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Food Labor Ethics

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Abstract and Keywords

This chapter is an overview of some of the ethical issues regarding food workers. Paying special attention to farm workers and the conditions under which they work, it discusses, among other things, the infliction of pain and suffering on workers and their treatment as tools, children, or animals. It discusses also the coercion and exploitation of workers as well as the sexism, racism, and classism they face. In addition, this chapter discusses how these conditions arise at the societal level and what can be done about them.

Keywords: food workers, migrant labor, ethics, food justice, food labor, food work

Some food is grown, picked, and eaten by a single person. Other food is produced by a chain: food is grown and picked, sent to a restaurant or store, and then consumed. Or food is grown and fed to an animal that is killed and prepared, sent to the restaurant or store, and then consumed. At each link along the chain, there are food workers. This essay considers multiple layers of ethical concerns related to food work.

About tomato pickers, Barry Estabrook writes:

Tomato harvesting involves rummaging through staked vines until you have filled a bushel basket to the brim with hard, green fruits. You hoist the basket over your shoulder, trot across the field, and heave it overhead to a worker in an open trailer the size of the bed of a gravel truck. For every 32-pound basket you pick, you receive a token typically worth about 45 cents—almost the same rate you would have gotten 30 years ago. Working at breakneck speed, you might be able to pick a ton of tomatoes on a good day, netting about \$50. But a lot can go wrong. If it rains, you can't pick. If the dew is heavy, you sit and wait until it evaporates. If trucks aren't available to transport the harvest, you're out of luck. You receive

neither overtime nor benefits. If you are injured (a common occurrence, given the pace of the job), you have to pay for your own medical care. (2009)

Picking up on some of these points, adding others, describing restaurant work, Saru Jayaraman writes:

Claudia [was] the only Latina server at [a] Houston pancake house. There were four white and two black servers working with her. . . . White servers were almost always chosen over Claudia and the black servers to work banquet events—the rare parties that pulled in higher-than-average tips.

. . . [T]he managers forced Claudia to translate their nasty comments to the Latino bussers and dishwashers. “When the managers were mad, they’d take it out on bussers and dishwashers, and they’d make me translate all the horrible things they were saying,” says Claudia. “The workers would cry when I told them they were being sent (p. 495) home. I would apologize and feel horrible. They would say, ‘Please don’t send me home. I need to make this salary.’ I would say ‘I’m sorry, that’s what they’re making me tell you’ . . . I knew that this was the only job I could get, and the only one they could get. The managers would take the most vulnerable people and take stuff out on them when things were going bad. It was inhumane, horrible, how they treated them.” . . .

Claudia made about \$30 to \$40 a day in tips, working five to six days a week. The \$2.13 she earned in wages amounted to a weekly paycheck of about \$10 after taxes. So, in total, she earned about \$150 to \$200 per week. . . . She was . . . hungry all the time. . . . She was a food service worker who couldn’t afford to eat. (2013, 80–81)

Estabrook’s and Jayaraman’s claims recur in work on other agricultural, restaurant, and meat-packing workers.¹

Across these narratives, descriptions repeat. Food work is hard, monotonous, stressful, and potentially dangerous, threatening short- and long-term injury and illness. Wages are low. Benefits and legal protections are scant. The jobs are precarious, and workers feel coerced into them. They are often exploited and treated as tools, animals, or children. They face discrimination along the lines of citizenship, class, gender, and race.

There are morally important issues to discuss about all of these workers and, too, about uncompensated workers in the home. While food workers at each link in the chain deserve scholarly, legal, and political attention, we focus especially on farmworkers as a helpful case for thinking through these issues. Some of the farmworkers we consider are Triqui native Mexican workers—pickers—on the West Coast of the United States.² We focus on them because the experiences of these workers exemplify many of the issues that we have already explained. There is significant evidence that their experience is usual: descriptions of it cohere with descriptions of fieldworkers in *Bon Appétit* Foundation (2011), Bove (2003, 2007), Estabrook (2009, 2011), McMillan (2012a, 2012b),

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Mines and Nichols (2009), Saxton (2015), all the way back to McWilliams (1939). So while our view is not panoptic, our focus should not lead a reader to think our points are limited to the ethics of treating a certain group of people in certain fields in a certain way. They are, rather, meant to draw out ethical issues in many areas of food labor: interpersonal relations in the workplace, societal-level issues of economic exploitation, sexism, and racism, and international issues of immigration and political economy. (p. 496)

The Fields in Detail

Consider farmworkers on medium-sized and large industrial fields on the West Coast of the United States. Their work conditions, which will be described in some detail, are like the conditions in Floridian tomato fields described by John Bowe (2003, 2007) and Estabrook (2009, 2011). They are like conditions in Mexican fields described by Richard Marosi (2014) and conditions in Southeast Asian fields described by Raj Patel (2007).

These workers differ from some workers described by Bowe and Estabrook, workers who are enslaved: kidnapped to work, not free to leave their jobs, who work under the watch of armed guards, who are beaten for failing to work or trying to escape, are confined to their homes (shacks, backs of trucks), and are charged exorbitant fees for services with the net effect that workers are in debt.³

In the words of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, agricultural enslavement is “not the norm in agriculture today. Rather, modern-day slavery occurs along a continuum of systemic abuse that can best be described as sweatshop conditions” (n.d.; cf. Bowe 2007, 79–80). Most farmworkers would not be considered slaves in legal terms. They have some latitude to find other jobs, though these other options are limited. In addition, at times, they organize for better working conditions.⁴ Yet the lives of farmworkers on the West Coast are highly controlled, which is one of the reasons immigrant farm work has been called “modern-day slavery.”

For example, consider a Triqui strawberry picker. He or she might wake up before sunrise to get the children ready for school or daycare and then drive or be driven to the field. Sometimes this is a short commute—in Washington, workers sometimes live on-site—sometimes it is over an hour each way.

Picking strawberries starts before sunrise. It proceeds like a factory in the fields:⁵ humans bent over, picking quickly with both hands over and over, filling buckets and then running to weigh and empty those buckets. This repeats till the field is finished in the afternoon. (Raspberry pickers might work 12–18 hours per day, onion pickers even more.)

To maximize productivity, workers take few breaks: more breaks makes for less fruit and, because workers are typically paid by the weight of what they pick, less pay. Furthermore, most farms lay off workers who do not pick a minimum weight per day. To avoid needing to take breaks to use the bathroom and thereby risk missing the minimum and being laid off, pickers eat and drink little before work. Only very recently did Washington State pass a law requiring official lunch or bathroom breaks (Jenkins (p. 497) 2015; State of Washington 2015; cf. Holmes 2013, 83, 93). Time on break opens one up to reprimands from field supervisors who are tasked with supervising picking, exhorting, instructing, and reprimanding. Workers are also directly but informally supervised by

“checkers” who mark start and end times of work and weigh produce picked. Treatment ranges from respectful to disrespectful with the latter having a racist and dehumanizing tinge (Gray 2013, 44; Holmes 2013, 36).

