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Practices of modest recuperation: Food, situated knowledge, and the politics of respect

Marja Vehviläinen

University of Tampere, Finland

ABSTRACT

This article discusses food as a political object through an analysis of the practices of two non-governmental organizations that work with food production and the associated production of knowledge. Donna Haraway's notions of situated knowledge, companion species, and the politics of respect are employed to build the methodological framework for the analysis. The analysis employs a qualitative empirical study of a large Finnish women's organization working in the field of home economics, and a complementary study of an East London based feminist environmental organization. Both organizations work through local groups. Firstly, the article examines how these groups work with practices of food production, using the case of composting as an example. Composting food leftovers utilizes networks of companion species and their bio-socio-technical apparatuses across the globe, including—but not limited to—soil, worms, and waste management companies. Secondly, it shows how situated knowledge is produced by connecting research based knowledge and the experience based knowledge generated through material practices of food production and use. Finally, it discusses the ways in which communally produced situated knowledge facilitates the politics of respect in everyday practices of food production via networks of companion species for modest recuperation.

KEYWORDS

Situated knowledge; companion species; politics of respect; feminist food politics; non-governmental organizations; material-discursive practices of food

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INTRODUCTION

Food and its production is a multifaceted phenomenon. It is a political object that is organized through numerous intersecting injustices that are present in the lives of both human and non-human species. On the one hand, the production of food for human consumption is implicated in climate change, the capitalist economy of global multinational companies, and even in the survival of the planet and its species. On the other hand, eating and the accessibility of food are mundane daily practices for embodied living beings. The societal implications and politics of food encompass many different areas of this multifaceted phenomenon. Additionally, national and transnational regulations focus on global processes, and the politics of ethical consumption pay attention to the choices of individuals. However, food is one of the central political objects in which the recognition of both the survival of the entire globe and the constant struggle within often contradictory daily practices are equally important. This is the politics that Donna Haraway (2016) calls "staying with the trouble," working with "modest possibilities for partial recuperation and getting on together" without losing sight of the bigger picture with regard to global relations (p. 10).

In this article, food as a political object is examined from the perspectives of everyday practice and modest partial recuperation that importantly do not forget their connections to global relations. This politics engages intensively with practices of knowing. Knowledge associated with food is produced in numerous research fields, policy-making, media discussions, non-governmental organizations, and embodied everyday practices. It can also be produced collaboratively through public engagement in science, in which knowledge emerges through the interplay of science and everyday knowing (Horst, 2013, p. 23). This article analyzes the collaborative production of knowledge pertaining to the politics of food through a qualitative empirical research method. This research takes place via interviews, document analysis, and participatory observation of the practices of two non-governmental women's organizations: The Martha Association in Finland and the Women's Environmental Network (WEN) in the United Kingdom. The latter is an explicitly feminist organization. They both engage in practices of knowledge production as well as food production, such as growing, composting, and ecological cooking.

In order to capture the multifaceted and contradictory phenomenon of food as a political object, I build a methodological approach that enables the study of the dynamics and practices of food production and use. Additionally, I examine the knowledge production intertwined with those practices and politics. In this methodological approach, I employ the notions of companion species networks, situated knowledge, and the politics of respect, as introduced by Donna Haraway (1991, 2008).

Donna Haraway's (2008) "companion species" is one of the material feminisms (Alaimo & Hekman, 2008) that have emerged at the intersection of science and technology studies, and feminist research traditions such as eco-feminist research and feminist epistemologies. "Companion species" focuses on processes and relations (Haraway, 2008, pp. 16–17). Haraway states that the concept of "companion species designates webbed bio-social-technical apparatuses of humans, animals, artefacts, and institutions in which particular ways of being emerge and are sustained. Or not" (Haraway, 2008, p. 134). Species are full of others, and full of companions. They are "coshapings all the way down" (Haraway, 2008, p. 164), involving micro-organisms, bacteria and fungi. The approach examines the "becoming with many" that takes place in intra-acting relations of material-discursive practices, as described by Karen Barad (2003).

By employing companion species in my methodological approach, I examine food as a material-discursive practice, including growing, cooking, eating, waste management, and composting—in which leftovers and microbes engage in a process that creates (becomes) soil in which to grow new food. Food practices, through the lens of companion species, take place at both local and micro levels—yet are simultaneously organized into global hierarchical orders. Further to this, I employ a politics of food implied by companion species—namely the "politics of respect" and response-ability. This pays attention to the interdependence of species and aims to re-work the hierarchical relations in companion species networks—both between species and between humans (Haraway, 2008, p. 19, pp. 88–89).

