embedded in the moralising discussions of what is described as "precarious" or "informal" work. Instead, her informants are equals, colleagues and agents – and makers of history in their own right (Thompson 1969).

What is the inescapable pull of *catador* work? Why did *catadores* repeatedly return to the dump, even when many had other (more permanent) opportunities to pursue? Each chapter assembles an open-ended answer to these questions to answer the puzzle of why people return to what is primarily a toxic zone of work. Upon reflecting on the kinds of questions other anthropologists have asked about her research, Millar suggests that this question is never asked because anthropologists have assumed they know the answer – garbage pickers return to the dump out of economic necessity. Millar argues that the *catadores'* decision to return can be understood as a political act in itself. It is a way "to break with normative forms of capitalist labour" (92). In this sense, Millar's work resonates with accounts of the flexible labour of mushroom pickers (Tsing 2015).

To support her claims that alternative forms of work are a political practice, Miller introduces the reader to the fascinating work of Edward Palmer (E.P.) Thompson. This move is a refreshing one, as I have always wondered why Thompson hasn't had more of an influence on anthropologists who study work and labour. Millar suggests that anthropologists have avoided Thompson because, while his work is intriguing, it is also challenging, as it lacks an apparent "thesis" or "theory" that can be applied succinctly to anthropological analysis. Rather than draw on the overly cited work on class consciousness from *The Making of the English Working Class*, Miller channels a Thompsonian essence throughout her ethnography. Her analysis demonstrates a resistance to overly economistic understandings of experiences, a rejection of the idea that subsistence drives people to work, and an acute attention to working peoples as the authors of their own political agency and history – regardless of whether or not these contribute to hegemonic understandings of organising – the topic of Chapter 5.

The main strength of *Reclaiming the Discarded* is – without a doubt – what it contributes to contemporary understandings of precarious labour. By troubling the notion that "precarious labour" is necessarily "bad labour," as contemporary commentators would have us believe, Millar complicates an economistic hypothesis that people work because they need to subsist. Anthropologists would head Millar's call by looking beyond political (and commonplace) forms of political action and consciousness to see the ways everyday forms of work and life can be, in themselves, practices that are indeed political choices with political consequences. The choice of Rose, in Chapter 2, to work as a *catador* as opposed to taking a permanent office position does as much to reflect what precarious employment adds to people's lives – closeness with co-workers, flexibility to deal with everyday emergencies, a sense of mutual obligation and attachment to friends, and an ability to develop other life goals – as it does to contrast what, according to Rose, is lost with the permanent forms of employment that she has known. This intervention is a welcome one for anthropologists who study non-permanent forms of employment.

What could be conceived of as an additional strength of the book is potentially a weakness. By carefully developing new theoretical concepts from which to understand the realities of *catadores*, such as "relational autonomy" (71), "dump as burial ground" (66), and "plasticity/plastic-economy" (127–150), to name a few, Millar risks letting her nuanced development of theoretical problems and paradigms overwhelm an otherwise beautiful and accessible ethnography, the strengths of which at least in most cases speaks for themselves. Unfortunately, this makes an otherwise rich and compelling ethnographic account potentially inaccessible to undergraduate and broader audiences.

If a thoughtful and, at times, dismaying portrayal of the sacrifice and hard work that refuse sorters in Jardim Gramacho incur to make a living and produce livelihoods on the periphery of one of the largest cities in the world were not enough, Millar adds a much-needed (and inspiring) account of alternative ways of imagining futures of work and life during times of generalised neoliberal restructuring and an overwhelming global attack on permanent work. *Catadores* teach us that there are other ways of imagining what work life could look like in a future not entirely dominated by capitalist relations. This respectful portrayal of *catadores'* refusal to succumb to the capitalist steamroller is a refreshing and thought-provoking read for anyone concerned with labour, livelihoods and political change.

## References

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**Guntra A. Aistara**, *Organic Sovereignties: Struggles over Farming in an Age of Free Trade*, Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2018, 272 pages.

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What is organic agriculture? Many of us are familiar with the idea that organic agriculture is a social movement that seeks to transform conventional, chemically dependent farming practices, and society along with them, and have come across debates over certification and labelling, as well as over whether the procurement of organic goods by large corporations like Walmart actually contributes to any positive transformation of farming practices or the food system. But what do these debates and practices look like outside of North America and Europe, and perhaps also Mexico, where most of the research has thus far been focused? Luckily, Guntra Aistara's comparative ethnography provides us with an insightful addition to existing studies on organic agriculture by delving into the meanings, struggles and practices of organic agriculture for farmers in Latvia and Costa Rica, two countries that are situated in between the east/west and north/south geopolitical axes, respectively. Understanding the practices and struggles of "organics in between" challenges assumptions about organic farming that universalise the North American and European experiences, including the assumption that the transformative potential of organic is always watered down by state regulation and markets.

