Title: Review of "A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age" edited by Amy Bentley
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cultural-traditional knowledge about food and health as well as the sensual-practical experiences of growing and preparing food to identify healthy and wholesome food and diets (236).

Despite the complexity of the food quality paradigm, Scrinis's alternative seems to agree with the "weak criticism" he earlier disparages: Eat less processed food. While his nutritionism concept is powerful in its critical presentation of the history of nutrition science, the several other concepts he introduces within his "Nutritionism and Food Quality Lexicon," such as the "nutritional gaze" or the "nutricentric person," are rather confusing for our understanding of nutrition science and do not help Scrinis to further his critique.

Overall, Scrinis's expertise is the history and philosophy of science and social theory, which makes *Nutritionism* a unique theory of nutrition science. He uses social theory to extensively critique nutritional science as a practice, a paradigm, and an ideology. His ideas range from the epistemic practices of the scientific field to the strategies of big food corporations in exploiting this knowledge. His historical approach offers a detailed background that supports and illustrates his arguments and renders visible the working mechanisms of this nutritional ideology. Even though the neologisms and complex theoretical framework are confusing at times, the book is still worthy of the attention of nutrition and social scientists as well as of the lay audience.

BOOK REVIEW | **EMILY CONTOIS**

A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age
Amy Bentley (editor)

New York: Bloomsbury. 2012. 272 pp.

Featuring eleven essays penned by a veritable *Who's Who* of food studies scholars, *A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age* concludes the six-volume set edited by Fabio Parasecoli and Peter Scholliers that encompasses the cultural history of food from antiquity to the very near present. Focusing primarily on the West, *Food in the Modern Age* takes up the years from 1920 onward. Both broad in scope and specific in detail, the text reinforces what E. Melanie DuPuis argues in *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink* (2002): There are no perfect stories about food, eating, eaters, or food systems. The making of the modern food system is a story best told not with a linear narrative arc of either ascension and progress or decline and degeneration. Rather, the story of food in the modern age must accommodate, balance, and negotiate contradictions and paradoxes.

Laying volumes of context in less than twenty-five pages, editor Amy Bentley's introduction sketches the political events, technological developments, economic changes, and social transformations that shaped the modern history of food. In this story, processed food emerges as a central character, full of ambivalent meanings and compounding consequences. Pre-war advancements began the industrialization of the food supply, yielding diets that boasted new variety and improved nutritional adequacy for many eaters. Bentley demonstrates, however, that World War II "changed, accelerated, and altered the production, manufacturing, and advertising of industrialized food, setting the stage for the remainder of the century" (5). The policies, products, and technologies of the war made a uniquely American mark on foodscapes of every size and locality: farm fields shaped by the Green Revolution; supermarkets full of processed items; dinner tables at which families consumed canned, bottled, and boxed foods; fast food restaurants serving quick, cheap fare.

Food systems became not only more industrialized during the modern age but also more globally connected and dependent. While globalization has shaped food since the Columbian Exchange, in the first chapter on food production, Jeffrey Pilcher effectively and succinctly argues that modern food has been characterized by "greater concentration, standardization, and globalization" (44). Such actions have yielded exceptional, but ultimately unsustainable, levels of production. Despite this, Peter Atkins asserts in the text's third chapter, "A history of the twentieth century is a history of hunger" (69). To support his nearly polemic statement, he organizes his chapter on food security, safety, and crises around the common tropes of famine, which took more lives in the twentieth century than ever before. Maya Joseph and Marion Nestle reveal why this is so in their chapter dedicated to food politics. They argue that despite the potential desire and ability of the global food system to produce safe, nutritious, abundant, accessible, and affordable food, political debates inundate every stage and sector of the food system because of intense social stakes and economic implications (88). In his chapter on food systems, Daniel Block also demonstrates the limits of global food production, citing not only recent attention to food deserts but also the salience of "the Eggo story." Block uses this brief 2009 shortage of Kellogg's

Eggo waffles, which was of nearly hyperbolic concern to consumers at the time, to demonstrate that despite industrial food's vulnerabilities, excesses, and problems, it "is still very much a part of not only American eating but also American culture" (67).