I argue that using companion species in the analysis of the politics of respect benefits from Haraway's (1991) early notion of "situated knowledge." For Haraway (1991), situated knowledge implies feminist objectivity (pp. 188–191). Situated knowledges are both partial and located, yet also critical and non-innocent. "Locatedness" is a key component in situated knowing (Haraway, 1991, p. 193), as it enables new perspectives to replace abstract knowledge and aims. However, located knowledge is not a synonym for situated knowledge. Rather, situated knowledge is a process of knowledge production, a process that weaves together located, embodied knowing and the analysis of relations in networks of companion species. Thus, situated knowledge is an agential knowing about the lived experiences of the world, communal knowledge production, and it is often technologically mediated (Haraway, 1991, pp. 198–201). Crucially, situated knowledge is not restricted to any given locality. The notion of situated knowledge encourages the articulation of the (gendered) complexities of knowledge production and imagined futures, while simultaneously connecting research to particular and local knowledge (of food). Therefore, situated knowledge is a means to connect located knowing to the analysis of the global hierarchical orders of food production via the politics of mutual respect.

I begin by exploring the injustices embedded in the production and consumption of food as a political object, and the politics that have acknowledged these injustices and aim to transform food production and eating—including feminist research that has contributed significantly to these debates. Donna Haraway's politics of respect is one of these contributions. I continue with an analysis of Martha's and WEN's material-discursive practices, as they work with food in everyday contexts, with a specific focus

on composting and ecological cooking. Here, composting serves as an example of the methodological approach of companion species and its application to the phenomenon of food. The case of eco-cooking examines how situated knowledge is produced among Martha participants. Proceeding, I demonstrate how situated knowledge functions as a major tool in the politics of respect that both Martha and WEN practice. Finally, I discuss how the methodological use of companion species and situated knowledge come together in the politics of respect via the subject of food as a political object for the work of modest recuperation in a contemporary context.[1]

INJUSTICES OF FOOD

Eating is never symmetrical in networks of companion species (Haraway, 2008, pp. 74–75). Human societies have organized a systematic approach to food production from non-human species. Intensive farms produce crops such as soybean, corn, and sugar cane (Boamah, 2010, pp. 160–161; Matondi, Havnevik & Beyene, 2011, p. 177), while factory farms, both in poor areas such as South America, Asia and Africa and in the Northern and Western parts of the world, intensively exploit animals. Meat plays an increasingly dominant role in eating practices, with men—at least in a Western context—eating meat more often than women (Carolan, 2013, p. 93; Gender and Climate Change, 2009). This consumption occurs despite the fact that meat production has well-known negative effects—not only on the environment, but also on both human and non-human species. Finns consume on average of 78 kilos of meat annually, the British on average consume 86 kilos, while people in 21 other countries consume even more (Carolan, 2013, p. 93; Luke, 2016). Only a small percentage of Finns consider themselves to be vegetarians and even fewer consider themselves to be vegan (Vinnari, 2010, pp. 68–69).

Food production on an industrial scale within the context of a capitalist political economy has numerous serious harmful consequences. For example, as a direct result of de-forestation to make way for industrial agriculture, there are fewer forests to balance carbon emissions—a contributing factor to climate change. Furthermore, the monoculture production of, for example, soybean or corn impoverish the soil and diminish biodiversity (see Shiva, 1989). In addition, industrial-scale farms exploit the limited water resources of the regions in which they are situated, and intensive farming techniques are supported with pesticides, hormones and genetic modification. In this way more and more chemicals enter the water cycle, the food itself, and thus the organs of humans and other living creatures. Farming emissions—especially those from cattle farming—add to the green house phenomenon, whilst the huge amounts of waste generated during food production and consumption cause further emissions (Carolan, 2013, p. 86). This list of the negative consequences could continue to include, among others, injustices between humans who work on intensive farms in poor countries, in low-pay jobs, being exposed to chemicals, and those in rich countries who consume the products of their labors.

Given that the injustices inherent to food production are so numerous, food has become a major area of concern for global organizations, nation states, food movements, non-governmental organizations (NGO’s), and individual concerned humans. Regional, national and transnational institutions and organizations regulate

the processes of food production (Kjaernes, Harvey & Warde, 2013). They set standards of quality for the production and retailing of food and create guidelines for both institutional actors and citizens alike. Transnational food politics have been organized via the notions of "food security" and the "right to food" for many decades. These notions gained significance in the post-Second World War period through various food regimes and development projects (Fairbairn, 2010, p. 29). In recent decades, the politics of food have become more and more organized in terms of "food sovereignty"—a concept that emphasizes alternative ways of producing and consuming food.

