

From the editor

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The current number has four articles, one discussion article, and two book reviews. Previously, we have featured four classifications of contributions, but Springer's standardization of style allows us only to use three, the three used in this issue. The previous classifications of Discussions and Book Review Essays have now been collapsed into one: Discussion Articles. So under Discussion Articles we will include articles that primarily take issue with one of our previously published articles and also articles that review several books and discusses their connections and common themes, as does the current discussion article, "Ethnographies of Taste: Cooking, Cuisine, and Cultural Literacy," by Samuel Snyder. Snyder finds important common themes in these four books: *Cultural Memory and Biodiversity*. Virginia Nazarea. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005 (1998), ISBN 0-8165-2547-1. Vileisis, Ann. 2008. *Kitchen Literacy: How We Lost Knowledge of Where Food Comes from and Why We Need to Get it Back*. Ann Vileisis. Washington D.C.: Shearwater Books, 2008, ISBN 1-59726-144-0. *Good Bread is Back: A Contemporary History of French Bread, the Way it is Made and The People Who Make It*. Steven Laurence Kaplan. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006, ISBN0-8223-3833-5. *The Pull of the Earth: Participatory Ethnography in the School Garden*. Laurie Thorp. Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2006, ISBN 0-7591-0783-1.

The four articles cover a range of themes from a critique of the trend in organic agriculture to be absorbed by the agro-industrial complex (Thodoris Dantsis, Angeliki Loumou, and Christina Giourga/Organic agriculture's approach towards sustainability; its relationship with the agro-industrial complex, a case study in Central Macedonia, Greece); a critique of China's exponential growth in the livestock industry and its negative impacts (Peter J. Li/Exponential Growth, Animal Welfare, Environmental and Food Safety Impact: The Case of China's Livestock Production); a critique of the pet trade (Kimberly K. Smith/ A Pluralist-Expressivist Critique of the Pet Trade); to a critique of the metaphysical suppositions of the defenders of GMO food crops (Lisa A. Bergin/Latina Feminist Metaphysics and Genetically Engineered Foods).

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The authors of the Dantzis et al. piece use a survey conducted in Central Macedonia, Northern Greece, involving local organic farms to examine the degree to which the “conventionalization” thesis is true and the degree to which organic farming will develop in a radically opposite direction from conventional farming where organic farming is “defined by two essential components (prevention and direct marketing),” both of which support agricultural sustainability. The results of their study “indicate that a large proportion of organic producers did not differ substantially from their counterparts in conventional agriculture in so far as their relationship with the agro-industrial complex is concerned.”

In the second article, Li uses the rapid growth of China’s livestock industry to argue that China has come to an important juncture in its march towards a sustained development, because this development has been achieved at a high cost in environmental degradation, food safety, and animal welfare.

In the third article, Smith uses a modified version of “Elizabeth Anderson’s “pluralist-expressivist” value theory, an alternative to the understanding of value and rationality underlying the “rational actor” model of human behavior” as a basis for critiquing the pet trade. Anderson’s theory does not provide a basis for addressing the role of the state in monitoring the pet trade, so Smith draws on social contract theory to fill this gap and concludes “that the state’s role in regulating the pet trade should be limited to ensuring the welfare of animals in the stream of commerce, not in prohibiting their mass marketing altogether.”

In the last article, Bergin critiques two popular, non-scientific attitudes toward genetically engineered foods and then argues that a specific anti-biotech argument and a pro-biotech argument share a metaphysics of purity that is contrary to the metaphysics developed by Latina feminist metaphysicians such as Anzaldúa, whose concept of impurity provides a more scientifically accurate account of genetics than the reductionist account offered by some defenders. Plants cannot be reduced to their genetic component because genes behave differently in different environments.

I hope the readers will forgive me for publishing a favorable review of my recently published book, and I invite more critical reviews should anyone want to write them.