Seed Swaps and Sunday Sauce: Lessons About Sharing Food in Hard Times

By: Roshni Caputo-Nimbark

Abstract: In times of crisis, which may include perennial poverty and environmental hurdles, unattainable myths and racial stigmatization, or climate change and postmodern anxieties, food sharing stands out as an important source of community resilience. In this article, I argue that by reframing the capitalocentric narrative, one perceives a world of food sharing economies essential for resisting those myriad and often supralocal forces that threaten livelihoods. Personal experience narratives of rural peasants in Gujarat, India and Italian immigrants in Brooklyn, New York from the 1940s through the 1960s exemplify how informal food economies operate in hard times. Anecdotes about culinary resourcefulness, mutual aid networks, and food-centred festivities illustrate the significance of economic practices unacknowledged or undervalued in capitalocentric discourse but central to the fostering of community and sustainability, then and now. Furthermore, following the diverse economies framework and weak theory, the academic subject is implicated in a politics of prefiguration.

Keywords: food sharing, hard times, diverse economies, capitalocentrism, weak theory

Introduction: Blackouts and barbecues

On Thursday, August 14th, 2003, a great blackout swept across the northeastern United States and southern Canada. An overhead transmission line in Walton Hills, Ohio, overloaded with dangerously high currents powering fans and air conditioners, sagged into a tree, setting off a chain of human and operational failures that shut down 100 power plants and plunged some 55 million people into darkness. Living in New York at the time, I remember hearing about the episodes of claustrophobic panic and intrepid evacuations that played out in subways and elevators, where hundreds of thousands of unsuspecting passengers found themselves trapped inside sweltering, overcrowded cars and shafts. Above and below street level, some remained stranded for over three hours before being rescued by the New York Fire Department.

The most fascinating accounts, however, took place in the streets. With folks unable to make purchases, and comestibles perishing in homes, grocery stores, eateries, and bars on this particularly balmy afternoon, neighbourhoods across the five boroughs and surrounding suburbs engaged in block parties of epic proportions, some of which were documented by newspapers, television programs, and social media platforms[1] (Fuller 2003, Chung 2018). In street displays approaching the carnivalesque, residents spanning the demographic spectrum commingled amicably and availed themselves of gratuitous ice cream, pizza, hot dogs, alcohol, cold drinks, and much more offered by local businesses and residents alike. Although anxieties about the 9/11 events from two years prior and fears of a second attack were on countless New Yorkers' minds, the predominant tone on the darkened streets was conspicuously celebratory. Residents were pulled together by a power outage that spared no one and, at least for a fleeting moment, they reveled in a camaraderie centered largely on food sharing.

This article is a meditation on food sharing traditions, and the diverse economies and networks of care intrinsic to them, particularly in times of hardship. It highlights those myriad economic practices typically ignored or underemphasized for their incongruence with market logics but which have existed prior to and continue to thrive in spite of capitalist ones. My main objective here is to bring food sharing economies of the past into conversation with the present to reframe the dominant capitalocentric account of food scarcity and austerity toward one of resiliency and possibility. To illustrate how food sharing economies operate amid a variety of struggles, I explore food-related personal experience narratives of two members of my family: my paternal aunt and my mother. I draw on their memories from rural India and New York City of the 1940s-1960s to situate my own contemporary ones, attendant to emic interpretations of struggle and perseverance. Whether crisis relates to perennial poverty and environmental hurdles, unattainable myths and stigmatization, or climate change and postmodern anxieties, I argue for the centrality of food sharing in hard times, as well as the continuing relevance of lessons that can be learned about enacting networks of commensality and care when we delink our appreciation of economic diversity from preconceived notions of what constitutes the economy.

My argument rests on the assumption that all humans experience hardship of some kind (Turner & Rojek 2001) and food sharing has always been central to the social and material sustenance of communities (Graeber 2011, Belk 2010). Moreover, humans have an innate drive to promote cooperation, of which sharing and mutual aid are integral components (Kropotkin 1902). Another assumption is that informal food economies have always existed in hard times but are unacknowledged, devalued, or subsumed within the dominant economic discourse (Mitchell 1998), an ontology folklorists have the tools to disrupt by documenting and interpreting sharing economies through weak theory (Sedgwick 1997, Stewart 2008) and reflexive performance (Gibson-Graham 2008). I begin with a review of literature related to scarcity, mutual aid, food sharing, diverse economies, capitalocentrism, and weak theory. I then present two personal narratives from the past, which I connect to contemporary food sharing economies in rural Newfoundland, where I currently reside, and to the broader diverse economies framework. I conclude with a brief reflection on the future of food sharing.

Literature Review

Hardship and/or scarcity have always existed in a diversity of forms. Poverty, natural disasters, epidemics, conflicts, famines, and systemic inequalities afflict entire communities or regions while ailments, childrearing, family obligations, interpersonal conflicts, and mortality exemplify individualized or localized hardship. Sociologists Turner and Rojek (2001) enumerate the ways that group behaviors and institutions work to offset the effects of scarcity in all human societies. For instance, they view cooperation, reciprocity, and sharing as "the building blocks of social existence" (2001: xiii), whereas ceremonials, rituals, and festivals offer temporary relief from hardship by way of fun and celebratory community-building exercises that strengthen trust and kinship.

Numerous scholars have documented how the equitable distribution of food and other goods has been the rule rather than the exception in most premodern societies for whom the sharing of meals and provisions is intimately linked to community resilience in perennially precarious times. For example, Henry (1964), who looked at sharing practices among the nomadic Kaingáng of Brazil, reports how, "In times of hunger the meat is divided among the whole group […] Their understanding of reciprocity is in terms of lifelong symbiosis, not in terms of balanced exchanges" (1964: 99,101). Similarly, Damas (1968) describes the highly structured food distribution networks and village-wide communal eating practices among the Copper Inuit. Mauss (1925) and Malinowski (1922) write about the social, economic, and semiotic complexities wrapped up in quasi-collateral food "gifts" among the Northwest Coast Indians and the Trobriand Islanders, respectively. Turnbull, studying the Mbuti People of the Congo, notes that "the bonds that make two brothers hunt together and share their food are not much greater than those that obtain between a member of a band and a visiting Pygmy, even if he is totally unrelated… They expect the same help and respect from all children and they owe the same responsibilities toward them" (1963: 31-32).

Reflecting the above accounts and his own work in Fiji and Hawai'i, Sahlins (1972) coined the term "generalized reciprocity" to refer to transactions where the reciprocation of a gift is vague, indefinite in terms of quality and quantity, and non-obligatory. Following this scholastic tradition, Graeber (2011) argues that, based on ethnographic research in Madagascar and elsewhere, these early economic systems were entrenched in social currencies based on mutual expectations and responsibilities rather than formal reciprocity and hierarchy. To corroborate his argument, he finds evidence of recorded debts and credits existing among ancient Sumerian farmers long before the appearance of money, which itself he determines to predate barter. Price (1975) agrees that sharing is an older and more fundamental[2] economic practice than gift giving and exchange, yet he notes that in modern societies, food, stimulants, and depressants, even when transacted, possess a special ability to consummate acts of socialization (Firth 1970). In his extensive research on modern sharing patterns, Belk claims that, unlike economic exchange, "which rarely creates communal bonds with other people," sharing fosters trust and companionship (Belk 2010: 717).