The worldwide food sovereignty movement aims to replace corporate-dominated industrial agriculture and consumer culture, instead revitalizing other forms of food production. It works towards the sovereignty of people and communities, democratic food production, local food markets, and sustainable agriculture. The movement was born in the beginning of the 1990s in collaboration with farmers, indigenous people and women's organizations, very often from poor countries (Wittman, Desmarais & Wiebe, 2010, pp. 2–5). The movement's role model, La Via Campesina, is made up of organizations from more than 70 countries (as of 2017). Food is seen from a nutrimental and communal perspective, rather than being valued only as an economic commodity (Fairbairn, 2010, pp. 26–31).

FEMINIST DEBATES ON FOOD AND THE POLITICS OF RESPECT

Women's groups across the world have engaged with the particularities of food production by starting from the perspective of their everyday lives, for example by fighting against environmental contamination in the larger Toronto area (MacGregor, 2006), for access to water in India (Lahiri-Dutt, 2015) and Brazil (de Moraes, 2015), and for access to forests in India and Sweden (Arora-Jonsson, 2013). Further to this, they have promoted the possibility to source food through gathering (Shiva, 1989) and self-sufficient farming (Buechler, 2015). These initiatives exploit the advantages and methods of small groups—as often deployed by women's movements—to connect the concerns of food and the environment to the well-being and justice of their communities and further, to the health of their bodies (Buechler & Hanson, 2015).

Vandana Shiva (1989, 2008) is one of the pioneering feminist researchers from the eco-feminist tradition and has participated extensively in discussions on multinational food production and local feminist politics. For decades, she has argued that multinational food companies harm the access to food of local inhabitants, and women in particular, as they diminish the possibilities to gather and grow food and limit access to water resources. Women need to buy food from the market, although their incomes remain low as workers in the industrial farming sector (see also Matondi et al., 2011, p. 188). Furthermore, many researchers have pointed out that the relation between gender, food production, and environment also intersect with other differences, such as class and caste relations (cf. Arora-Jonsson, 2013, p. 75; Buechler & Hanson, 2015; Kaijser, 2011; Philip, 2008).

Eco-feminisms have paid attention to the hierarchies between species. They have analyzed the relation between nature and society, and argue that Western thought is

built on hierarchical orders and the divisions of gender, "race," the human, and the non-human. Women are subordinate to men, women of color are subordinate to white women, and animals are subordinate to all humans (Adams, 2007, pp. 26–31; the great chain of being as discussed already by Arthur Lovejoy in 1936). The feminist care tradition of animal ethics (Donovan & Adams, 2007) builds upon these observations and discusses eating and food by comparing the gender division to the human-animal division. Eco-feminists argue that the divisions and hierarchical order between humans and animals has become naturalized in the same way as gender divisions and other orders have become naturalized. Thus, they highlight how the production of animals for food is rarely questioned in everyday practices of eating—an argument that they also apply to factory farms that produce animals for slaughter and human nutrition whilst disregarding the animals' needs as if they were mere industrial artefacts.

The feminist care tradition in animal ethics strives for a politics that disentangles the divisions between species. It argues that feminism should pay attention to the relations that oppress animals in food production and explicate how these relations are inherently political. In their view, feminist research should also demonstrate how everyday practices of eating sustain these relations (Bailey, 2007; Donovan & Adams, 2007). Vegetarian and vegan food is emphasized, as well as ethical respect towards animals and their living conditions. Meat eating is either rejected or accepted only in particular contexts (situated meat eating, see Bailey, 2007).

Whilst Donna Haraway (2008) acknowledges the debates of an explicitly feminist animal ethics, she does not entirely agree with all the arguments put forward (p. 80). She has interrogated knowing and ethics in several texts and introduces the notion of "respect" specifically in the context of companion species, as distinct from the politics of animal—or other—rights. Respect, or "respecére," is "looking back, holding in regard, understanding that meeting the look of the other is a condition of having face [*sic*] oneself," and "sharing suffering" (Haraway, 2008, p. 88). The ethical ground of politics is in the mutual respect that recognizes inequalities, as also suggested by feminist animal ethics scholars Donovan and Adams (2007). This notion of respect is about the matter of care that, according to Puig de la Bellacasa (2011), "aims to add something to matters of fact/concern with the intention of not only respecting them, but of engaging with their becoming" (p. 100). Thus, it is not only a sympathetic look towards others, but also articulates inequalities in companion species relations.

