical commitment/approach to the “hidden curriculum.” What readers see does not reflect the labor that goes into the issue, including the countless rounds of revisions by our contributors, reviewers, and us. Backstage there are pieces which are being reconsidered, reworked, restructured, or put on ice while graduates deal with jobs, applications, proposals, upgrades, life events, and so on.

The voices here matter: diverse voices will bring diverse issues in and outside of the academy. What is said (or not said) and by whom has effects, leaves absences, and fills spaces. We express these intentions in earnest, but we also acknowledge that our work is never finished. We are grateful to our contributors who help us think and work through these challenges. We want to be attentive to whose work we engage, and how, across different disciplinary spheres, epistemological frames, and geographic loci. We want to stay mindful of whose voices are part of the discussions and whose need
amplification. Given that we do not commission contributors to write for us, we continue to grapple with remaining radically open, even invitational, without overdetermining who contributes.

As always, we cherish feedback, input, and the privilege of working on this publication. We especially invite commentary and invite readers to write us. Special thanks go to Maria Carabello and Cheyenne Schoen for their expert copyediting of this issue.

With warm regards from the editorial team, happy reading!

The GJFS Co-Editors (in alphabetical order)

Cormac Cleary
Jessica Fagin
Maya Hey
Katherine Hysmith
Catherine Peters

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