Work done, workers go back to the camp (sometimes via required farm transportation paid for by the workers). They pick up the kids or meet them at home. They do laundry. They get food. Occasionally, they attend a baptism party or health fair. They cook for the family (cooking is usually done by the women even though they often picked all day).⁶ They sleep and then repeat again the next morning as long as weather permits. This happens daily in Washington, six days per week in California. The strawberry season might last four to six weeks. Raspberries are similar. Blueberries last longer. Once a season is over, workers move on to new fields. The moving involves dislocation and the psychic costs of that. Movement also reduces workers’ time in one place and, hence, ability to put down roots and derive benefit from that (e.g., financial and social benefits for grown-ups, educational and social benefits for children).

At the same time, during this extremely demanding and damaging work, immigrant farmworkers build what Sarah Willen has called “inhabitable spaces of welcome” (Willen 2014) for themselves and their families in an effort to exercise power and choice wherever possible (Jackson 2005). In the midst of the severe limitations placed on them by their work, by structural racism, and anti-immigrant policies and practices, they build relationships, care for one another, work toward better futures for themselves and their families, and, as already mentioned, at times organize for change.

This brief sketch does not make clear the extraordinary toll of picking. Because of the hard, repetitive, lasting job, workers experience gastritis, headaches, and pains in their backs, hips, knees, and necks. They have higher than average rates of anemia, dental problems, diabetes, heart disease, hypertension, kidney and liver abnormalities, malnutrition, memory problems, nonfatal injuries, and sleep disturbances.⁷ Whereas farm executives worry about sustaining their business and worry about typical Western middle-class conditions—heart disease, various cancers—whereas their immediate subordinates worry about that and their relations with their bosses, and whereas their administrative assistants worry about those and about repetitive stress injuries, pickers worry about all those plus the conditions already enumerated plus whether they will be able to keep their jobs and their housing, plus pesticide poisoning.⁸ (p. 498)

For the pressure to work day after day at such a pace and the anxiety about losing one’s job make for risky picking practices. Strawberry pickers work without gloves. Pesticide residue mixes with strawberry juice and stains their hands. If they eat anything, they eat it in the fields while picking, without washing their hands so as not to take time away from work, so as not to risk failing to pick the minimum weight. Information on the dangers of pesticides is sometimes given only in English though workers often do not speak English, sometimes given in inaudible Spanish though many workers do not speak

Spanish (Holmes 2013, 173). And yet pesticides are something about which workers should be educated since

long-term exposure to chemicals can lead to serious health consequences for both workers and their families . . . [P]regnant women exposed to common agricultural pesticides produced children with diminished cognitive development and, in some cases, lower IQs. . . . Meanwhile, the pesticides heptachlor and lindane . . . have been linked to elevated rates of prostate cancers in farmworkers. Cancers of the lip, stomach, and prostate, as well as leukemia, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, and multiple myeloma are found at such elevated rates among farmworkers that they are sometimes referred to as "agricultural cancers" (Mills, et al (2009)).

(McMillan 2012b, 44)

Work from the early 1990s suggests that between a third and a half of agricultural workers report conditions signaling pesticide exposure (Rust 1990; Slesinger 1992). There are 10,000–20,000 diagnosed cases of pesticide poisoning in the United States annually (NIOSH 2015). Work from the early 2000s suggests that children born near farms are more likely to be stillborn or deformed, presumed due to pesticide exposure (Eskenazi et al. 1999; Frank 2004; Marks et al. 2010).⁹

As compensation for this risky, hard work, there is very low pay. There is no minimum wage for workers under age fourteen. For those older, there is effectively no guaranteed minimum wage (102; see, too, Bowe 2007, 84; Ehrenreich 2011, ch. 3; McMillan 2012b, part two). Pickers are paid by their output, by the volume of fruit they pick. They are legally guaranteed minimum wage so they are given a minimum weight to make their work worthwhile. Enough failures to meet the minimum—as few as two—can get them fired. On the one hand, there is pressure and encouragement to work in ways that can degrade the body and produce an increase in allostatic load. On the other hand, the law guarantees minimum wage for the many hours put in.

Even so, Bowe reports the median annual income for a farmworker as \$7,500 (Bowe 2007, 8). The State of Washington reports it between \$8,000 and \$9,000 (Holmes 2013). Bon Appétit (2011) puts it between \$15,000 and \$17,500. Tracie McMillan (2012) pegs (p. 499) it at \$19,000. How is it possible that pickers work so long at minimum wage and get so little money?

For one, there is mis-recording of their hours worked. In her fieldwork, McMillan picked garlic for 8.5 hours per day. The minimum wage where she worked was \$8 per hour. Yet she took home \$16—effectively earning \$1.80 per hour. To keep costs down, her farm credited her for working two hours at minimum wage (McMillan 2014; 2012b, 66, 75). Relatedly, a standard start and finish time might be entered on one's time card, regardless of when one actually worked (Holmes 2013, 68).

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Also pushing wages down is routine mis-recording of how much weight is picked (Bowe 2007, 19–21; Holmes 2013, 70, 76; McMillan 2012b, 57). Checkers routinely round down the weight of produce picked instead of paying for the exact amount.

These illicitly meager wages might then be garnished. Workers might be required to pay a “ride-giver” to take them to work each day or have payment withheld for food or housing or bathing. Bowe (2007) details an example of wages being garnished for use of a cold-water hose “shower.”

Much of this is illegal and yet

enforcement in the fields has always been rare and has [recently] shrunk further. . . . Federal investigations of agricultural workplaces dropped by 60 percent between 1986 and 2008, according to analysis of data from the Department of Labor by Oxfam and Farmworker Justice, a farmworker advocacy group. In 2008, inspectors visited 1,499 farms of the more than 2 million in operation nationwide. This is not just bad news for workers but for those [farmers] who play by the rules. By paying honest wages, they operate at a significant disadvantage compared to those who flout the law . . .

Even when violations are found, they rarely cost employers much. . . . Across the country, penalties for underpaying workers are so minimal, and so unlikely to be levied, that there’s no deterrent effect, says Mark Heller, a leading farmworker advocate from Ohio’s agricultural belt. “If you cheat 1,000 workers a week,” he says, “you might have to pay \$4,000 to one person who complains but in the meantime you save \$100,000. It’s cheaper to violate the law than to follow the law.”

(McMillan 2012a)

So while, as we indicated, an important new law in Washington mandates paid lunch and bathroom breaks, the mere existence of the law is insufficient for producing those breaks. It will be important to watch how effectively this law will be followed and enforced.