The word companion itself comes from the Latin *com-* (with) and *panis* (bread) and "is the consequence of a shared meal of a reciprocity around a table where food is exchanged between people who trust each other because of shared involvement in a ritualistic community" (Turner & Rojek 2001: 28). "[Used in the] creation and maintenance of social relationships, food serves both to solidify group membership and to set groups apart" (Mintz & Du Bois 2002: 109). Widlok (2004) distinguishes between "sharing in" and "sharing out." Sharing in is about including others in the "aggregated extended self" (Belk 2010: 725) for the sake of shared enjoyment of something perceived as commonly owned, is often ritualized[3], and typically involves sharing with neighbours, relatives, "or anyone who happens to be around" (Widlok 2004: 61). Sharing out is more akin to gift giving and commodity exchange and involves giving outside the boundaries separating self and other. Food provisioning in the form of sharing out, such as food banks and emergency food relief,

may be seen to reinforce the institutionalization of food insecurity by enabling governmental de-responsibilities (Poppendieck 1999).

Scholars have long noted that food sharing occurs primarily within the home[4]. Food encodes feelings of nurturance, love, happiness, and hospitality (Lupton 1996), and food sharing is frequently used by mothers to express love and affection (Miller 1998). Food sharing also extends to nonhumans and to the deceased (e.g. Sayers 2013). As Belk (2010: 717) points out, because it is an activity more characteristic of the interior world of the home than the exterior worlds of work and the market, and also due to its ubiquity, routine food sharing often goes unnoticed and as a result is understudied. Moreover, he sees this research preference as a reflection of gender bias in academia. As I discuss below, the continued devaluing and masking of feminist economies of food sharing are intimately tied to capitalocentrism, a paradigm the proposed framework in this paper seeks to override.

Notwithstanding cross-cultural evidence for the naturalness of sharing, the 18th and 19th centuries saw a flourishing of new paradigms for understanding human behaviour as guided by rational self-interest and competition, largely influenced by the works of Smith (1776) and Darwin (1869). Among a minority of nonconformists was Kropotkin (1902), the Russian philosopher and geographer who, in his seminal work *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*, challenged the dominant narrative about "survival of the fittest" that emerged from social Darwinism, pointing instead to overwhelming evidence in human and animal groups of cooperation and mutual aid. Ants, bees, beetles, termites, crabs, and migratory birds exhibit mutualism, just as do countless indigenous societies, medieval guilds, labour movement members, and the poor (cf. Stack 1974). He claimed that only through the imposition of private property by the State had many mutual aid institutions been destroyed, avowing that, "In the long run the practice of solidarity proves much more advantageous to the species than the development of individuals endowed with predatory inclinations" (Kropotkin 1902: 17). Predictably, he was imprisoned and sent into exile for most of his life.

While Kropotkin has remained relevant in his radical questioning of capitalist assumptions and his desire to identify and enhance existing, alternative, and more equitable societies, contemporary scholars are expanding upon his project with a postmodern lens characterized by critical and reflexive performativity of diverse economies. In the late 1990s, feminist geographers J.K. Gibson-Graham[5] developed an epistemological and ontological project[6] grounded in a Marxist understanding of capitalism's inherently exploitative and unsustainable prerogatives (Harvey 1982). They were concurrently driven by a desire to identify and enact alternatives so as to bring into being a world of economic possibilities untethered by the privileging of systemic or structural determination, which they refer to as capitalocentrism (Gibson-Graham 1996). This dominant framing of "the economy" has become crystallized in contemporary thought through mainstream economic discourse that, since around World War II (Keynes 1936), sees linear growth as a structural imperative dependent on market transactions and waged labour and measurable by econometrics, which itself is based on metaphors from the rational sciences such as physics and mathematics (Mitchell 1998). Capitalocentric ideology, moreover, naturalizes commonsense economic behaviour, so that "growth" is intrinsically predicated on

individuals rationally opting to outcompete one another, as illustrated in the influential "tragedy of the commons" predicament (Hardin 1968).

Even though the word "economy" derives from the Greek *oiko-nomos*, which translates to household-management, it is ironically the *oiko*- part, i.e., childrearing, cleaning, preparing meals, and sharing food, which has been excluded from this new definition of the economy. Rather, the household, primarily the domain of women, was considered to be part of the non-economic sphere or the family sphere (Mitchell 1998). Several feminists have pointed out that the functioning of capitalist production and the conception of the economy as a self-contained sphere depend substantially upon the social reproduction of the labour force and the continued exclusion of the household as a non-economic site of activity, in part accomplished with econometrics[7] (Vaughan 1997). Therefore, attentive to the reification of language through performativity (Foucault 1970), the diverse economies project works to destabilize the normativity of hegemonic capitalocentrism "through a proliferative queering of the economic landscape and construction of a new language of economic diversity" (Gibson-Graham 2006: 56). By dislocating diverse and often noncapitalist economic practices that have been "domesticated, symbolized or integrated" (Torfing 1999: 301) within capitalocentric discourse, these othered economic spheres are given ontological sovereignty with space to experiment and develop on their own terms.

Despite feminist and other research demonstrating that noncapitalist activities such as food sharing, reciprocity, and unpaid housework constitute roughly 30-50% of economic activity in rich and poor countries (Ironmonger 1996), a major hurdle in the diverse economies project is credibility. The challenge is to convince people about the real or potential consequences of existing or imagined diverse economic activities, especially given available quantitative evidence that ostensibly marginal economies are in fact more prevalent, time-consuming, and/or productive than capitalist ones. Sharing and other economic practices are commonly considered to be relevant "only in times of crisis, when the market can no longer provide for well-being and sustenance, when there is simply no other choice, or they are associated with people 'on the make,' 'grabbing' at informal and/or illegal economic opportunities" (Smith & Stenning 2006: 206). Similarly, sharing economies in the Global South are typically seen in the context of livelihood strategies, whereas in the Global North capitalocentric discourse renders them invisible "as they are deemed residual and marginal and hence inappropriate for 'developed' societies" (Jehlička & Daněk 2017: 276). However, the present study reveals that diverse economies including food sharing are in fact omnipresent, existing in a variety of spatio-temporal contexts.

Folkloristics is in an ideal position to recast this comfortably taken-for-granted ontology. It is through ethnographic research that economic realities on the ground are most comprehensively documented and interpreted, marginal diverse economies like food sharing recentered, and ideas about the common good locally negotiated and enacted. Following Gibson-Graham (2008), for the academic subject who is ready to explore rather than to criticize other economic worlds, to acknowledge the performativity of her scholarship and research, and to relinquish the comfort that accompanies her existing ontologies in order to permit encounters with new ones, it is inevitable that "interdependence and creativity are thrust upon us as we become implicated in the very

existence of the worlds that we research" (Gibson-Graham 2008: 8). Put another way, ethnographers may engage in a prefigurative politics (Maeckelbergh 2011) by creating ordinary spaces, relationships, and structures here and now so as to forge pathways to envisioned and extraordinary future worlds. With this creative and experimental approach, we can also appreciate weak theories as alternatives to strong ones (Sedgwick 1997, Stewart 2008, Gibson-Graham 2014).