The life of species is based on eating other species, and thus the notion of mutual respect cannot mean abstaining from eating. Instead, the politics of respect aims to recognize the unequal relations of consumption and the ways in which other species are produced for food. Haraway (2008, p. 80) acknowledges the inequalities of factory farming and food production, and suggests that animals should not be raised for human eating in industrial, objectifying ways—although, differently from many feminist researchers (Donovan & Adams, 2007, p. 5), she does not insist that humans should not eat non-human animals at all. This is because plants, eaten by practically all humans, are also living creatures in the networks of companion species, so it becomes increasingly difficult to draw a universal line between the species that humans can eat, and the ones that they should never eat.

Simultaneously, it becomes more and more important to connect the politics of respect to the practice of knowing. In her book "Staying with the Trouble" (2016) Haraway writes about how the politics of respect intertwine with knowing and response-ability—with knowing how to do otherwise,

> training the mind and imagination to go visiting, to venture off the beaten path to meet unexpected, non-natal kin, and to strike up conversations, to pose and respond to interesting questions, to propose together something unanticipated, to take up the unasked-for obligations (Haraway, 2016, p. 130).

It is this kind of response-ability in the politics of food that I aim to study in this article through my analysis of the production of situated knowledge.

MARTHA AND WEN

In the following section, I examine the material-discursive practices of the Martha Association and the Women's Environmental Network. Through the methodological lens of companion species, the politics of respect and situated knowledge, I analyze how they work with food and produce knowledge intertwined with that work, as well as their particular politics of food. The analysis in this paper is based on a qualitative research project carried out with members and experts from the Martha Association, comprised of 35 qualitative interviews (conducted together with Anna-Laura Marjeta and Maria Åkerman), and participatory observations conducted at Martha events. Additionally, the analysis includes a complementary study of WEN via participatory observations in a two-day event, interviews, and a web page analysis conducted in cooperation with the WEN coordinator. The analysis follows the institutional ethnography method (Smith, 2005), starting from material-discursive practices and mapping relations that organize these practices.

Martha is a country-wide women's home economics NGO with a history spanning more that 110 years (Ollila, 1993).[2] The NGO has over 45,000 members, organized into 1300 small groups in Finland. It aims to promote a notion of well-being through everyday practices in the home. For example, it promotes healthy and ecological food sourcing and eating habits. WEN is a significantly smaller NGO based in East London. It was established in 1988 (Metcalf, Minnear, Kleinert & Tedder, 2012), as women in environmental groups, after having pursued feminist goals inside larger environmental movements in the UK, built a "room of their own" (Woolf, 1928/1980). Both NGOs employ one of the core practices of women's movements, namely small local groups that discuss and co-produce communal knowledge. I view both groups sitting firmly within the tradition of the women's groups that have engaged with food production and environmental concerns presented in the previous section. WEN's scope is more focused on environmental questions than that of Martha (who work broadly on everyday well-being) and its aims are explicitly feminist, whilst Martha strives for well-being and equality in a wider sense, including environmental issues and gender equality.

Both Martha and WEN work towards self-sufficiency in food and eating. Martha members and the women associated with WEN learn communally to grow and gather

plants and to cook vegetarian dishes. By growing local food communally, and by doing so mainly outside the global food regime, they participate in the wider political food movement. Their activity dismantles the link between industrial food production and its consumption in rich countries, revealing the injustices embedded in both (Mies, 1986). In this way they share the aims of the food sovereignty movement. WEN declares publicly and explicitly that its activities facilitate the development of alternative economies for (often unemployed) women in East London (Metcalf et al., 2012). Furthermore, both NGOs engage with the issue of climate change and other environmental problems and have developed practices of eating, such as ecological cooking, in order to take these environmental concerns seriously and to transform everyday practices. Martha and WEN further recognize the complexity of both food production and consumption—including the waste that is produced. They both promote composting as an example that demonstrates how the networks of companion species—from microbes and earth worms, to communal institutions and the global climate—come together in mundane material-discursive practices.