Generally, the legal protections that are an important bulwark preventing pickers from being slaves are weak and weakly enforced: no explicitly protected collective bargaining in most states, no overtime, no right to days off, and no paid sick days. Smaller farms in many states are held to even lower standards.¹⁰ This both reflects and reinforces the fact (p. 500) that workers are at the bottom of the pecking order in places like western Washington or the Central Valley of California (Holmes 2013, 96). Here we will just mention two signs of farmworker positioning in the pecking order: housing and healthcare.

Some workers live in a camp on-site. In cases documented by Seth Holmes (2013), they pay no rent but the camp comprises 10 x 12 shacks (at times, confused as chicken coops).

Some are insulated. Some are not. Those that are not are subject to dramatic fluctuations in temperature because the roofs are made of tin that makes the interior hot in the sun or cold in the night. (For more on this, see Gray 2013, 57; Holmes 2013, 47, 76.)

Other farmworkers rent apartments. Researching, Holmes (2013) and his cohort rent a flophouse: three bedrooms, one bath for nineteen people. It is fetid, dirty, and in disrepair. This is not unusual. Don Villarejo and his colleagues report that almost half of all farmworkers live in overcrowded housing—more than one person/room—and a full quarter live in severely overcrowded housing—more than 1.5 persons/room (cf. McMillan 2012, 42). This matters because

a wide range of health risks are associated with [overcrowded] housing conditions of farm laborers and their families, including anxiety, depression, exposure to toxic agricultural chemicals . . . increased risk of infectious disease due to poor sanitary conditions, and increased risk of infectious disease due to crowded conditions.

(Villarejo et al. 2010, viii; cf. *Bon Appétit* 2011, 21; McMillan 2012, 43)

Overcrowding increases stress that is, of course, itself unpleasant but also increases health risks and structural vulnerability (Holmes 2011; 2013, 97, 101; Quesada, Bourgois, and Hart 2011). Health risks are compounded by poor access to healthcare and obstacles to good treatment once that healthcare is accessed.

Healthcare requires patients and doctors who are able to understand each other, but many hospitals do not offer doctors who speak Spanish or sufficient interpreters. Moreover, if a hospital has no Spanish interpreter, it has neither a Triqui nor Mixtec nor Zapotec interpreter, making speaking with non-Spanish-speaking migrant workers all but impossible (Holmes 2013, 142–143). The norm in healthcare is to make it accessible. Having interpreters is a necessary condition for this.

Finances are another barrier to accessibility. Despite the acute need for health services for farmworkers, only fifteen states offer workers' compensation to this population. The federal migrant health program is estimated to reach less than 15% of migrants (Holmes 2013, 102). Nearly 80% of farmworkers lack health insurance. In the words of Kurt Organista: "Such low rates . . . are the result of a formidable array of structural, cultural, and legal barriers about which service providers need to be aware if they are to have any success serving farm workers" (2008, 108–109).¹¹ (p. 501)

Overview of Ethical Issues

So much for what conditions for fieldworkers are like. These conditions raise a range of ethical issues. Some are about individuals: Is it permissible for employers to treat

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workers in various ways? If not permissible, why not? Is it bad for employers to treat workers that way? Unjust? Coercive? Exploitative? If so, how so?

Then there are issues where it is unclear how much power individual persons have in the situation but where wrong—or something otherwise morally objectionable—seems to be done all the same: Is it distributively just that workers' lives go so harshly? That they go so much more harshly than their employers'? That they go so much more harshly than the lives of pickers who are born in the United States? Or go so much more harshly than they would under alternative labor regimes? If any of these is a background injustice, who perpetrates it and who is responsible to remedy it?

Relatedly, if treating workers in certain ways is wrong or unjust, is it permissible to buy products produced by such wrongful treatment? If treating certain workers in certain ways is wrong or unjust or coercive, who—or what—is responsible for that treatment?

This essay is an overview. No issue can be dealt with in full depth. For a deeper dive into one issue in food work, see Sabine Tsuruda's essay in this volume. Also, our overview is not panoptic. Some issues are not considered fully here because they are so broad—for example, the political economic injustice of some having so much while others have so little. Others are left out because they are so straightforward—whether it is morally objectionable to withhold payment just because you can.

Pain and Suffering

Harm is clearly inflicted on workers in the form of physical and psychological suffering:¹² knee pain, gastritis, anxiety, and so on. Picking is “pure torture” (Holmes 2013, 74) and not to be confused with the soreness someone might feel after a day's gardening. An interesting ethical issue that we do not have space to discuss arises from the fact that people might misunderstand pickers' work conditions by generalizing from their own experiences in gardens or as teenage farmworkers (Holmes 2013, 72).

The infliction of such suffering is *pro tanto* wrong. There is clearly something morally objectionable about the infliction of such intense suffering. It crowds out other parts of (p. 502) life out of the fields. Out of the fields in the short term, workers, among other things, manage pain.

And note that the suffering is not limited to short-term effects of hard work. It is not like suffering from painful medical procedures with no long-term harmful side-effects. On the contrary, picking produces short-term suffering and also durable pain and long-term decay. As we noted, farmworkers have higher than average rates of kidney and liver defects, higher than average rates of assorted cancers. Durable, chronic pain is tagged in Anna Case and Angus Deaton (2015) as a driver of suicide. Hope Tiesman et al. (2015) rate farming as the job with the second-highest suicide rate in the United States.

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Who proximately inflicts the suffering is clear: field bosses. Who ultimately inflicts it and who is morally responsible or blameworthy for such infliction are less clear.

Take knee pain, a common affliction proximately caused by the fact that picking strawberries requires folding one's body over, repeatedly pivoting, making small, rapid movement for hours each day, six or seven days per week. Abelino, a picker profiled by Holmes (2013), suffers this pain because of this style of picking. What proximately causes him to pick this way were the demands of his field bosses. Yet these people, like Abelino, are just following orders. The field bosses just follow orders of their managers who, in turn, follow the orders of farm executives who, to some extent, are subject to the demands of a consumer collective or individuals comprising it or the demands of shareholders or of the functioning of the prevailing economic system more broadly. Martin (2015) argues that responsibility for the treatment of factory-farmed animals accrues to consumers even more than to farmworkers or even farm owners. If she is right, similar points apply to responsibility for the treatment of workers.

It is unclear which of these people—field bosses, managers, farm executives, shareholders, consumers, policymakers organizing the economic system and excluding farmworkers from legal labor protections—should be thought of as primarily responsible for Abelino's suffering. It could be more than one. The causal origins of Abelino's knee pain trace not only to supervisors in the fields, farm owners, and strawberry consumers but also to politicians and educators on both sides of the border. As Iris Marion Young (2004) stresses with regard to responsibility for sweatshop conditions, there are types of responsibility that are not causal. There are, to boot, candidates for responsibility that are not persons: economic systems and social and cultural forces. Because of various economic policies and because of local exclusionary perceptions and practices, Abelino had vanishingly few opportunities for employment. Strawberry picking, the proximate cause of his pain, was best of the bunch available to him (Holmes 2013, 94; cf. Holmes 2011).