Strong theories about human behaviour, such as those propounded in economic discourse and conspiracy theories (Latour 2004), seek to "explain away" complexities with an embracing reach, with the flip side being a reductive field of meaning (Sedgwick 1997) and the simultaneous enactment and reconstitution of dominant structures, even under the guise of critique[8] (Latour 2004). Weak theories, on the other hand, offer the opportunity to recast existing knowledge about large issues such as the effects of neoliberal global capitalism, and to ratify in its wake locally meaningful and performative ontologies based on observation, careful interpretation, and the yielding to emerging knowledge (Stewart 2008). It may connect novel linguistic terminology with emergent socioeconomic roles and identities and attend to the nuance and diversity of economic activities, emancipating them from a "paranoid" capitalocentrism, seeing them rather as evolutive and "reparative" (Sedgwick 1997). Finally, it may discursively "rescue" (Geertz 1973) economic practices from the past in order to reinvigorate present and future economic relations and vocabularies. With all that in mind, I now turn to personal experience narratives about food sharing economies, beginning in rural India in the 1940s.

Food Economies in Bhoringada, India, 1940s-1950s

Anna nokha, to manna nokha
If you do not share food, you cannot share thoughts (Gujarati proverb)

In this section, I present results from an hour-long, semi-structured Zoom interview with my paternal aunt, Shanta, in March 2021, during which she recalls food sharing economies from her childhood. Shanta was born in 1945 in Bhoringada, a small Hindu village in northwest India, the youngest of four siblings. She spent her childhood there until, due to the absence of schooling beyond the fourth grade and her father's desire for her to pursue higher education, she relocated to a larger town at the age of ten or eleven where she lived with a maternal uncle[9].

Shanta's family in Bhoringada was poor, like all of the villagers, though not entirely landless. Her father, Dharmadas, was the temple keeper, or *pujari*, and owned a small shop and peanut patch. One of his responsibilities as *pujari* was to host the wandering *sadhus*, or holy men, at the temple for up to a week at a time while they were on pilgrimage. Shanta's mother[10], Nanbai, always provided them with two hot meals a day and would make sure they had warm bedding in cold weather. Provisioning of food for the *sadhus* sometimes proved difficult for her parents, especially in the dry season, when ingredients were hard to come by, "in which case my father would go around the neighbours to collect food and often other villagers would offer to help but my father would have to coordinate the tasks."

While daily life was a struggle for the impoverished villagers, who relied on subsistence farming for their livelihood, Shanta stresses how "we really didn't call [it] hardship because we didn't know it was hard… but just a way of life." Nonetheless, having enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle in San Francisco for the past fifty years, she recalls by ease of comparison and hindsight the relative difficulty of accessing what few resources were available in her village at that time and the quotidian tasks performed by even the youngest of children: "We worked from day one."

Women were the predominant workhorses in the village. Along with all the cooking, childrearing, and housework, they performed most of the farming tasks from sowing seeds to milking buffalo. Harvesting and swapping of seeds was also done by women, a critical task for ensuring a resilient and diverse crop the following year. Procuring basic cooking necessities like water and fuel was an ordeal as well. It was typically the children who were required to fetch water from the communal well and to gather kindling or cow dung for their mothers to cook on the fire. She recalls[11]:

> The hurdle was, you know, just the lack of resources. Kindling wood, water, food, and they're all interconnected. And, you know, we were put to work to collect it, every little bit that we can find… Looking back, we didn't have electricity at the time, we didn't have running water, so you have to do everything, you know, by lamp. We had kerosene. Often, it was rationed, so we had to be careful not to use it after certain hours, so studying past eight, we were allowed to keep the lamp on for one hour, then we had to turn it off and wait and wake up early in the morning to study... Especially in the summer, there wasn't that much kindling wood … that's what my mother made a fire to cook the meals, and me and my sister were assigned to go gather it so we had to go in the farmland to find whatever we can find… that was hard because sometimes we came home with not enough and my mother didn't like that. She didn't know there was nothing there to collect. We ran out of the cow patties, which we also used as fuel, the dried cow dung. So that was hard.

The most difficult period for the villagers was unequivocally the summer months, which lasted from March until mid-June, when the monsoon rains would finally commence. The children only had one month of vacation from school, during which they were put to work making papadum, a crunchy flatbread requiring very little flour, and shelling peanuts: "You have to shell every single one of them using your teeth, right, because at the time they didn't have machines, so they'll put the little people to work… I have to remember that the seeds go in one pile and the shells go in another pile and sometimes we would be such a hurry that we'll mix up the shells with the seeds, and then it will take twice as long to clean them." Although they were required to work quickly and without error, Shanta and her older sister enjoyed racing one another to fill the buckets.

It was a particularly challenging season because the arable land did not produce food during the summer, and the last one to two months preceding monsoon were the most precarious as food rations were low and wells nearly dried up. She recalls how deep the village well was, "so you had to fetch the water with the rope from the well and it took

more time and more work." It was during this period when community members most relied on one another for food and support, and the landless peasants were especially vulnerable for lack of resources:

> The last month of the summer felt especially long and I remember I would look at the sky to see when the rainy clouds would gather… The most hard-hit community with food insecurity during the dry season were definitely the landless people. So folks like my mother would, you know, invent work for them, so for example quilting and deep cleaning the house to give them whatever little food she had in storage, and the landowning farmers' wives did the same. I remember the women always did the bartering with services or other goods and they always fed the kids first, even when they were not your own kid. But there was definitely a challenge for the women folks to prepare food during the month before the monsoon because we were like running out of what we had, which would be your dried goods, whether pickles or vegetables or dal, and dal is this split beans.

Shanta describes how creativity played a large role in guaranteeing food for all members of society, even if the food itself was sometimes less than desirable. When it is a matter of eating food or not, taste and texture become less of a priority than sheer nutritional value:

> Sometimes to be creative we had to use things like fenugreek, that looks like dal but it really isn't, but turns out, nutritionally that does have a lot of protein. So when we think of spices, we don't think of protein, right? It's just a condiment. But fenugreek does have some protein, so we used the fenugreek, which was really, really hell bitter to eat with our millet bread. And my mother told us that this was nothing compared to a drought month when she was a child where they didn't have any grains left one month and her mom had to make tiny chapatis using tamarind seed powder! If you have seen tamarind seeds, they are as hard as your teeth or even harder, so I don't know how they ground them.

In the days leading up to monsoon, it was considered auspicious to feed the village dogs, sometimes the highest quality food available. "It sounds contrary to common sense, perhaps, but when it didn't rain they made lot of stuff and gave it to the dogs, you know, so that it will rain. So there was a sharing going on there, too."