In Chapter 5, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson examines the boundaries constructed to divide eating in and out—between insiders and intruders, tradition and innovation, the simple and the fancy, the quotidian and the spectacular. In her study of eating out, she argues that a globalized world so blurs the distinctions between private and public that the meaning of eating out becomes "manifestly variable" and "perceptibly unstable" (113). She concludes, "In the twenty-first century, more than ever, dining out will be about producing difference" in order to ensure the survival of restaurants within a competitive culinary environment (125). In Chapters 6 and 7, Amy Trubek and Alice Julier also explore how all aspects of cooking and eating, in spaces marked both private and public, are intricately linked to the structures of the broader, global food system. In her study of kitchen work, Trubek explores the fluidity of culinary practices, demonstrating how the twentieth century's social transformations altered the location, hierarchical arrangement, social prestige, and affective character of paid kitchen labor. Within this constantly shifting context, Julier addresses family and domesticity, arguing, "In contemporary times, the family meal has become the locus of concern for food and for social and political development" (163). It is at the dinner table, both real and imagined, that the global systems determining what and how consumers eat collide with social ideals of family (particularly those enacted by women and mothers) and nostalgic feelings for "a mythic agrarian past" (147).

In Chapter 8, "Body and Soul," Warren Belasco also explores this conflict, characterizing the act of eating as one in which eaters eternally aspire "to reconcile the material demands of the body with the noble longings of the soul" (182). This process of reconciliation grew more pronounced, moralized, complicated, and elusive during the modern era, as advancements in science, global linkages, and consumer cultures "also broadened people's awareness of connections and consequences" (179). In Chapter 10, "World Developments," Fabio Parasecoli explores these connections and consequences "at the margins of Western modernity," working to decentralize and contextualize the text's dominant focus upon the United States and Europe as well as to provide inspiration for further research (ix).

In her study of food media and representations in Chapter 9, Signe Rousseau offers perhaps the most optimistic account of food in the modern era, gesturing to its continuity over time. Citing scientific literature, food porn, fine art, magazines, and television programs, she argues, "People will continue to tell stories about—and through—food, because it is a natural conduit for thinking about and negotiating life" (200). In this way, Rossseau points to the achievement of this text and series. Despite past moments when the academy shunned food as a topic unworthy of serious inquiry, this series dedicated to the cultural history of food is now not only possible but demonstrative, enlightening, and cohesive. This volume singularly contributes valuable insights to the study of food *and* global history. *A Cultural History of Food in the Modern Age* provides a thorough, varied, and dynamic history of food during our most recent century and is sure to engage scholars and students alike.

Bibliography

DuPuis, E. Melanie. *Nature's Perfect Food: How Milk Became America's Drink*. New York: New York University Press, 2002.

BOOK REVIEW | **KIMI CERIDON**

Sugar & Spice: Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England, 1650–1830
Jon Stobart

Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2012. 304 pp.

Jon Stobart persuasively shows that daily purchasing habits, procurement techniques, and modern retailing practices date as far back as long seventeenth century in *Sugar & Spice: Grocers and Groceries in Provincial England*. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, he examines systems of flexible procurement and selling practices that led to adaptive retailing techniques for acquiring and selling newly available products such as spices, sugar, tea, coffee, and tobacco. Widespread availability meant these new goods were enjoyed not only by the gentry and elite: the middling and lower classes could purchase these specialty items at a variety of shopkeepers, such as apothecaries, drapers and metalsmiths. *Sugar & Spice* shows that by developing a complex supply network and by cultivating their personalized selling practices, grocers differentiated themselves from other retailers to become the most trusted sellers of these items. Through the examination of particular