Exploitation

This suggests that Abelino was exploited into taking this position.

There is philosophical disagreement about the nature of exploitation, but there is some consensus that it requires someone (or something) getting something from (p. 503) someone else when and because the latter was vulnerable, "taking advantage" of that vulnerability. Exploitation might, too, require harming the latter or treating her or him as a tool. It might require unfair acquisition of benefit. There is disagreement about each of these. But there is less disagreement that exploitation involves getting something from someone when and because that person is vulnerable and that manifests in the fields. Farmworkers are a vulnerable population, having few options for work (Holmes 2011,

2013; Quesada et al. 2011). Indigenous Mexicans are an especially vulnerable population (Mines and Nichols 2009). Because they are vulnerable, they can be treated in ways that seem morally objectionable. As a border patrol agent describing migrant workers says:

You know these workers are so vulnerable. They're housed miles from civilization with no telephones or cards. Whatever they are told they're gonna do. . . . They're controllable.¹³

As Margaret Gray writes, “[Farm bosses] who saw themselves as offering an escape from third world poverty . . . could not avoid taking advantage of workers’ undocumented legal status to tighten their control over them” (2013, 96).

When workers are mistreated by having their hours miscounted or not being paid overtime, when they are pressured into not joining unions, when they are offered illegally shoddy housing, when they are given risky jobs for very little compensation, these are plausibly instances of exploitation: workers are mistreated and mistreated because they are vulnerable in certain ways—as unauthorized immigrants, as people who are not fluent in English, as working-class people, and as racialized workers, they either lack legal recourse or are not functionally able to access that recourse.

Bosses,¹⁴ landlords, and even farm apparatchiks exploit. But then there are further questions about what else exploits the farmworkers: in many understandings, the system of capitalism clearly exploits. Does the state as well? What does treatment of farmworkers tell us about which things can exploit?

Also, the treatment of workers might be systematically exploitative—and exploitative along racial or gender and immigration status lines—and that is oppressive, as argued by Young (1990).

This treatment raises a series of questions: When is exploitation morally problematic? Is it possible to exploit a worker while also making that worker better off? If so, need such exploitation be morally objectionable?

We have not argued for it fully here, but our view is that farmworkers are clearly exploited and that this exploitation is clearly morally objectionable and so if those workers are better off overall as a result of that treatment, this shows that exploitation need (p. 504) not involve any worsening-off to be problematic. Yet this raises a question of why is exploitation morally problematic. Is exploitation problematic because it harms? Because it harms and treats victim unfairly? Because it involves benefiting from pro tanto wrongdoing? All of the above?¹⁵

Treating as a Tool

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In order for migrants to be exploited, some accounts imply, migrants must be treated as tools. Yet if they are treated as tools, this might itself be morally problematic regardless of its connection to exploitation.

Indeed, the language of being treated as a tool or used—we treat the two synonymously—recurs in literature on food workers. A doctor who treats indigenous Mexican farmworkers says:

I see an awful lot of people just wearing out. They have been used and abused and worked physically harder than anybody should be expected to work for that number of years In their early forties they have the arthritis of a seventy year old and they are not getting better.

(Quoted in Holmes 2011, 4)

This recalls a chilling portion of Eric Schlosser's book *Fast Food Nation*, an interview with Kenny Dobbins, a broken-down slaughterhouse worker:

"They [the slaughterhouse bosses] used me to the point where I had no body parts left to give," Kenny said, struggling to maintain his composure. "Then they just tossed me into the trash can." Once strong and powerfully built, he now walks with difficulty, tires easily, and feels useless, as though his life were over. He is forty-six years old. (2001, 190)

Schlosser reveals that these body parts have something like prices: you might get \$36,000 in workers' compensation for losing an arm, \$3,000 for a finger, \$2,000 for "disfigurement," and so on (Schlosser 2001, 185).

Julie Guthman critiques the ways workers are treated as subsidies:

Healthy fresh fruits and vegetables, celebrated by the contemporary food movement and health professionals alike, are also artificially cheap, subsidized not by federal payments, but by the bodies of those who cultivate and harvest them. (2014, 331)

(p. 505)

The suggestion is that workers are tools or machines to be used to pick strawberries, chop up carcasses, whatever. They are treated as merely these things, what Upton Sinclair calls "cogs in the great . . . machine."¹⁶

The "merely" is important. When someone orders a coffee from a barista, it might be that they treat that person as a tool to getting that coffee but perhaps not merely as a tool. The philosophical literature on this is complicated, but there is some consensus that when a worker is treated merely as a tool, that worker is seen as lacking autonomy, as fungible, as property, as simply a way to benefit their bosses. Tools—cogs, screwdrivers, coffeemakers—are understood to lack feelings and wants and so understood to lack feelings and wants that need respecting. One's treatment of a barista should (though may

not) meet few of these conditions. In the fields, being treated merely as a tool, being used, manifests in being worked hard, in not having breaks, in lax treatment under the law (and then lax enforcement of those laws, as if the laws protecting farmworkers are not worth enforcing).

On various moral theories, there is something suspect about treating people merely as tools though what, exactly, is suspect varies from theory to theory. As we said, it could be that treating someone merely as a tool is suspect because of its contribution to exploitation and exploitation is objectionable. It could be that treating someone merely as a tool manifests an objectionable attitude on the part of the user and is wrong because of that. Instead, it could be that the mechanics of treating someone merely as a tool—regardless of the attitudes of the user—are themselves objectionable. Or it could be that treating someone merely as a tool is objectionable purely because of its effects on the workers. Or it could be objectionable for all of these reasons or more.

One important question in food work is what the right account is of what treating someone merely as a tool is. Others are when and why it is objectionable. Finally, who or what treats farmworkers merely as tools and who or what is complicit in that treatment? Immediate supervisors like checkers or field bosses? Higher-ups on the farm? Consumers? Architects of trade agreements that produce the current system of migration? People who vote for those agreements? We suggest all of these in different ways.¹⁷

Treating as an Animal or a Child

As workers are sometimes treated as tools, they are also “treated . . . as inferiors, sometimes as animals” (Holmes 2013, 36), falling along what has been called a hierarchy of animacy by Chen (2012).¹⁸ A worker interviewed by Bowe says she was “treated like a dog” (2007, 42). Richard Street’s history of California farmworkers entitled *Beasts of the Fields* derives its name from a newspaper claim in 1888 that Chinese migrant workers “could be treated like beasts of the field, and like them be removed by their drivers or herders when no longer needed” (2004, xxx). Gray quotes a worker saying he is treated as less than a dog (2013, 44). The insults used for Triqui workers are those used for dogs or small children: “dirty” (67) or “untrustworthy” (69). This treatment as animal or child also manifests in hospitals that assign a low priority or lack the necessary sensitivity and cultural knowledge to understand what non-English-speaking workers go through (Holmes 2013, 151). Treatment as an animal manifests in the way workers are housed.