Food insecurity became virtually nonexistent during and after the monsoon, when even the landless laborers had plenty to eat, and harvests coincided with the most important religious holidays and village-wide celebrations. "Nobody was left hungry during holidays and everyone shared sweets, which were a prized commodity." The first crops of the season were always gifted to the gods at the temple for good luck, and Dharmadas, being *pujari*, had the special privilege of accessing the *prasad*, or gods' leftovers. The *prasad*, however, was readily shared with community members in need, the wandering *sadhus*, and the houseworkers:

> As much as we weren't the rich people, we always had somebody who'd come to our house to help us with housework, like doing dishes and stuff, and we'll share whatever little food we had with them… They probably would have, you know, done the work anyways because it was for the temple keeper, right? Yeah, we felt that sharing was the way to go.

Photo 1: The author's three paternal aunts: Labhu, Shanta, and Sharda, sharing food and smiles. San Francisco, 2001. Photo: Rick Sugarek.

Celebrations, to which the *pujari* and his family were always invited, included weddings, engagements, funerals, and *bhajan*, when the ancestors are ritually fed over a period of two weeks (Sayers 2013). These festivities were usually joyful, even the funerals, and almost always accompanied by full days of singing, dancing, and feasting. Shanta has especially vibrant memories of *bhajan*, a ritual she continues to perform every year. It inevitably involves stories about the deceased, for whom elaborate meals are prepared and offered on one's roof for the crows to carry away to the ancestral spirits:

> We would have lot of people who would come to our house or we were invited to their house… *bhajan* is like you sing together or sometimes you have professionals who come and sing with a drummer, but end of the session there's

> always some food and chai and sharing… Sometimes the storytelling will be first and [stories] were told by a brahman that you have invited, you know, and it's the same story and everybody knows it, but he just repeats it. At the end of the story, there'll be *puja* and there'll be food that we share.

It is clear from her recollections that Shanta's village life was one of daily struggle tenuously balanced by grandiose festivities and a strong kinship network. These three fundamental elements were punctuated throughout by an ethic of food sharing, where it was everybody's duty to ensure that nobody was left without food, not even dogs and spirits. This food sharing ethic extends to family members into the present (see Photo 1). In the next section, I turn to another family member whose stories capture a sociocultural reality that is, on the surface, worlds apart from Shanta's but that, on closer inspection, is quite similar indeed.

Food Economies in Brooklyn, New York, 1950s-1960s

Addo' magnano duje ponno magnà pure tre.
Where two can eat, so can three (Neapolitan proverb)

This section is based on an hour-long, semi-structured Zoom interview with my mother in March 2021, who, like Shanta, recalls diverse food economies from her childhood. My mother, Maryann, was born in 1952 into a working-class Italian American family in an ethnic enclave of Brooklyn. As most of the residents had immigrated or were descendants of immigrants from rural southern Italy, it was an unmistakably urban environment with visible agrarian roots. In fact, the neighbourhood was referred to colloquially as Pig Town because of the pigs that supposedly roamed the streets in the first half of the century. Maryann's father, Tony, was Pig Town's fruit peddler and he would spend his mornings singing Neapolitan love songs and selling his wares, first from a horse and cart and later from his truck. As the story goes, his charming voice was what originally caught the attention of my grandmother, Olga, who, lovestruck, restless, and to the chagrin of her parents, eloped with Tony and subsequently plunged a couple rungs down the socioeconomic ladder. Olga worked several odd jobs and tended to all the cooking and cleaning for their family. Tony and Olga raised five children together, the youngest of whom was Maryann.

In our conversations about my mother's childhood, I am easily transported to her kitchen table watching her mother cook fish on a Friday. While Olga effortlessly grabs eels with a newspaper and bangs them over the head with a pan, a battalion of snails crawls up the walls in a futile attempt to escape the boiling pot. Outside the kitchen, my mother recalls with equally vivid descriptions the host of characters who inhabited her neighbourhood and who seemed to embody a unique syncretism of devout Catholicism and paganism. These images nearly always involve informal interactions with food. For instance, she recalls the old ladies perpetually in mourning, dressed in all black while walking either to or from church[12]:

> And they would walk down the street-I'd watch them as they walked-and in

> between the concrete, wild dandelion would grow, and they would pick the dandelions, stick the dandelions in their pocket with their little sack or whatever they were carrying, and they'd go to church, and on the way back from church they'd do the same thing. So they were using the dandelions to cook. They were poor. And that would have been typical of what they would be doing if they were in Italy. So always in mourning, they would talk Italian to one another or to our neighbours, they would pick up the dandelion, they would stick it in their pocket… and that was just a normal, everyday kind of occurrence with people.

Then, there was the kind old lady, Michelina, who lived across the street and would spend much of her time on her front stoop soaking her feet in greens. Tony would regularly instruct Maryann to bring her a bag of the leftover, wilted greens from his truck to soak her feet in. I include a lengthy quote about Michelina here because I think it powerfully illustrates the food-centred, community-oriented, and paganistic world of Italian American Brooklyn in the 1950s:

> But he'd always give her something to cook, too. She'd sit in front of her house on the stoop with a basin of water and the greens in it, and she'd sit. She'd just soak her feet because she had, I guess… she was very old, and her skin was really brown from sun. She must have been old when she came to this country because she probably was a child growing up in the shadows of Vesuvius, in the hot sun. And she had gray hair pulled always back in a bun and very leathery, you know, brown skin. Sweet, sweet woman… And then, of course, every time there was a full moon she'd go crazy… wild hair... and we would worry. We'd say, "Oh boy, she's coming out tonight." Didn't make a difference what month of the year. She'd come out with a stick and she'd run through the streets and hit everybody's fence with the stick… Oh, and for a woman who couldn't walk, she ran, she ran… She was shouting all kinds of things. She'd say, "Michelina one-two-three!" We'd say, "Michelina one-two-three is coming!" And then she'd say all kinds of things in who knows what language, it could have been Latin, it could have been anything, and she'd do it the next night, and then finally she'd calm down. Then she'd sit there soaking her feet.

While acknowledging her fascination with the daily deluge of sights, sounds, and smells from the old world, Maryann admits that life for her and her family was full of hardships. They were a family of seven living in a small, run-down house, three to a bed with a single bathroom. Rodents were a constant source of fear for Maryann, as they would sometimes scurry over her bed or even up the sewage pipe into the toilet bowl. The view from the sub-street-level kitchen window was a concrete wall. Then, apart from "the day-to-day of having to make ends meet," her community was eternally confronted by the idea of the American Dream, a mythic and largely media-driven account of what constitutes success, with racial identity widely perceived as being paramount to one's ability to access the myth:

> My family was probably a kind of quintessential example of people who knew, relatively speaking, that America offered more than what we had, yet there were very few ways for people to access the ways to get more when you had limited education, were a member of an ethnic group that was really far behind many others—being an Italian American meant that you were handicapped from the standpoint of a definition of success. We were not WASPs, we were white ethnics—a term that people are using today-and white ethnic meant that you were relatively deprived in relationship to other white ethnics… so I think that my family, while they may not have been able to articulate that, knew that. And my mother had an image of what it was probably in television land to be a white American WASP, and she was a white ethnic living in an urban, working-class, peasant-turned-into-proletariat Brooklyn, with a husband who was a street peddler, far from what you'd imagine as being middle class. And she herself, a woman who tried to make ends meet by working odd jobs, you know, for most of her life, really her whole life. So, scarcity was a real thing, but it was also relative to the concept of the American Dream, pretty much.