COMPOSTING FOOD: WORKING WITH MICROBES AND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTS

The Martha Association has been promoting composting since the 1930s. They study composting among their member groups and educate other local inhabitants to use compost as a way to improve the soil in order to grow vegetables for personal consumption. An expert from Martha has produced a 35-page educational booklet, describing the process of composting thus:

> Compost is a worksite for micro-organisms. To become composted is to become rotten, that is, bio-waste decomposes in circumstances where oxygen is present through the activity of microbes. This kind of decomposing process happens in nature, near the surface of the earth, in dead plant waste. Microbes break bio-waste into carbon dioxide, water, humus and nutrients. In compost, waste decomposing is activated by fungi and bacteria. Earthworms appear to compost only in a late ripened phase, when the mass temperature has come down sufficiently low. (*Kotikompostointi*, 2008, p. 17)

Composting processes include plants, worms, bacteria, soil and water systems, and they coshape "all the way down" with companion species, as Haraway suggests (2008, p. 164). With the help of micro-organisms, waste from eating and gardening turns into nutritious soil that facilitates plants and creatures, and further, the life of humans and other species. Although rather similar phenomena take place without human intervention, humans can expedite the process, and are thus members of composting companion species networks. The warmer winters in London give WEN a chance for many differentiated forms of composting all year around, while compost heaps in Finland may freeze for several months.

As a large NGO that has regional expert offices the Martha Association has taken a step further. They acknowledge that composting is part of the global circulation of water, chemicals and emissions—part of "bio-social-technical apparatuses of humans, animals, artefacts, and institutions" (Haraway, 2008, p. 134). Martha works with these

large-scale composting networks by collaborating with communal waste management, municipalities, and waste companies. For example, in this collaboration the waste company has provided compost bins for neighborhoods that do not have big enough yards to make use of composted soil. The company collects the composted matter and delivers it for use. This way the residents gain the possibility to compost, and the decomposed soil is utilized in nearby neighborhoods. One of the Martha interviewees explained that the mundane minor practices of waste and composting become big when they are considered collectively:

> Although composting is a minor issue, it is actually a major issue. Bio-waste should be directed away from the landfill banks and that is a major question. . . . In our own area, even half of the household waste includes foods and gardening waste, bio-waste. That is a lot.

The transportation of waste in Western societies involves the extensive use of both human and natural resources. As Myra Hird (2013) points out, waste management is big business. Waste is dumped in landfills, circulated globally in similar quantities as consumer products, and intervenes in the mutual relations of living creatures (Tsing, 2015). Although the global waste problem requires multifaceted techno-societal solutions, as stated by Hird (2013), composting, when performed as an institutional and communal practice, can diminish the emissions of waste significantly, and this is important for all species in a global context. Composted leftovers from food consumption do not end up in landfill. Rather than burdening the life of the earth, they sustain and respect it. Waste companies and municipal policies play an important role by facilitating (or sometimes not) composting in such a manner that people are able to include it in their daily practices and in different types of housing—even those without outside space.

However, as with most large scale practices, composting can also have unintended consequences. For example, the remains of plants and animals grown in other parts of the globe can become soil in a new location. Compost may introduce toxins or hormones from industrial farms into gardens (Roberts, 2008). Composting spreads microbes from various systems to local soil and water systems, and it is not always clear how they "become with" indigenous flora and fauna. Companion species networks, as they involve participants from microbes to global actors, always consist of struggles and hierarchies, as well as contradictions and tensions.

THE PRACTICES OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION

In this section, the focus moves to the material-discursive practices of knowledge production that both Martha and WEN work with as they promote composting and other food-related practices. The complicated processes of food production and consumption are not worked with coincidently, but instead are integrated in, and supported by, continuous work on the production of knowledge. Both Martha and WEN have developed methods for knowledge production along the lines of the wider women's movement (de Lauretis, 1987). They work through local groups and the practice of shared experience. Groups gather for an evening or a day, and in the case of Martha, gatherings take place once a month or every two weeks. However, these

events are not for sharing experiences of the participants only. Research based knowledge also plays a major role. Martha employs (research based) learning materials sourced either from Martha experts or found elsewhere, and these are then studied in small groups. They read together and invite experts to give lectures to the group. The Martha Association's meetings involve the sharing of everyday experiences, also discussing more personal matters over a cup of coffee, accompanied by reflection upon the studied topics. Often, material practices such as composting or cooking are also involved. Thus, situated, communal knowledge is produced during these small group gatherings. WEN's activity model shares these processes, although it works through courses, and thus the small groups do not have the same continuity.