Gray (2013) highlights farm boss “paternalism,” wherein workers are treated as children to be controlled by parents and whose lives are open to those ersatz parents (see esp. 53–61). As Gray brings up, even on “good” farms the amount of control that owners have over workers is quite large. Because some of them have good relationships with their

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workers, employers might feel emboldened to control which school workers send their kids to, which doctor to see, and so on. Farmworkers are, like pets or children, micromanaged and “dominated” by others in the useful term of Bourdieu (2000, 2001) and Pettit (1997).

As with treating workers as tools, on various moral theories, there is something morally suspect about treating adults as children or animals though what, exactly, is suspect varies from theory to theory. It could be that treating someone merely as a child or animal is suspect because it is paternalistic, and paternalism is objectionable. (For more on food and paternalism, see Sarah Conly’s and Seana Shiffrin’s essays, in this volume.) It could be that treating someone as a child or animal manifests an objectionable attitude¹⁹ and is wrong because of that. Or it could be that treating someone merely as a child or animal is objectionable because of the control it involves and control it produces. Or it could be objectionably for all of these reasons or more.

As with treating people like tools, treating them as children or animals raises a series of questions: What is it to treat an adult as a child or animal? When and why is it objectionable? Who or what treats farmworkers merely as children or animals? Who or what is complicit in that treatment? Immediate supervisors like checkers or field bosses? Higher-ups on the farm? Community members? Consumers? Architects of trade agreements that produce the current system of migration? People who vote for (p. 507) those agreements? Societies stratified by race, class and immigration status? Individuals within those societies who live within such stratification? Again, we suggest all of these things in different ways.²⁰

Racism, Sexism, Classism

The treating of someone as a tool or as a child or as an animal is the treatment of a particular group of people: poor, primarily Latin American, migrant workers. The treatment of these workers is raced and classed (and often gendered and “illegalized,” see Holmes 2013; Willen 2012).

There are multiple layers of racism affecting farmwork, from individual interpersonal to institutional to structural (see also Jones 2000). Interpersonal racism can be seen in the comments of field supervisors calling farmworkers such things as “indios estúpidos” or “Oaxacos” (a deliberate mispronunciation of “Oaxaqueños” with an explicit derogatory meaning) (Holmes 2013; Jones 2000). Institutional racism can be seen in the ways in which indigenous Mexican farmworkers are not promoted to processing or other jobs as often as mestizo (non-indigenous) Mexicans based on many, relatively small and uncoordinated decisions and policies that are not explicitly orchestrated by any one person or group on the farm (Holmes 2013; Jones 2000). Another example of institutional racism could be the lack of translators in hospitals and clinics. Structural racism can be seen in the ethnic hierarchies in society at large that lead to differential access on a

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broad level to political power and economic stability that affect indigenous Mexican immigrants significantly and that have historically produced a racialized agricultural workforce in California (Brown and Getz 2011; Holmes 2013; Metzler and Roberts 2014; cf. Young 1990 on gendered divisions of labor). Labor laws themselves were borne of structural racism. Gray writes:

The exemption of agricultural workers from labor laws dates to an era when the southern Democrats' lock on national electoral politics was unassailable, resulting in white supremacist politics that assured the perpetuation of a low-wage, southern, black work force. (2013, 49)

Structural racism is a form of “structural violence” (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2003) and is of a piece with structural violence manifested as social inequalities and hierarchies among categories of class, gender, and race. It is violence committed by configurations of social inequalities that, in the end, hurts (Holmes 2013, 43, 89; cf. Holmes 2007, 2012). It is violence because it is the infliction of physical harm through force. It is structural because the infliction results from the way one food system—a “structure”—is set up (Farmer 1996) rather than from an attack of one or more persons on another. (p. 508)

Of course, some race-, gender-, and class-based violence in the fields is more direct and physical: Irma Morales Waugh (2010) surveyed 150 Mexican and Mexican American female fieldworkers in California's Central Valley. Eighty percent reported being sexually harassed (McMillan 2012b, 60). Andres Cediell (2013) gives an account of sexual assault in farmwork.²¹

So there is objectification based on race or gender or class. There is hostility based on those things. There is what Lawrence Blum (2002) calls “inferiorization” based on them. One ethical issue is to figure out which aspects of these are wrong. Another is to figure out whether there are aspects in addition to objectification, hostility, and inferiorization themselves that are wrong or that support the objectionable racism, sexism, and classism.

At any rate, objectification, hostility, and inferiorization issue from and then help to support various injustices—something like a caste system out of the workplace, a compartmentalization in the workplace, and so on—and products of injustice and supports for injustice are themselves objectionable.²²

Coercion

What is worse, participation in this labor system seems not to be the result of free, informed choice on the part of workers. Consider this recurrent note in Holmes's work on indigenous migrant labor. He writes that Triqui laborers

understood [migration] as something that they were forced into. [It was] not something where they . . . weighed pros and cons or all those things that we tend to assume about migration. Even academics who do migration studies often write about the push and pull factors and the way that immigrants weigh those factors and then make a choice to immigrate at a certain point. But the Triqui people . . . none of them ever talked about weighing pros and cons or making a decision. The only decision they ever talked about was, “Who’s going to migrate?” because every family in their home village had at least one or two or three people in the U.S., working and sending money back . . . the Triqui people weren’t talking about NAFTA so much. They were just talking about, “We can’t sell our corn, and there are no jobs here, and we have to go get jobs, so we’re going to leave our land (p. 509) here and leave our farms here to go and work on farms up there.”

(McMillan 2013; cf. Holmes 2013, 17–18, 21, 91)²³

What is more, there are ways in which the political and economic system coerces not only subsistence farmers in southern Mexico to migrate (see also Holmes and Castaneda 2016; Yarris and Castaneda 2015) but also, in different ways, impinges on growers themselves (Holmes 2013, 180).

The language in these works is the language of coercion either physical (involving the laying on of hands) or volitional (operating directly on the will). Although Holmes shows in other places how growers, managers, and supervisors have some range of decision, and, therefore responsibility, their range of decision-making possibilities is enabled, encouraged, fostered, inflected, and limited by economic and political structures. Thus, there is significant coercion in the midst of some leeway within multiple levels of responsibility. Farmworker organizations calling for local, state, federal, and international change make these multiple levels of responsibility clear, as well.

To coerce is to, in some sense, force someone to do something they, in some sense, prefer not to do. But in which senses? There is a vast philosophical literature about this, focusing on the nature of coercion, which types of actions can be coercive (threats, offers?) and which types of things can coerce (individuals, governments, economic systems?).