In a word, stigmatization was the source of much of Maryann's struggle growing up, as she was perceived as belonging to a racial identity associated with street gangs and the mafia. She saw ethnic stigma as being intimately tied to "the reality of the lack of upward mobility… being stuck," and blames it for her parents' decision not to teach their children Italian, a heavily stigmatized language at that time. Maryann struggled tremendously in school, where she and other Italian kids were regularly seated at the back of the class, bullied, and made to feel inadequate. Her self-confidence was so poor and feelings of deprivation so extreme that she dropped out of school at sixteen and sought a rebellious escape through drugs and alcohol. It was not until many years later that she obtained her high school diploma and, eventually, a doctorate in sociology.

For most Italian-Americans in Pig Town, food was the glue that bound them together, an omnipresent and dependable source of pride and joy. As with Shanta, "eating out" never entered Maryann's childhood lifeworld. Rather, all meals were prepared by her mother, also a remarkable alchemist of a cook. Maryann recalls that the table was a necessary site of moral and cultural edification in a world of chaos and uncertainty, and that food sharing was a daily practice for community sustenance and the enforcement of kinship:

> You could repair through the sharing. You know, women have always done the work of sharing and caring, because what is the hearth and home? You listen to people's problems, you feed them, and then you say, "And now what?" and you help them work it out. Well, that was a neighbourhood, that was a collectivity, that was what people did, day in and day out. They gossiped, they shared, they repaired, and much of that was really done through food, food rituals of this and that.

Informal food economies thrived in Pig Town. Tony the peddler habitually threw in a little extra for customers he knew could not afford it, sometimes doubling their eggplant or escarole at no extra cost. He would always gift Michelina and other elderly folks some fish,

"because who didn't eat smelts or sardines on Friday?" Excess food from his truck went straight to Olga's kitchen: "My mother always made so many different kinds of foods and confectionaries that she would say, you know, 'Bring this to the neighbour'... There was the woman, Asun, who lived around the corner, the old Italian woman, and my mother would say, 'Bring her this dish of pasta, Asun likes this.'" Tony even shared vegetable scraps with the Pig Town cats. "That truck represented everybody's meal, everybody's meal."

Medical care, not being socialized, could constitute a significant cost for families like Maryann's, so their family doctor would exchange services for cookies or fruit. "He'd say, 'Don't worry about it, Olga. Tell Tony to drop off a bushel of oranges or apples.'" The local shops operated on credit with many customers, especially those they knew to be on government subsidy, or "on relief." The butcher always gave scraps to his customers, fully aware of the importance of his contribution to family meals:

> My mother… always cooked hearts and livers and gizzards. She'd say, "This is what we need. It's good food." And we ate it. I didn't like it, but I mean that was there, it was on the plate. So there was nothing wasted. There was no waste. Waste didn't exist at all... and if my father didn't sell all of the eels and the snails and the mackerel and the sardines, my mother had to cook it… People came in, people ate, people were always invited, people were always eating. And, you know, it was just the way it was because nothing could be wasted. The concept of waste didn't exist. You couldn't throw something away.

The Italian couple with the candy store on the corner also did their part to make sure there was something for everyone regardless of income:

> They were Italians from the other side who happened to figure out how to open up a candy store. They had this water with sauerkraut in it and hot dogs. What the hell did they know about hot dogs? They were Italians. But somehow they figured out that that's what the Germans ate and that's what the Jews ate, and why not have hot dogs? It cost next to nothing. But most people couldn't afford the hot dogs. So you'd go in there and you'd say, "Can I have a mush?" And a mush was give me the piece of Italian bread, put the sauerkraut on it dripping with water, and the bread becomes soggy, and for two cents you didn't have the hot dog but you had the mush. Now, why would the DiLee family do that? Because the DiLee family knew that most people couldn't afford the hot dog. That was their way of sharing.

Yet, with all the apparent handouts, Maryann stresses that in the environment she grew up in, out of pride and face-saving, people would not let on that they were lacking in food and resources. Sharing was "indirect" so as to eschew the notion of charity. "It wasn't a barter system where, you know, people are exchanging goods and services... It was quasi-collateral urban Brooklyn… but they brought with them the ways of the countryside."

As in Bhoringada, religious festivals and celebrations were crucial community-bonding activities largely centred on food and entertainment. Countless Catholic saints were

worshiped on their respective *onomastico*, or name day, in a carnival atmosphere punctuated by music concerts, food vendors, dancing, and games. Sundays were full-day affairs where extended families would gather to eat many courses of food, compare homemade wines, sing Neapolitan songs, and play bocce ball. A vat of aromatic Sunday sauce would always be simmering on the stove, anticipating the imminent hunk of Italian bread to be dunked by an impatient passerby. "And it went on for years and years and years in that vein." Not just Maryann's family, but seemingly everybody in her neighbourhood operated likewise, where directly after church would ensue a festive yet relaxed day devoted to food and family:

> It was like an outdoor picnic in Brooklyn, in someone's backyard… And every family was doing the same thing. Every family was doing it. On Sunday morning, anybody of my ethnicity in the summertime when the windows were open could smell the same tomatoes and basil and garlic being cooked. Everybody was doing it. And everybody was happy to eat their macaroni and then have their coffee and then talk and then sit down and talk. You know, it was just, life centred around food completely… You had nothing to do but eat… So, you know, the idea today that we have to fit in food around scheduling was not existent.

Food sharing was thus an omnipresent buffer in perennially hard times; it was a reliable source of sustenance and sense of belonging around which ethnic traditions were constantly and intergenerationally reaffirmed. Brooklyn provided a social and built environment conducive to the cultural reproduction of food traditions, at least until the 1960s for Italian Americans. While Maryann blames much of the disintegration of food-based kinship networks on suburbanization and its concomitant displacement of informal food economies by hypermarkets and impersonal stores, her childhood food memories forever serve as a model from which she derives her sense of ethics, especially as it relates to food and family.

Discussion: A bountiful future of food sharing possibilities

In light of contemporary hardships pertaining to climate change and the all-encompassing crisis of modernity, how important is food sharing today? What are its possible roles in shaping an ethically and ecologically responsible future? How might we situate food sharing within the diverse economies framework to delink it from existing narratives of unilinear economic growth and recast it as a crucial enforcer of community and economic resilience in its own right? In attempting to answer these questions, I situate myself within the performative space of a researcher-activist to transpose lessons from my relatives into my own economic worldmaking potential.

My findings corroborate evidence cited elsewhere (e.g. Bird-David 1990) that economies of abundance are not requisite for sharing[13]. The environments in which Shanta and Maryann were born and raised differed drastically, as were the types of hardship they endured. For example, whereas Shanta desired very much to study and was an admired student in her class, she was materially restricted by a kerosene rationing that only allowed her an hour each night for studying after completing her farming and household tasks. Maryann, on the other hand, felt racially stigmatized by teachers and classmates in her ethnically mixed

classroom and, as a result, saw herself as incompetent, a feeling that was cyclically reinforced by her poor academic performance. Of course, their hardships were not limited to school, and, as both attested to, their families often had to use culinary creativity to make ends meet for their families. Whether it was fenugreek dal, tamarind seed chapatis, or fish hearts and gizzards, Shanta and Maryann occasionally consumed uncharacteristically subpar foods because their pragmatic mothers understood that resources were limited and that the prioritization of nutrition over taste was sometimes necessary.