I attended a Martha eco-cooking course for registered participants (in this case, inhabitants of Helsinki) that followed a typical Martha meeting procedure. The meeting was coordinated by a regional Martha expert on the premises of a Martha district. There now follows a summary of my notes from the event:

> Including myself, there were nine participants on the eco-cooking course. The course started with a circle in which each participant reflected on their previous understanding and experiences of ecological cooking. Many participants shared their struggles with the reuse of their leftovers, and how these therefore tended to pile up in their refrigerators. The Martha expert then gave a talk about the use of local and seasonal vegetables. She further explained the implications of the different dishes (vegetable, meat, etc.) and practices of cooking (using left-overs, cooking on the stove and in the oven), as well as energy use and global climate change. The talk was constantly interrupted by the questions and comments of the participants. Throughout the talk the Martha expert referred to the experiences that group members shared in the first round, helping them to integrate their everyday life practices and global ecological concerns. Later, the group—now in four pairs—cooked a dinner (mainly vegetarian), supplemented with one dish of small local fish. Each pair cooked one or two dishes, peeled roots and cooked them in pans. Participants freely walked around the kitchen to learn from the other pairs' cooking. Towards the end, all participants gathered to eat the self-made three course meal. However, before we started, the cooks of each particular dish said a few words about the cooking process and gave tips for successful cooking.

Both Martha and WEN promote the growing of vegetables and emphasize the importance of eating vegetables (where possible self-grown). Simultaneously, they stress the importance of the environmental concerns connected to food use and production. These points are often taken up in courses—as happened during the eco-cooking course—and are also expressed in booklets, magazine articles, and expert advice on cooking.

These ecological concerns imply that humans should avoid eating meat or at least keep consumption at a modest level. This is why the course included a dish made from local fish—the most ecologically sound animal product available to Finns (next to vegetarian dishes). The Martha Association acknowledges the ethics of meat production and animal welfare, although they were not central in the course I attended. They support the Finnish authorities' food recommendations (National

Nutrition Council, 2016), and teach both fish and meat recipes. Many Martha members say that they would not normally cook meat dishes, but they do so because their husbands and sons need meat. This is a common view, as men generally eat more meat than women in the Nordic countries, and especially more than highly educated women living in cities (Gender and Climate Change, 2009; Vinnari, 2010, pp. 120–123). Often, the ideas of self-sufficiency and the consumption of local produce are the main ethical forces driving practices of eating rather than avoiding the killing of animals per se. Gardening, fishing, hunting, and eating meat from local producers are all considered ethical by many Martha members. Thus, the naturalized hierarchies between species that eco-feminists highlight are not questioned. For example, the preparation of a dish of locally sourced fish was not objected to by anyone on the course. From this we see that the Martha Association, through their practice and teaching, express diverse and sometimes contradictory understandings of food and eating. However, the important point here is that communal, local and embodied knowledge production occurs by starting with the participants' experiences and continuing through reflections upon major ecological concerns (founded in research) regarding food production and consumption. Taken together these then become cooking skills, actual food, and ultimately a communal dinner.

The role of experience based knowledge production was emphasized by the Martha expert, who explicitly arranged a circle in which participants shared their experiences and made room for discussion during her talk. The expert then built connections between this everyday knowing and research based knowledge of ecological issues. This connection between everyday experiences and research based knowledge is also facilitated through the research based learning materials produced in the Martha Association's central office. As an example, produced in 2010, a 50-page booklet on ethical consumption ends all its chapters with questions that encourage readers to reflect upon the text from the perspective of their own everyday practices and to then discuss them in a group setting. The article on healthy and environmental eating ends with the following questions:

> Think about your own consumption: how does it relate to the general trends (described in the article)? Think about your own role as a consumer and citizen: how can you influence the environmental impacts of food production? Are you ready to change your own food consumption for environmental reasons? Is it easy or difficult?
> (Saarinen, 2010, p. 43)

The questions are intended to guide group members—this time without the help of a Martha expert—not to learn research based knowledge in abstract terms, but rather towards a communal reflection upon the textual research based knowledge through their own everyday experiences. The questions aim to facilitate dialogue between research based and experience based, everyday knowledge, and in this way to co-produce new kinds of knowledge (Smith, 2005) that the Martha members can use in their everyday lives. Thus, both the Martha experts and the study materials invite participants to imagine new kinds of practices and to change their own everyday habits. In this process new, explicitly situated knowledge is produced. For example, it creates located, co-produced knowledge about global crises and their connections to

food production systems—knowledge that is then integrated into everyday practices. In the eco-cooking course we cooked seasonal, local plants and small local fish on energy saving stoves and separated the vegetable peel for composting in order to minimize the global consequences of our eating.