There is consensus, though, that coercing someone is pro tanto wrong and that being coerced into something lessens one’s moral responsibility for it (Pallikkathayil [2011] connects these two.) There is consensus, too, that something morally objectionable about food work is the coercion involved. Yet something striking about the coercion of farmworkers and their immediate employers—and this is especially striking with migrant workers—is that apparently coercive force comes from trade agreements or economic systems. For example, Triqui people are apparently coerced into leaving Oaxaca, but there is no single human agent who coerces (though there are humans involved in multiple levels of decisions in these processes). There are other apparent cases of

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coercion that involve agents: apparently coercive pressure to take certain housing or to pick at a furious rate.

Which happenings in the field are coerced? Which, by contrast, are merely instances of hard-nosed but fair bargaining? (Could there be hard-nosed but fair bargaining between persons of greatly unequal power?) Who or what does the coercing? If by something other than a person, that constrains philosophical accounts of coercion: they should not imply that only persons can coerce. Is the fact that Triqui families have no good option for work in Oaxaca sufficient to show that they are coerced into leaving? If so, why? If farmworkers are coerced into various actions, what does this show about their responsibility for them or for actions that follow from the coerced actions?²⁴ (p. 510)

Immigration Ethics

Recent estimates have it that nearly 81% of agricultural workers in the United States are immigrants from another country, 95% of whom were born in Mexico and more than half of whom are unauthorized immigrants (see Frank et al. 2004; Kandula et al. 2004; for what happens when such unauthorized immigrants are not allowed to work, see Powell 2012). Two levels in which a continuum of coercion is apparent in immigration are, first, the question of whether or not to immigrate and, second, the questions of how to immigrate. Despite the ways in which politicians and even many scholars speak and write about immigration, many immigrant farmworkers indicate that they do not experience immigration as a choice or at least clearly not a free choice. There are clear ways in which economic inequalities significantly influenced by policies and broad economic systems push many people to leave their home countries (most commonly Mexico) and work on farms in the United States (for an overview, see Yarris and Castaneda 2015). This level of coercion is seen clearly in the statements of farmworkers already adduced.

One cluster of issues about immigration surrounds the justice of a system that coerces migration and the justice of laws that forbid migration (Burawoy 1976). Is it unjust that, through no fault of their own but through the fault of public policy, Triqui people need to migrate for work (whereas their bosses do not)? What are the moral objections to public policy that has facilitated or necessitated this migration? What are the moral objections to the migration producing and reinforcing a system in which some have so much and others have so little through no fault of their own? This raises a further series of important issues about government complicity and voter complicity.²⁵

Another cluster of issues about immigration surrounds the mechanics of migration into the United States: dangerous border towns, hundreds of annual deaths due to heat stroke, dehydration, and violence that are partially due to knowing decisions of Border Patrol leadership,²⁶ exploitative treatment at the hands of some coyotes (though some coyotes are experienced as protectors) or people who pretend to be coyotes and others who facilitate crossing or outright kidnap border-crossing hopefuls.²⁷ Unauthorized

status is understood by many to increase detrimental allostatic load due to fear of apprehension and traumatic experiences crossing the US–Mexico border (McGuire and Georges 2003). Another level on which significant coercion is apparent involves the means by which one immigrates.²⁸ (p. 511)

What Should Be Done in Response to This Morally Bad Situation? And Why Is This a Complex Question?

Some issues discussed here are international issues. Some are national issues. Others are local issues. Still others are interpersonal.

Some issues are easy (e.g., some farms falsify how long their workers work).²⁹ This is easy in two ways: first, it is clear what is being done is morally wrong; second, it is clear what should be done and doing it is straightforward.

This is not always the case. Some treatment that might, at first, look morally wrong is not, on closer inspection, wrong. Closer inspection reveals a context that renders that treatment permissible. For example, two people punching each other might seem morally wrong, but be permissible when closer inspection reveals the fighters are boxers sparring for consensual fun.

The boxing example is useful because, as we said, typically, it is morally wrong to inflict suffering on others, but it is generally considered permissible in certain cases. Boxing matches are typically such cases as boxers agree to the risk of harm.

Consider the frameworks through which the treatment of farmworkers is at times considered morally permissible: some might consider it permissible to inflict various costs on them because they are understood to have freely chosen that work and permissible to impose costs on people that they might freely agree to.³⁰

There are two questions here: Do workers consent to their treatment—is simply repeatedly showing up for work consent? If so, does this consent render treatment permissible?

We follow Wertheimer (2003) in assuming that consent is transformative—something that makes treatment go from impermissible to permissible—only if (a) informed about risks, benefits, and alternatives and (b) not coerced.

There are clearly cases in the fields in which consent is not informed and so (a) is not satisfied: migrant farmworkers do not give informed consent to pesticide risks, since those risks are not explained in any detail in a language that is well-understood (p. 512)

by workers.³¹ (This is one way in which they are treated like small children or animals, beings whom we sometimes deceive without moral qualms.)

There are also clearly cases in which it is plausible that (a) is satisfied and workers are informed about those aspects. They know that the work will be long, monotonous, and painful. They know that the work has produced long-term maladies in co-workers. Their repeatedly showing up for this work could be considered a form of informed consent to related conditions.

Earlier, we discussed whether Triqui workers are coerced into taking various positions. If so, this is morally objectionable in itself—coercing of morally responsible agents is objectionable—but it is also significant since if they are coerced, then their consent is not transformative any more than your consent is when you give your wallet to a mugger who will kill you if you do not do so. If so, condition (b) for transformative consent is not met.

While the consent given to some suffering in the field—knee pain, back pain—seems to us informed and clear-headed, it is also arguably coerced: workers have relatively little choice of job. This lack of choice does not issue from some prior free choice. It does not issue from some state of nature. Rather, it issues from a structure of society, economy, and government, a structure that, for example, Triqui migrant workers have relatively little role in constructing or choosing, though there are clearly ways in which Triqui people are active in negotiating and organizing in relation to this reality. It is a hard question to what extent there is transformative consent here. In many ways, it appears plainly coerced. Because of this, it is questionable that the physical suffering inflicted on Triqui farmworkers is permissible. This issue of questionable permissibility crops up in farm work in general, in slaughterhouses, and in restaurants. In each of these areas of food work, it is reasonable to argue that treatment should be changed in many of the specific areas pointed out so far.

What Are the Alternatives to Current Treatment of Workers? Why Is the Issue of Whether Certain Treatment Is Morally Objectionable Complex?