Indisputably, the most visible similarities in these two women's personal narratives are the preeminence of food in community affairs and the unremitting enforcement of kinship through informal food economies. Harking back to Widlok's analysis of sharing in and sharing out, it is clear from both these examples that communities were strengthened through the former practice where, by "extending the circle of people who can enjoy the benefits of a shared resource" (2004: 61), the aggregate extended self is enlisted in the local economies of practice. Indeed, even where on the surface it may appear as though food was being shared out, as with the bags of greens gifted to Michelina or the meals provided for the wandering *sadhus*, on closer inspection it becomes clear that the donors of food were in fact expanding the domain of common property to include allies in a world of hardships. Tony knew that Michelina shared an appreciation of the greens from the old world just as Dharmadas knew he was obliging the needs of fellow Hindu peasants. To share food was as much a duty as an honour and a joy.

Addressing the crisis of modernity, Belk & Llamas (2012) contend that, despite cultural lessons about sharing, such as those learned in proverbs and childhood play, in contemporary Western society, "sharing in" is becoming relatively uncommon in adulthood. They cite as the main drivers of this shift such modern phenomena as growing attachment to possessions, privacy and fear of strangers, values around individualism and independence, and utilitarianism (Belk & Llamas 2012: 636). There is an exhaustive amount of scholarship structuring these atomizing phenomena around capitalism and the culture industry (Adorno & Horkheimer 1972 [1947]). These scholarly works speak to the pervasion of capitalocentrism, buttressed by the neoliberal commodification of affect (Clough 2008), evident in the stories we increasingly tell ourselves about desire and success. While I value their analyses, at the present I find it more productive to focus on those emancipatory spaces of hope and possibility rarely discussed in the academic literature.

Durkheim (1964) saw the desire for intimacy with others as the most important determinant of human behaviour, and it is no coincidence that the sharing of food, especially when it is shared in, is often intimately tied to a sense of communalism. We might ask, then, if kinship has been, in our examples at least, an historic precursor for extending the self or sharing in, how can we think about extending the self by sharing food in larger or more heterogeneous groups? Or is it more likely that sharing out will replace sharing in, so that we will see more impersonal food sharing practices such as charities, food banks, and web-based initiatives to the detriment of inclusive and prosocial activities like block parties, supper clubs, potlucks, seed swaps, collective gardens, and community food distribution networks?

Gibson-Graham (2006, 2008) advises us, where those prosocial spaces exist, to foreground them so as to cultivate existing and emergent economic discourses and practices centred on community, ethics, and sustainability. Likewise, we can locate diverse food economies of the past, through personal experience narratives and ethnographies, to engage them in the present. Bring back the seed swaps, the Sunday sauce, the festivals, and the interpersonal relations with the poor. Draw out the hidden or unacknowledged economic relations espoused by those practices in order to highlight, envision, and prefigure alternative food economies of the future. The relationships I discussed in this article accepted interdependency, regenerated trust, strengthened economic resiliency, and constantly reinforced the timeless ethic of mutual aid. When re-enacted in the present with a postmodern lens to reflexive performativity, new or revived vocabularies can legitimate these diverse economies in order to use them as springboards to perform new identifications, new interdependencies, new notions of economic value, and new ethics. Without the confinement of the capitalocentric narratives, food sharing practices can coalesce around a desire for a sustainable future that puts ethics and community before linear growth[14] in a diversity of creative ways.

The DiLees' customers who purchased a mush in lieu of the pricier hot dog, the landless peasants who helped Shanta's mother with housework in exchange for food, and the street cats and dogs fed by my grandparents in Bhoringada and Brooklyn may never be seen in an economic textbook. Yet, it is precisely these subjects that weak theory highlights when "attending and attuning" (Stewart 2008: 72) to co-produced systems of meaning, affect, and economic value. Rather than explaining away these practices as predictable representations of grand theories such as capitalism, poverty, or class relations[15], weak theory sees them as contingent, dynamic, and negotiable, always with the possibility for surprise and creativity[16]. It sees the ecological value imbued in Maryann's recollection that "the concept of waste didn't exist" as an ethical practice that communities can mobilize in the present to address the systemic overproduction of waste. While environmental stewardship from Olga's prudent use of resources was likely an unintended result of her pressing concerns with material survival, weak theory invites us to appreciate, with a postmodern gaze, her small but productive kitchen, animated by women sharing and repairing with food and stories, but conspicuously lacking the packaged, processed foods, overflowing trashcans, and energy-intensive appliances so common in kitchens today. These are the relational details to which weak theory may point our attention to adapt to contemporary, creative contexts.

Finally, I draw on my relatives' experiences with food sharing to tie them to my own food sharing practices in Newfoundland[17]. Familiar with their nostalgic accounts of a time when kinship was still strong and neighbours regularly interacted and helped one another, but also privy to their general sense of pessimism about the alienating effects of modernity and inspired by the forward-looking prerogative of the diverse economies project, I have undertaken to revive and co-create food sharing traditions that are intentionally unhinged from the logics or illogics of capitalism. My partner and I opened a small eco-hostel a few years ago in rural Newfoundland, where guests are invited to pay for a bed or else to exchange help with gardening or other projects for room and board. We are riding a wave

of growing enthusiasm for local food cultivation and healthy food more generally, which are likely reactions to an increasing threat of food insecurity due to frequent food shortages in local shops, a rise in diet-related health problems, and the effects of climate change. In any case, we see it as an opportunity to enact local food sharing economies.

Personally, we initiated a community learning garden and have hosted free or by-donation gardening and herbal wellness retreats, harvest potlucks, and a seed-saving workshop. We regularly swap seeds, garden products, and recipes with friends and neighbours, and a visit to somebody's home is nearly always accompanied by the gifting or exchange of a jar of preserves, a loaf of bread, or garden produce. We participate in a bulk food buying club, quarterly farmers' markets, and attend potlucks and fundraisers at our community centre[18]. We prepare organic fertilizers from comfrey, worm castings, humanure, and kelp, and happily share the finished products with interested folks, as well as tips about organic composting, gardening, vegan cooking and baking, preserving, and fermenting. Finally, we continue the Sunday sauce tradition, where all are welcome to indulge in an all-day eating and drinking bonanza. With a nod toward my relatives' relational practices, we encourage active community engagement, zero waste production, and respect for our nonhuman neighbours.