However, producing situated knowledge does not only relate to the groups' specific locales. In WEN, women share experiences in small groups—for example, experiences on the subject of gardening, which have been passed on from generation to generation in Bangladesh, where some of the women's families come from (Metcalf et al., 2012). They have an opportunity to link experience based knowing from different parts of the world to research based knowledge, and produce communally situated knowledge in East London. For their part, the Martha Association has engaged with local groups globally through their long-term participation in the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) and development coordination initiatives, often occurring through ACWW networks (Koskelainen, 1999, p. 212). For example, the association collaborated with Pag-La-Yiri—a women's organization in Burkina Faso—throughout the first decade of the 2000s. Together they developed practices of knowledge production, with Pag-La-Yiri offering local advice on how to cook nutritious food for children and how to collect plastic waste in order to avoid animal deaths in surrounding villages. Finnish Martha groups annually collected the self-financing share of the development project funds—the balance was funded by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The cooperation was featured in the Martha magazine, from which members learned about the lives of children and their mothers and animals in localities far from their own. Some members were prompted to visit the area personally. In this way, experience based knowledge from different localities—even from other continents—and from different generations became part of the production of situated knowledge in both NGO groups.

As injustices concerning the production and consumption of food are so complex and contradictory, local groups cannot possibly address them all—not even those that meet regularly and work broadly on everyday wellbeing. Added to this there are also differences in the capacity of individual groups. Some groups have resources, such as experts and research skills, with which to acknowledge and analyze important issues and to adopt a stance on them from the point of view of their localities, while others do not. As a result, in many groups contradictory practices remain unarticulated. For example, there are many relations, such as gender, that remain underdeveloped and unexplored. Further relations, such as the hierarchy between species as discussed in the context of eco-cooking, or the whiteness of activism—addressed by Katharina Novak (2016) in the context of UK organic food networks—remain entirely outside the discussion among Martha members. Furthermore, most members are white. However, WEN, which works in East London, has paid critical attention to these intersecting differences and has placed significant emphasis on local women, and low-income and unemployed women from black, Asian and other minority backgrounds in particular (Metcalf et al., 2012). My complementary study of WEN does not allow me to analyze these differences further, but the event in which I participated was an example of the cooperation of local women from diverse ethnic backgrounds.

SITUATED KNOWLEDGE WITHIN THE POLITICS OF RESPECT

The production of situated knowledge plays a significant part in the development of a politics of respect. It allows groups of humans that have not suffered themselves to take part in the politics of food, along with groups that have gone through disasters in their own lives. For example, the Canadian women in MacGregor's (2006) study on feminist environmental groups had themselves faced major contamination in their neighborhoods and had formulated a political stance that was firmly rooted in these experiences.

Many Martha members have not necessarily experienced environmental disasters or the injustices of poverty in their own lives. However, they still address these concerns as they learn about them in the everyday lives of both humans and non-human creatures in other parts of the world. They engage with various (research based) narratives and with large-scale environmental problems from the perspective of their everyday lives. They explore their own part in large-scale issues that connect them to the situations of, for example, groups of women that live near to industrial farming and biofuel agriculture in Africa (Boamah, 2010; Matondi et al., 2011). This way, global issues become rooted into the localities and knowing of Martha groups, and partially into their own practices. This is how the politics of respect in companion species networks create concrete means by which to change local practices. Situated knowledge is the key to the politics of imagining and new everyday practices. As Haraway (2016, p. 130) suggests, visiting unexpected realities and response-abilities trains the imagination.

MODEST RECUPERATION THROUGH THE POLITICS OF RESPECT

Food as a political object is a complex phenomenon, and throughout this article the notions of companion species, situated knowledge, and the politics of respect as discussed by Donna Haraway have guided my analysis. The processes that govern the production, consumption, and disposal of food implicate complex networks of companions all the way down to the smallest microbes. As illustrated through the example of composting, the material-discursive practices of food are organized by bio-social-technical apparatuses, reaching from municipal waste companies to the global markets of multinational food companies, and from the global circulation of water to the processes of climate change. Knowing the dynamic and complex nature of these practices, including the tensions and contradictions embedded within them, and finding ways to train our imaginations to embrace unexpected understandings that may emerge with regard to the practices of respect, are the main points with which the methodological approach has helped me to engage. The framework of companion species is so complex that one article cannot hope to cover all the relations at work in companion species networks, and thus I have chosen to give examples that illuminate the shaping of these networks and the politics of respect between them. The production of situated knowledge is a key practice with regard to the politics of respect between companion species.

