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J. L. Anderson. *Capitalist Pigs: Pigs, Pork, and Power in America.* Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2019. Illustrations. xiii + 285 pp. $34.99, paper, ISBN 978-1-946684-73-8.

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J. L. Anderson's *Capitalist Pigs* is big history. It covers four hundred years of history of an array of topics and in doing so offers a history of the internal empire of the United States. According to Anderson, exerting power over pigs in the political economic system of capitalism resulted in the United States conquering and dominating a huge swath of North America. It was a march of hoof and foot across a continent. While others have made similar arguments, his study puts animal husbandry and agricultural history at the center of his take on the process. It was not just that pigs fueled empire, but changes in how pigs were raised, fattened, slaughtered, and consumed made such a conquest possible in the first place.

Despite having such a large scope, Anderson deftly organizes *Capitalist Pigs* into clearly delineated and intellectually coherent chapters. Readers should have no trouble following along with him and the pigs he writes about as they trot through history. Chapter 1 focuses on the geography of pig dispersal and the capitalist empire created by the "gehography." Chapter 2 explores the open range of hog ranching from the 1600s to the 1860s. Chapter 3 tells how Americans developed a taste for pork and how pork came to dominate the other meat diets throughout the country. Chapter 4 covers hogs and their nineteenth-century urban context, particularly their fueling of industrialization. Chapter 5 uses pork markets and marketing to explore the broader American economy from the 1800s to the 2000s. Chapter 6 explains how the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) came to dominate disease eradication and work at the behest of the industry. Chapter 7 returns to consumption to explain how the industry maneuvered consumer demands and helped spark the bacon craze of recent decades. Chapter 8 ends by demonstrating that the recent scientific advancements that have allowed for the development of massive confinement in raising and feeding are not a break with tradition but an outgrowth of it.

What stands out most in Anderson's *Capitalist Pigs* is its ability to convey how entwined humans and pigs have been within the United States and in expanding its boundaries. At every turn, pigs and humans are shown to be in close proximity and co-constructing their environments and economic outcomes. A compelling example comes from his analysis of "Porkopolis," as Cincinnati was called before Chicago eclipsed it as the meat capital of the world. In his telling, the city was awash in hogs, so much so that residents could not cross a street without nearly being trampled during the winter hog slaughtering season. Anderson deftly connects the human work that powered the industry and animal work of getting fat to the larger outcomes

of the industrializing process. He quotes famed architect and social critic Frederick Law Olmsted as describing hog slaughter and processing in the mid-1800s as a "human chopping machine" (p. 114). Anderson, in telling such a big history, connects the power used to manipulate pig raising and slaughter to the power used to drive the broader economic transformation of the nineteenth century. The human machine that chopped pigs fueled and lubricated the Industrial Revolution.

The natural world is never far from site in *Capitalist Pigs*. For environmental historians, Anderson's work is valuable in showing how the industrializing of pig raising and pork production tied people to the land while alienating them from the economic processes that sustained them. While less focused on this dynamic than previous works on this topic, *Capitalist Pigs* nevertheless powerfully captures the dynamic that connected industrial workers to the systems that fed them by showing how pigs were turned into industrial products themselves. By remaining attentive to the shifting geography of production, that "gehography" of chapter 1, throughout the work, Anderson makes it clear how and where pork production took place. In addition, he excels in tying the broader picture of production back to the place by showing how local examples either drove larger processes or were driven by those processes. By covering such a long span of time and the entirety of the United States, this work makes clear how important that dynamic was and remains.

If *Capitalist Pigs* has a any weaknesses, it is in its dicussion of mass consumption after World War II. As with many histories of meat production history, Anderson's work presents consumers after the 1910s as a product of their choices without contextualizing those choices. Doing so helps the work remain focused on agriculture and animal husbandry but it comes at the cost of presenting consumers as components of the meat industry rather than the independent actors that they were. A key example of this comes within his explanation of processors' near-ubiquitous adoption of new techniques for producing low-fat pork products like hams through injection curing. Rather than be driven by consumer spending as he suggests, the process was far more contested with consumer fury, leading to the most extensive public hearings about a USDA meat ruling ever in spring and summer of 1961 followed by years of lawsuits. This omission is a minor issue within the scope of the work, yet the focus on the producers' point of view reflects a broader issue within the history of meat production. Postwar meat history is not a tale of consumer compliance but a history of fierce fighting over what meat should be.

If mass consumption post-World War II fairs less well in *Capitalist Pigs*, Anderson does an admirable job in humanizing the cultural geography of consumption of African Americans, whose consumption of pork has a long history. As he explains, the centrality of pork within African American foodways is rooted in the history of enslavement, mobility, and labor. The spread of slavery to the southwestern parts of the United States in the 1820s and 1830s (Mississippi and Louisiana) created a region that had to import its food from Porkopolis, even if some owners did keep their own herds. White planters did this because they did not want to give up potentially valuable growing lands to hogs or risk enslaved workers stealing the pigs. Following emancipation, pork offered valuable sources of protein in diets that were surprisingly varied for how limited they were in ingredients. Rural families owned and slaughtered their own animals and thus ate more of the pig than just the more popular parts that consumers purchased. By the 1960s, black power activists like the Black Panther Party began re-centering historic black foodways and eating habits in order to reclaim their cultural heritage, with pork playing a particularly key role.

No review of *Capitalist Pigs* would be complete without a mention of the physicality of the book. Stuffed with fifty-three quality images that are

scattered throughout the text and almost as long as it is tall, the awkwardly shaped book offers a compelling visual history of hog raising that enhances the written story. Academic texts often lack enjoyable visuals for various reasons but this is an exception. Some images, like figure 3, the "Porcineograph" (an 1876 map of the United States in the shape of a pig), capture how people imagined the power of the pig, while others, like figure 20 (a picture of steam-powered hog feeding in 1935), show animal husbandry in action. The images in this work do a wonderful job of enhancing Anderson's main arguments while also telling a visual version of the story of their own.

Anderson ends his exploration of capitalist manipulation of the pig to wonder if we are becoming the pig thanks to various therapies that have been developed from hog bodies. Whether or not the hog body is making that final step to becoming part of the human body, hogs and their bodies, as *Capitalist Pigs* makes clear, first conquered North America with humans of European-descent and then powered an industrial capitalist revolution before being bred as the food source of an expanding global number of meat-purchasing consumers. Anderson's work reveals the depths and enduring significance of hog-human connections.