While generating local interest in diverse food economies that are social, fun, and free or not-for-profit, my community members and I are simultaneously extending our selves, in solidarity against a precarious future of food and in recognition of our emerging sense of trust and kinship. The emphasis on ethics, enjoyment, and empowerment via a prefigurative politics of sharing, reciprocity, and ecological stewardship, with a diminished focus on linear growth and competition, is reframing the notion of a successful food economy in a way that, by dint of its vast assemblage of activities, valorizes care and diversity. Members of the community are assuming new roles and identities by engaging in different kinds of economic discourse, learning to articulate new vocabularies, and collaborating with diverse actors in creative and educational projects. Of course, these practices are not all foreign; many residents have engaged in food sharing and gardening their entire lives. What is new is the postmodern imperative to recenter these practices as bulwarks in the face of continuous risk posed by climate change and unsustainable dominant narratives. With hindsight as our guide, we can recognize the power of community—enforced through the sharing of food and pleasures—to keep us connected, empowered, and well fed. While I may not habitually feed wandering *sadhus* or lunatics, there will always be travelers and eccentrics, and if we are willing to inhabit a shared space, we may as well share some healthy meals.

Conclusion: The great blackout revisited

It is tempting to conclude that New York City's food sharing episode resulted from a common crisis, but what if the deeper motive was an overdue collective desire to extend the self? True, when the power returned and the ATMs started working, the block parties ended. People went back to business as usual, and it is probable that many neighbours who had commingled freely on that sweltering Thursday afternoon never spoke again. While a feeling of impromptu revelry was enjoyed by tens of thousands of people that day, it was so incredibly out of the ordinary as not to be taken seriously. Just as the carnivalesque enables

the status quo through a sanctioned allowance of temporary subversion of norms, the great blackout block parties were a refreshing but anomalous blip inside an outdated but widely accepted story.

As I have tried to illustrate in this article, attention to personal experience narratives, diverse economies, and weak theory lets us write different stories. In these new stories, the anomalous blip might even become the new normal, or it might open up possibilities for a diversity of normals. While we cannot physically resurrect 1940s Bhoringada or 1950s Brooklyn, we can resuscitate their food sharing traditions and use them as blueprints to make new ones. My neighbours and I might swap broccoli seeds grown only in Newfoundland or drink rum with our Sunday sauce rather than red wine. As our appetite for ethically producing and consuming tasty, local, healthy food expands, so too may our appetite for co-performing those activities and sharing the fruits of our labour. In the present and impending crises, our greatest strength comes from companionship, in the very oldest sense of the word.

Notes:

[1] One reporter for a NYC-wide culture and news blog, *Gothamist*, wrote: "While they had to endure about 30 hours without electricity, New Yorkers turned the blackout into a moment of urban solidarity: Citizens started to direct traffic since traffic lights were out; they helped each other out of trapped subway cars; welcomed in stranded colleagues who couldn't get home; restaurants held impromptu cookouts, sharing their food and beer with neighbors." Additional first-hand food sharing accounts from the blackout are related in the comments section of the blogpost.

[2] Psychologist Michael Tomasello (2009) studied sharing practices among children in various cultures, concluding that sharing is innate rather than learned. He found sharing to occur in children and chimpanzees before their parents or cultures impose politeness rules and that, starting around age three, children become more selectively helpful, learning and enforcing social norms of politeness in order to be accepted into groups.

[3] Belk and Llamas describe the performativity of food "sharing in" as an interplay of cultural processes and individual psychology. For instance, in one study, a seventh grader is confronted with the initiation ritual of sharing her smoothie with peers and must contain her fear of contagion in order to be accepted into the group: "After that I realized that sharing was cool. It was the 'in-thing' to do and I fitted in" (Belk & Llamas 2012: 634). By sharing in with her peers, this initiate is celebrating "self-extension via an act of communion" (Belk 2010: 726).

[4] In his book *Feast: Why Humans Share Food*, Jones (2007) uses archaeology to uncover ancient hearths, tracing the evolution of hunting, cooking, and sharing food from over 30,000 years ago up to the complex eating traditions of today (e.g. Douglas 1972).

[5] J.K. Gibson-Graham is the pen name of Katherine Gibson and the late Julie Graham, feminist geographers based at University of Western Sydney and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, respectively.

[6] For Gibson-Graham (2008, 2014), the distinction between the epistemological and ontological are collapsed when the former representation of economic diversity achieved with "interpretive skill and a microscopic gaze" (Gibson-Graham 2014: 149 contributes to the enactment of that diversity through performative ontology.

[7] For instance, Vaughan (1997: 30) has shown how the gift paradigm, which "emphasizes the importance of giving to satisfy needs" and is "need-oriented rather than profit-oriented," is in fact an extension of mothering as a practice that resists numerical calculations. For Vaughan, the prerogative of expansion of capitalist exchange relations into the affective realms of emotional and nurturing labour is an invasion of feminist economies akin to plunder.

[8] Much of the groundbreaking work from the Frankfurt School, for example, while justifiably critical of capitalism, validates it through an overdetermined attribution of myriad cultural phenomena to capitalism or its corollary, "the culture industry" (Adorno & Horkheimer 1972 [1947]), without identifying or proposing alternatives.

[9] Following the lead of my father, her oldest sibling, to pursue studies in the United States, with his assistance Shanta moved to New York at the age of nineteen. For the past fifty years, she has resided in San Francisco where she raised three children, has been an active member of the food cooperative movement, published four food-related books, and continues to teach vegetarian cooking classes.

[10] Shanta's birth mother was, by many accounts, an extremely talented cook and storyteller and "tough as a buffalo." Tragically, when Shanta was only four years old, her mother took her own life after losing a daughter. Although Dharmadas remarried a woman from the next village and this new wife, Nanima, was loved deeply by Shanta and her three elder siblings, Nanbai's death left a dark void in the family and the village more broadly and, sadly, epitomizes the plight of so many peasants of that spatio-temporal reality.

[11] All quotations in this section are by Shanta Nimbark-Sacharoff.

[12] All quotations in this section are by Maryann Caputo.

[13] Nor is poverty requisite for sharing. A major takeaway from the diverse economies project is that sharing and other informal economies have always existed through time and space, but that they are increasingly masked within mainstream economic discourse. Through the cultivation of novel vocabularies, identifications, and collaborative economies, food sharing can become central to our emerging perceptions of economic value.

[14] Similarly, Heldke (2011) discusses our moral imperative to cultivate a politics of pleasure around eating that derives a sense of aesthetics from the many dimensions of food ethics, above all else.

[15] For example, Maryann positions her family's poverty and lack of upward mobility in relation to the American Dream, an elusive grand narrative grounded in excesses of capital and attained by few. However, weak theory draws attention to the myriad economic relations, food-sharing activities, and food-related festivities in Pig Town that belie a perceived sense of inferiority, indeed, that reinforce a localized sense of ethnic and/or community pride.

[16] It also sees performers of diverse economies often excluded from the mainstream capitalist economy, such as unemployed youth, single parents, retrenched workers, and subsistence farmers, as actually and potentially valuable and dynamic economic actors in their own right.

[17] Likewise, I plan to gather personal experience narratives in my own community so as to document and recontextualize bygone practices and economic vocabularies, some of which undoubtedly predate capitalocentric discourse but, owing to folklore and memory, are still recognizable by locals. Feelings of familiarity and belonging are desirable in the co-(re)production of affective and relational economic practices (Wright 2015).