Organic agriculture, as a range of practices and principles around soil health and non-chemically dependent farming, emerged in various places in the early twentieth century, but it became a global movement in 1972 when groups from France, Britain, South Africa, the United States and Sweden established the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements. Aistara's book outlines the emergence of organic farming in Latvia and Costa Rica and argues that we need to understand the particular histories of place and the process of policy harmonisation that accompanied Latvia's joining the EU in 2004 and Costa Rica's free trade agreement with the United States in 2007.

In 2004, organic production was on the rise in both countries, but the number of organic farmers in Costa Rica (3,900) was ten times that in Latvia, where there were extensive pastures and grasslands. By 2014, the number of organic farmers in Latvia had gone from 350 farmers to 4,000 as a result of the country's entry into the EU, and farmers gained access to support payments for environment services (PES), while Costa Rica's organic production declined in the absence of subsidies, among other factors.

In Latvia, organic agriculture was taken up due to questions of scale and lack of resources, only later becoming a social and political movement. In the 1990s, small family farms were reclaimed during de-collectivisation of the Soviet agricultural system. "Back to the landers," who may not have been farmers, claimed family land as a way to connect to their past. Due to the small scale of their farms and lack of resources, they became organic farmers by default. However, these farmers were politicised during the process of EU policy harmonisation.

By contrast, organic farming in Costa Rica was a political and social movement from the beginning. In the late 1980s, organic farming emerged as a reaction against foreign-owned monoculture plantations and agrochemicals. Costa Rican agriculture for domestic consumption involves the most intensive use of pesticides in the world, while close to 70 percent of organic produce is now for export.

In both countries, farmers understand organic farming in relation to landscapes as living reminders of past events and people, as well as idealised images of their national landscapes. However, the key sites of struggle for farmers differ in the two countries: Latvian farmers see their political and economic sovereignty as based on having the autonomy to manage their own land, whereas in Costa Rica, organic farmers view their sovereignty as linked to their ability to save, reproduce and exchange native and creolised seeds. The seeds used by organic farmers evoke memories of family and are seen as living creatures with whom the farmers collaborate. Seed exchanges are part of the reciprocal obligations of kin. Aistara insightfully argues that with the expansion of organic agriculture, seed exchanges now include connections to farmers outside kin networks through organised events. In other words, organic farmers create new "fictive kin" to maintain the "networked" diversity of seed (126).

Aistara uses "networked diversities," a nicely theorised and helpful concept, as an alternative to "biodiversity." She eschews decontextualised approaches to biodiversity conservation that list and catalogue diversity within and across species. For example, in the Convention on Biological Diversity, biodiversity is defined "in wholly biological terms, the outcome of an evolutionary process divested of human presence" (Whatmore 2002, quoted in Aistara 2018, 92). This definition, Aistara points out, "lends itself to a careful accounting of living organisms and species, rather than emphasizing the processes and interactions through which they emerge and are maintained" (112). It also detracts attention from "the work farmers have done over centuries to create and protect agricultural and associated biological diversity, through techniques such as selection of seeds and intercropping in small spaces" (112).

In contrast, "networked diversities," as a concept that draws from the work of anthropologists Arturo Escobar and Tim Ingold, helps us understand diversity as a dynamic and relational process in connection to organic farming, livelihoods, and alliances with non-humans. What mattered to organic farmers in Latvia, for example, "was not the number of species on their farms, but rather the relationships forged with other species and other farmers" (113). Aistara concludes that "Mosaic meadows [in Latvia] and creole seeds [in Costa Rica] show us that biodiversity is not only something to be counted and lost but also something that can be created and maintained. But for this to happen, policies must resonate with cultural memories, place-based ecological knowledge of the present, and future imaginaries of residents" (134).

This comparative ethnography offers a helpful discussion of free trade agreements and the politics of harmonisation centred on organic farming in addition to being relevant to readers interested in organic agriculture, seed politics, and biodiversity. This book would be a good course text for advanced undergraduate or graduate students in anthropology and environmental studies because it engages key debates about organic agriculture, offers new material on the struggles faced by organic farmers in these two countries, and provides an interesting discussion of theoretical approaches and key concepts.

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**Immanuel Wallerstein**, *La Gauche globale. Hier, aujourd'hui, demain*, Paris : Éditions de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2017, 169 pages.

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En 2013, le sociologue états-unien Immanuel Wallerstein donna à la Sorbonne une série de conférences sous invitation de la Fondation Maison des sciences de l'homme à Paris, organisation dont il a d'ailleurs été président. Ces conférences portaient sur le problème de la « Gauche globale », au passé, au présent et au futur. L'ouvrage dont il est ici question rassemble les textes traduits de ces interventions publiques, de même que les commentaires critiques de six intellectuels de renom qui replacent les propos de Wallerstein dans différents contextes théoriques, historiques et géopolitiques : d'abord Étienne Balibar, collaborateur de longue date de Wallerstein, mais également James K. Galbraith, Johan Galtung, Nilüfer Göle, Pablo González Casanova et Michel Wieviorka, qui signe également l'avant-propos. Notons d'entrée de jeu qu'une seule