Physical suffering and monotony are endemic to this sort of repetitive work. Workers could be better compensated for this, which would increase the price of food in ways (p. 513) that would require changes in consumer habits and in societal values in the United States (one of the countries in which residents pay very little per capita relatively for their fruits and vegetables). Similar remarks apply to shortening worker hours or improving worker housing. Indeed, people in the United States would need to start

valuing more (including in practice) their food and the laborers who provide that food. The relatively low value currently conceived of for food work in the United States can be seen in the legal category of farm labor as “unskilled” or “low skilled” despite research indicating directly otherwise (Holmes 2013, 184). As Holmes writes:

Over the course of my fieldwork, many of my friends and family who visited me in the labor camp quickly blamed the farm management for the poor living and working conditions of berry pickers. They automatically assumed that the growers could easily rectify the situation. That supposition is supported by other writings on farmworkers, many of which describe the details of pickers’ lives but leave out the experience of growers. . . . The stark reality and precarious future of the farm serve as reminders that the situation is more complex. The corporatization of US agriculture and the growth of international free markets . . . many of the most powerful inputs into the suffering of farmworkers are structural, not willed by individual agents. (2013, 52)

Partly generating the problems of low pay and rank housing are structural features—laws, economic systems, patterns of xenophobic treatment of poor foreigners—that farm bosses did not cause or originate. Farm bosses cannot easily change such large, structural features on their own. At the same time, aspects of these working and living conditions issue clearly from decisions made by farm owners and bosses such that there clearly is a layer of responsibility at the level of the owners and bosses and another at the level of political and economic structures and all of us located within and complicit with them. Likewise, while it is straightforward to stop using racial slurs, and people who use them are responsible for doing so, other sorts of racism (e.g., a lack of indigenous language translators in hospitals) are built into the structures of things in a way that makes that racism more complex, though very important, to change.

The difficulty in improving various conditions matters because while it is clear that certain aspects of farmworker jobs are morally objectionable, some people argue that they are permissible because those conditions are the best realistic conditions for those workers, that a system in which there was less suffering is simply too far-off in social and political space. For some, that will be sufficient to show that conditions in the field (and in hospitals, with regard to housing, etc.) might be considered permissible.³²

Yet we should be careful about assuming conditions are immutable. In food work, there are important case studies in improvement: United Farm Workers, Pineros Campesinos Unidos contract farms, a lawsuit by Familias Unidas por la Justicia changing piece rate payment in Washington State, Coalition of Immokolee Workers producing contracts (p. 514) for better farmworker payment at the level of grocery chains, Equitable Food Initiative Labels (though some organizations argue this should have gone further) linked to specific products, and the work of Restaurant Opportunities Centers United (ROC) and Food Chain Workers Alliance. It is important for consumers to understand how these actions succeed and what they attain over different time frames. And it is important for

consumers, voters, and politicians, with different kinds of responsibility for and complicity with the treatment of food chain workers, to support such important change.

Conclusion

There are all sorts of bad jobs. There is a comic literary genre of stultifyingly boring, coercive, exploitative office work. There is a comic literary genre of pointless, life-sucking, exploitative, coercive academic work. There is a genre of exposés of furious, monotonous, stupidifying work from warehouses to bureaucracies.

We have focused on food workers and somewhat more narrowly on farmworkers in the United States, most of them immigrants from Mexico and some of them native people. Their work is bad in various ways. Their work is painful. They are exploited and coerced into performing it. They are commonly treated like machines or animals or children. They are systematically treated sexistly, racistly, classistly, and xenophobically. Their having only these jobs reflects racist segmentation of work. In part because of this, they lack mobility and control over their jobs and much of their life outside of their jobs. It could be that this badness is something like an organic unity—worse than the sum of its parts.³³ At the same time, it is important to remember the many ways in which these people work to create “inhabitable spaces of welcome” for themselves, their families, and others (Willen 2014), including the ways in which they produce important change through organizing and advocacy.

The food system comprises a great diversity of workers, some of whose conditions are very different from native Mexican immigrant pickers, some of whose conditions are very similar, and many of whose conditions share some commonalities. The discussion here straightforwardly has ethical implications for workers on small, family farms or on large, corporate farms, for workers in slaughterhouses, in grocery stores, and in restaurants. It straightforwardly has implications for cases that have nothing to do with food: migrant laborers building soccer stadiums in Qatar, migrant sweatshop workers in Moscow.³⁴ Like Triqui farmworkers, these workers are coerced, exploited, treated as (p. 515) machines or as animals, and made to suffer. It is clear that some of these workers—like some farmworkers in the United States—are enslaved. There are implications, too, for food work in the home, but these are less straightforward.

What should be changed about these jobs and about food work in particular? Most obviously, improvements in food work conditions will also require better laws, including more fair trade policies and practices and better worker protections, as well as, crucially, better enforcement of these laws. As citizens, residents, voters, and immigrants, we can push for these. As consumers, we can push against mistreatment of farmworkers by supporting farms that do not mistreat and withhold support from those that do. As friends, family, or community members, we can push against unequal narratives or unfair

representations that justify mistreatment (symbolic violence in the words of Bourdieu [2000]). Finally and importantly, we can seek ways to support the work of food chain worker organizations as they work toward a better, more equal future.³⁵

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Notes:

(¹) Indeed, Jayaraman's ending echoes Marx (1844) on labor 150 years ago: "It is true that labor produces for the rich wonderful things—but for the worker it produces privation. It produces palaces—but for the worker, hovels. It produces beauty—but for the worker, deformity." For more on farmworkers, see, among others, Bon Appétit 2011; Bowe 2003, 2007; Gray 2013; Holmes 2013. For more on restaurant workers, see, among others, Bowe et al. 2000; Ehrenreich 2011; McMillan 2012b. For details on slaughterhouse workers, see, among others, Pachirat 2011; Schlosser 2001; Striffler 2005. For details on food workers in the home, see Shapiro 2008; Strasser 2000.

(²) The group is discussed in detail in Holmes 2011, 2012, 2013. For a detailed overview of farm work in general, see Bon Appétit 2011.

(³) See <http://www.ciw-online.org/slavery/>. For discussions of the wrongness of slavery, see Coleman 2016; Hare 1979; Rawls 1971.

(⁴) See Bacon 2016; Bardacke 2012; Minkoff-Zern 2014; Shaw 2008. See also <http://www.fiob.org>; <http://www.pcun.org>; <http://www.ufw.org>; <http://www.foodjustice.org>; <http://www.ciw-online.org>.

(⁵) "Factory in the fields" comes from McWilliams (1939) and the factory imagery is also important to Mintz (1985, esp. ch. 2).

(⁶) Farmworkers often lack enough food. According to Teresa Mares, "the incidence of food insecurity among farmworkers is as high as 3 to 4 times the national average, with a disproportionate number of households experiencing 'very low food security with hunger'" (2016, 4). For an overview of farmworkers in California and food insecurity, see Brown and Getz 2011. For an overview of gender and food work, see ch. 5 of Barnhill et al. 2016. For a deeper look, see Allen and Sachs 2007; Cediel 2013.