Both the Martha Association and WEN acknowledge the complexity of inequalities at work within material-discursive practices by producing situated knowledge in groups

and facilitating the imaginations and response-ability of their collaborators in companion species networks. By following the broader methods of the women's movement (de Lauretis, 1987) and feminist environmental groups (MacGregor, 2006), Martha and WEN build upon their own everyday experiences. They root both learning and doing in located and embodied knowledge, as well as developing their own everyday practices. At the same time, they study research based texts, and in this way they manage to co-produce new knowledge and activities in which they connect texts to their own situations (dialogical knowledge production; see also Phillips, 2011; Smith, 2005). Martha and WEN do not build politics on abstract principles or "God tricks" (Haraway, 1991, pp. 189–195). Instead, they are committed to situated, embodied politics that acknowledge a large number of fellow companion species and material-discursive orders embedded in their networks. This way they are able to consider issues that are hazardous in the webs of companion species and the disturbances of the planet beyond the localities to which they themselves as a community are connected. They work to adjust their practices in order to reduce the consequences elsewhere. They stay with the trouble (Haraway, 2016, p. 10) and work for modest and partial recuperation, developing their practices within a broad scale of material-discursive relations, although their activity remains focused on everyday surroundings. These are major achievements, and I suggest that both Martha's and WEN's practices with regard to the production of food and situated knowledge serve as a good example of the practices of modest recuperation.

These practices have consequences that extend far beyond the NGOs themselves. The Martha Association's collaboration with municipalities and waste companies—although not able to entirely follow the same communal methods—aims to support the production of situated knowledge among inhabitants and institutional actors, and the development of practices for the modest recuperation of an increasingly contaminated planet.

Both Martha and WEN use research based materials as they work in local groups. Feminist researchers (for example see McNeil, 1987) have criticized the one-way transfer and circulation of scientific expert knowledge as "Enlightenment thinking." This one-way information transfer model does not support the political agency of citizens (Irwin & Wynne, 1996). However, both Martha and WEN have developed an approach distinct from the one-way transfer model. The dialogue between scientific knowledge and experience based knowledge, and the production of situated knowledge in local groups is connected to everyday material-discursive practices. In small groups both NGOs do "thinking-with" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2012) that aims to make a difference to the political object of food and public engagement in science in mundane worlds.

The everyday practices in companion species networks consist of many tensions. Everyday life and its eating practices are complex and multifaceted, and the situated knowledge located in them becomes shaped in contradictory, not easily manageable, forms. For example, project funding—which both Martha and WEN work with—is a major source for these tensions, as funding schemes direct and focus attention and thus also knowledge production—although this was not discussed in this article (see Vehviläinen, 2013). Additionally, nature may at times exhibit surprising agency—the

global movement of chemicals through domestic composting serving as a good example. Nature is technologically mediated, but not in a socially determined manner. Technology spills over, and the coshapings of companion species take place in the interplay between nature, technology and society. The politics of food and the knowledge embedded within it sometimes means we must tip-toe in an otherwise contradictory world. Situated knowledge connects our tip-toeing to everyday practice, and it is thus a central organizer of imaginations for a politics of food that "stays with the trouble."

Respect is always contradictory in the context of the production and consumption of food as species consume each other, and humans eat non-humans in the form of animals and plants. However, the idea of respect does not stop or prevent eating. Rather, it implies the collaborative work that Anna Tsing (2015) writes about, "working across difference, which leads to contamination," as "without collaborations, we all die" (p. 28). Respect for other species and nature is not based on an empathetic gaze. Instead, it means engaging with differences and hierarchical power relations, such as the otherwise naturalized hierarchical relations between differently situated humans and non-humans in everyday practices. Yet, the hierarchical relations within contemporary societies intervene in knowledge production, even for Martha and WEN. The hierarchy between species, humans, and non-humans seems to be the hardest to work with. The attention to other hierarchical binaries depends on the locations and resources available to the groups concerned.

ENDNOTES

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[2] As a country-wide NGO, the Martha association is multi-layered. The more than 45,000 Martha members organize themselves into 1300 local associations and activity groups, each belonging to districts that cover the entire country. Together the districts form the Central Martha Association. The local associations and districts, and the central association have all elected governing boards of Martha lay members. In addition, Martha runs full-time expert offices. The central office in Helsinki employed about 30 experts in 2010, and the district offices each employ between 3 and 10 experts in household economics, gardening, and environmental issues.

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