[18] Critical engagement with diverse institutions, from community development boards to church networks to regional or national organizations, may open up new dialogues and secure access to external knowledge, funds, and other resources.

References Cited

Adorno, Theodor and Max Horkheimer. 1972 [1947]. *Dialectic of Enlightenment.* Translated by John Cumming. New York: Herder & Herder.

Belk, Russell. 2010. Sharing. *Journal of Consumer Research* 36 (5): 715-734.

Belk, Russell and Rosa Llamas. 2012. The Nature and Effects of Sharing in Consumer Behavior. In *Transformative Consumer Research for Personal and Collective Well-Being*, ed. David G. Mick, Simone Pettigrew, Cornelia Connie Pechmann, and Julie L. Ozanne, 625-646. London: Routledge.

Bird-David, Nurit. 1990. The Giving Environment: Another Perspective on the Economic System of Gatherer-Hunters. *Current Anthropology* 31 (2): 189-196.
Cameron, Jenny and Julie-Katherine Gibson-Graham. 2003. Feminising the Economy: Metaphors, Strategies, Politics. *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 10 (2): 145-157.

Chung, Jen. 2018. Photos: This was New York City during the Massive 2003 Blackout. *Gothamist.* August 14. https://gothamist.com/news/photos-this-was-new-york-city-during-the-massive-2003-blackout/.

Clough, Patricia T. 2008. The Affective Turn: Political Economy, Biomedia and Bodies. *Theory, Culture & Society* 25 (1): 1-22.

Damas, David. 1968. The Diversity of Eskimo Societies. In *Man the Hunter*, ed. Richard B. Lee and Irven DeVore, 111-117. Chicago: Aldine.

Darwin, Charles. 1869. *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, 5th Edition*. London: John Murray.

Douglas, Mary. 1972. Deciphering a Meal. *Daedalus* 101 (1): 61-81.

Durkheim, Émile. 1964. *The Rules of Sociological Method*. London: Free Press.

Firth, Raymond. 1970. Giving and Getting: Theories of Exchange. Unpublished manuscript. Lecture at University of Toronto.

Foucault, Michel. 1970 [1966]. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences.* Translated by Alan Sheridan. London: Tavistock Publications.

Fuller, Thomas. 2003. New Yorkers Meet the Neighbors in Impromptu Block Parties: No Lights, Big City: The Next Day. *The New York Times*. August 16.

https://www.nytimes.com/2003/08/16/news/new-yorkers-meet-the-neighbors-in-impromptu-block-parties-no-lights-big.html/.

Geertz, Clifford. 1973. Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture. In *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, 3-30. New York: Basic.

Gibson-Graham, Julie-Katherine. 2014. Rethinking the Economy with Thick Description and Weak Theory. *Current Anthropology* 55 (S9): S147-S153.

-----. 2008. Diverse Economies: Performative Practices for 'Other Worlds.' *Progress in Human Geography* 32 (5): 613-632.

-----. 2006. *A Postcapitalist Politics.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

-----. 1996. *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It).* Oxford: Blackwell.

Graeber, David. 2011. *Debt: The First 5,000 Years.* Hoboken, NJ: Melville House.

Hardin, Garrett. 1968. The Tragedy of the Commons. *Science* 162 (3859): 1243-1248.

Harvey, David. 1982. *The Limits to Capital.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Heldke, Lisa. 2011. The (Extensive) Pleasures of Eating. In *Educated Tastes: Food, Drink, and Connoisseur Culture*, ed. Jeremy Strong, 121-157. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.

Henry, Jules. 1964. *Jungle People: A Kaingáng Tribe of the Highlands of Brazil*. New York: Random House.

Ironmonger, Duncan. 1996. Counting Outputs, Capital Inputs and Caring Labor: Estimating Gross Household Output. *Feminist Economics* 2 (3): 37-64.

Jehlička, Petr and Petr Daněk. 2017. Rendering the Actually Existing Sharing Economy Visible: Home-Grown Food and the Pleasure of Sharing. *Sociologia Ruralis* 57 (3): 274-296.

Jones, Martin. 2007. *Feast: Why Humans Share Food*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Keynes, John M. 1936. *The General Theory of Employment, Interest and Money*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kropotkin, Peter. 1902. *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*. New York: McClure Phillips & Co.

Latour, Bruno. 2004: Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern. *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2): 225-248.

Lupton, Deborah. 1996. *Food, the Body and the Self*. London: Sage Publications.

Maeckelbergh, Marianne. 2011. Doing is Believing: Prefiguration as Strategic Practice in the Alterglobalization Movement. *Social Movement Studies* 10 (1): 1-20.

Malinowski, Bronisław. 1922. *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. London: Routledge & Sons.

Mauss, Marcel. 1954 [1925]. *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies.* Translated by Ian Cunnison. London: Coehn & West.

Miller, Daniel. 1998. *A Theory of Shopping*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Mintz, Sidney W. and Christine M. Du Bois. 2002. The Anthropology of Food and Eating. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (1): 99-119.

Mitchell, Timothy. 1998. Fixing the Economy. *Cultural Studies* 12 (1): 82-101.

Poppendieck, Janet. 1999. *Sweet Charity?: Emergency Food and the End of Entitlement*. London: Penguin.

Price, John. 1975. Sharing: The Integration of Intimate Economies. *Anthropologica* 17 (1): 3-27.

Sahlins, Marshall. 1972. *Stone Age Economics*. Chicago: Aldine-Atherton.

Sayers, Matthew R. 2013. *Feeding the Dead: Ancestor Worship in Ancient India*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sedgwick, Eve K. 1997. Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're so Paranoid, You Probably Think this Introduction Is about You. In *Novel Gazing: Queer Readings in Fiction*, 1-40. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Smith, Adam. 1776. *The Wealth of Nations.* London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell.

Smith, Adrian, and Alison Stenning. 2006. Beyond Household Economies: Articulations and Spaces of Economic Practice in Postsocialism. *Progress in Human Geography* 30 (2): 190-213.

Stack, Carol B. 1974. *All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community*. New York: Harper and Row.

Stewart, Kathleen. 2008. Weak Theory in an Unfinished World. *Journal of Folklore Research* 45 (1): 71-82.
Tomasello, Michael. 2009. *Why We Cooperate.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Torfing, Jacob. 1999. *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Žižek*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Turnbull, Colin M. 1963. The Lesson of the Pygmies. *Scientific American* 208 (1): 28-37.

Turner, Bryan S. and Chris Rojek. 2001. *Society and Culture: Scarcity and Solidarity*. London: Sage Publications.

Vaughan, Genevieve. 1997. *For-Giving: A Feminist Criticism of Exchange*. Austin, TX: Plain View Press.

Widlok, Thomas. 2004. Sharing by Default: Outline of an Anthropology of Virtue. *Anthropological Theory* 4 (1): 53-70.

Wright, Sarah. 2015. More-than-Human, Emergent Belongings: A Weak Theory Approach. *Progress in Human Geography* 39 (4): 391-411.

Interviews

Caputo, Maryann. 2021. Interview with author. March 2.

Nimbark-Sacharoff, Shanta. 2021. Interview with author. March 5.