(⁷) For more, see Frank et al. 2004; Holmes 2012, 2013; McMillan 2012b; Mobed et al. 1992; Rust 1990; Sakala 1987; Slesinger 1992.

(⁸) See Holmes 2013, 83, 93, 96; Guthman and Brown 2015.

(⁹) Risks involved in animal processing plants are detailed in Schlosser 2001; Pachirat 2011. Risks involved in getting to the United States—injury and death by violence, heat stroke, dehydration, and snakes—are detailed in Cornelius 2001; Doty 2011; Holmes 2012, 2013.

(¹⁰) Gray 2013, 49; for helpful overviews of the lack of legal protections, see Schell 2002; Bon Appétit 2011. See also Harrison and Getz's (2015) work on small versus large farms.

(¹¹) For an account of healthcare for slaughterhouse workers, see Schlosser 2001. For detailed discussion of healthcare for Mexican migrant farmworkers, see Holmes 2007, 2012.

⁽¹²⁾ By suffering, we mean to indicate the physical, emotional, and social pain experienced by people in circumstances of direct, structural, and symbolic violence (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2003). We do not mean to imply a universal human that erases distinction or uniqueness, rather we seek to acknowledge full, three-dimensionality in all its aspects (including what many call agency) and different local contexts, ontologies, and epistemologies.

⁽¹³⁾ Bove 2007, 13; the book is largely about worker exploitation; cf. Holmes 2013, 56; and, for slaughterhouse exploitation, Schlosser 2001, 162.

⁽¹⁴⁾ For some discussion of management, see Gray 2013; Holmes 2013; Jackall 2010.

⁽¹⁵⁾ Two helpful overviews of exploitation are Sample 2003 and Wertheimer 1996.

⁽¹⁶⁾ Sinclair 1906: 92. That slaughterhouse workers are tools or simple machines is a theme of Pachirat 2011, Schlosser 2001, and Striffler 2005. That fieldworkers are tools is a theme of Bove (2007) and Estabrook (2011). During her time in the fields, McMillan (2012b, 74) starts to self-conceive as a tool.

⁽¹⁷⁾ Two foundational pieces on treating humans as tools are Kant 2012 and Marx 1844. Nussbaum 1995 and Langton 2009a are more recent ways into the topic.

⁽¹⁸⁾ This is, again, redolent of treatment of slaughterhouse workers. That people are treated like animals, unruly children, or things to be controlled is a theme of Pachirat 2011 and Schlosser 2001. Treatment as an (irresponsible) child is something Ehrenreich (2011) experiences working at Wal-Mart and that Buford (2006) experiences in various restaurants.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Whether treated as tools or animals or children, it is clear that farmworkers often are not treated respectfully. Indeed, even on small, “idyllic” farms, Margaret Gray says, “Workers on about one-third of the farms I surveyed . . . reported that they were not treated respectfully (2013, 44; for more on the relations between farm size and quality of work, see Harrison and Getz 2015). CIRS (2008) surveyed California farmworkers and found respectful treatment to be the most-valued condition, above compensation and safety.

⁽²⁰⁾ For entries into work on treating adults as animals or children, see Conly 2012; Dworkin 1972; Korsgaard 2015.

⁽²¹⁾ In food work, sexual harassment is not a problem limited to the fields. For statistics on sexual harassment and assault in restaurants, see ROC United 2012; Tahmincioglu 2011. When she works in a restaurant, McMillan herself is repeatedly sexually harassed and then sexually assaulted at a staff party. Saru Jayaraman details several similar cases and reports that “in 2011, 37% of the sexual harassment complaints received by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission were filed by women restaurant workers,

even though only 7% of women in the United States work in restaurants” (2013, 142). Eric Schlosser (2001) details slaughterhouse sexual harassment.

(²²) Some recent entries into the literature on discrimination based on race, gender, or class are Alkon and Agyeman 2011, Blum 2002, Lippert-Rasmussen 2014, and Young 1990.

(²³) Cf. Bowe 2007, 11; Holmes 2013, 21, 17–18.

(²⁴) For entries into work on coercion, see Anderson 2015; Pallikkathayil 2011; Wertheimer 1987.

(²⁵) For some recent treatments of complicity, see Kutz 2000; Lepora and Goodin 2013; Martin 2015.

(²⁶) Holmes 2013, 92. See, too, McMillan 2013.

(²⁷) Rampell 2009; Daily Mail 2014.

(²⁸) For some introductions to immigration ethics, see Carens 2013; Wellman and Cole 2011.

(²⁹) This is morally objectionable as well as illegal. Yet illegal treatment of food workers is common. Paul Thompson writes, “A 2009 report found that roughly 23% of grocery stores and 18% of restaurants in the U.S. violate labor or employment regulations” (2015, 57; cites Bernhardt et al. 2009). For illegality in slaughterhouses, see Schlosser 2001; Pachirat 2011.

(³⁰) Consent might matter in other way: what looks like exploitation or treating as a tool might not be. It might be that exploitation requires a lack of consent or that treating as a tool requires a lack of consent.

(³¹) McMillan reports that she signed a contract saying she had taken a food safety training course that she had not taken. Everyone she worked with signed on, too (2012b, 73). In his fieldwork, Holmes signed a form that stated he and his co-workers would not organize. They signed forms all in English that no one except for Holmes could easily read.

(³²) Two exemplars: Brennan and Jaworski 2015; Krugman 1997.

(³³) Some loci classici of organic unity discussions—the name comes from G. E. Moore—are Bourgois 1988, Crenshaw 1989, and Moore 1994. For discussion of Crenshaw’s work with respect to the food movement, see Jeff Sebo’s contribution to this volume.

(³⁴) Iris Marion Young’s description of sweatshop work is uncannily like descriptions of food work:

The vast majority of garment workers worldwide are women . . . who are readily accessible and relatively pliant from the employers' point of view. Shifts are commonly at least ten hours, six days a week, and forced overtime is common. Factories usually have strict rules, which often include restrictions on talking and going to the bathroom, and supervisors are often abusive as a matter of policy. Working conditions are often dangerous. . . . Women workers often suffer sexual harassment or verbal abuse. Workers who protest their exploitation or attempt to organize unions are typically intimidated, beaten, or fired. Wages for these workers are often below the local legal minimum wage, and even when they are not, the wages fall below what the workers need for subsistence. Health benefits and pension plans are a fantastic dream, and there is no job security. (2004, 366)

(³⁵) For more on consumer responsibility, see Bob Fischer's and Julia Nefsky's contributions to this volume. For help with this essay, we thank Anne Barnhill, Mark Budolfson, Vera Chang, Shen-yi Liao, Teresa Mares, Caley Millen-Pigliucci, Rachel McKinney, and Amy Trubek.

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