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Eating Right in America: The Cultural Politics of Food and Health, *Charlotte Biltekoff*

Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2013. 224 pp.

In *Eating Right in America*, Charlotte Biltekoff explores the history of American dietary reform to reveal how culture, politics, and middle class moral ideologies have shaped our social understandings regarding what it means, and has meant, to “eat right” as an American. Biltekoff, an American studies scholar with expertise in the emergent field of critical nutrition, premises her first book with the view that, “nutrition is not only an empirical set of rules, but also a system of moral measures” (p. 7). From this stance, she argues that “eating right” has as much to do with normative ideas of good citizenship as it does with seemingly more objective concepts of good health.

Biltekoff’s exploration follows a chronological approach. Drawing upon research and analysis of dietary reform discourse she narrates the cultural and political story of food and health through the voices of the reformers themselves—from the mother of the domestic science movement, Ellen Richards, and the father of the wartime national nutrition program, Paul McNutt, to contemporary figures such as Alice Waters, Michael Pollan, and Michelle Obama. Using the reformers as her narrators and the propaganda they inspired as her visual aids, she leads her readers through four of the most prominent dietary reform movements of the past century. She begins her exploration with the upswing of domestic science in the late nineteenth century, transitions to the national nutrition program launched during World War II, and ends by shedding light on two contemporary movements birthed in the later decades of the twentieth century: the alternative food movement and the campaign against obesity. These movements compose the book’s four foundational chapters, each showcasing a different set of emerging dietary ide-

als. Throughout, Biltekoff emphasizes how changing definitions of good diets and good health have worked to draw ever more distinctive lines between America’s abiding middle class and the “unhealthy others” (p. 9).

While the actual dietary recommendations of each of these major reforms differ considerably—from the domestic science movement’s reductive nutritional lens and call for economically efficient diets, to the alternative food movement’s holistic view and call to invest in food that better serves the health of people and planet—Biltekoff’s most striking revelation comes through her unraveling of a unifying thread. Despite the almost complete reversal in the content of dietary advice over the course of a century, the messages endorsed by Ellen Richards and Alice Waters are fundamentally one and the same: to “eat right” is to be a good citizen (p. 2-4). Ultimately, Biltekoff challenges her readers to move beyond an empirical view of dietary health rooted in objective scientific fact toward a more constructionist view that accounts for the social processes and cultural influences that have helped to naturalize the scientific framings of health and diet.

What *Eating Right in America* fails to do, as Biltekoff acknowledges, is to delve into the ways in which U.S. citizens may have perceived or responded to, adopted or contested, the dietary advice they were subjected to. This gap marks an important area for future food scholars to build upon Biltekoff’s work, and to begin to better understand the contemporary ramifications of modern dietary discourse. Especially needed is a deep and nuanced understanding of those who have been posited as the “unhealthy others,” and made to shoulder the blame for their dietary shortcomings in true neo-liberal fashion. How do these individuals view good food, a good diet, and good health? What are their reasons, challenges, and barriers to not following the path of dietary adherence to good health and good citizenship? Understanding the answers to these questions may more effectively allow food and nutrition professionals to help individuals make appropriate choices about their diets while confronting that such messages are inherently fraught with moral and ethical implications. Through her historical analysis Biltekoff reveals the patterns and

persistent links between dietary health and citizenship, while also pinpointing the pieces that have been left out; the pieces that are needed to more fully complete the picture of contemporary dietary reform.

Eating Right in America may arouse more questions than it answers, and probably complicates readers' understandings of nutrition and dietary health more than it clarifies. However, that is exactly what Biltekoff intends. This powerful critique of dietary reform "provide[s] a starting point from which to rethink eating right as a social duty, a moral measure, and a form of power worthy of our most critical attention" (p. 12). In summary, this book is for anyone who thinks ordering a side salad instead of fries holds no moral implications, anyone who views the USDA's MyPlate dietary pictorial guide as intrinsic scientific fact, or anyone who has never thought of their morning latte purchase as an exercise of power. This book is for anyone who eats, right or wrong, in America. ■

BOOK REVIEW | CHRIS MAGGIOLO

Wine and Culture: Vineyard to Glass, *Rachel Black and Robert Ulin, eds.*

New York: Bloomsbury, 2013. 323 pp.

Wine is an undeniably trendy topic that has entertained prolific attention from popular authors and academics alike. A frequent focal point for discussions of geography, history, and economics, the study of wine has received surprisingly little attention within the field of anthropology. In *Wine and Culture*, Black and Ulin curate a selection of oenocentric essays that aim to showcase how the subject of wine may fluently speak to important contemporary social and cultural discourses.

"Wine has long been and continues to be an important commodity that generates significant interest because of its commercial, symbolic, cultural, and aesthetic value." In order to frame the breadth

of oenological knowledge presented in this work, Black and Ulin divide the volume into four thematic sections. Section I, entitled "Rethinking *Terroir*," explores the often-debated concept of *terroir* both new and old world winemaking and outlines traditional perceptions of *terroir* while offering new tools and angles with which to delve into studies on "the taste of place." Ulin, himself, wraps up the section with an essay entitled "*Terroir* and Locality: An Anthropological Perspective", tying together the themes of "Rethinking *Terroir*" and presenting them in the context of anthropology.

No compilation of anthropological essays would be complete without a discussion of power dynamics and place, which is exactly the subject of Section II, "Relationships of Power and the Construction of Place." Rather than focusing solely on conventional winemaking environments, the editors selected three unique essays on the topic of wine in Eastern Europe. Ranging in focus from memory and identity, to elite consumption, to cultural patrimony, these forays into Eastern European wine culture offer a nice contrast to the section's more conventional essays on "Wine as Performance in Galicia, Spain" and the legality of the Bordeaux classification system.

Black and Ulin's last two sections, "Labor, Commodification, and the Politics of Wine" and "Technology and Nature," acknowledge important Marxist themes frequently found in commodity studies. A distinct look at commodification through the lens of Georgian drinking practices nicely juxtaposes discourses in gender studies and globalization. The book's final section begins with a case study of Lebanon, another marginalized wine-producing country, and ends with two essays tackling the emerging subject of natural wine.

Wine and Culture: Vineyard to Glass does what most academic takes on wine production and consumption avoid – it strays from the comfort of the Western viticultural landscape, though not so far as to render the discussion foreign and uninspiring. As stated in this anthology's well-written introduction, wine is a global commodity. As such, any book that attempts to compile a collection of essays on the culture of wine needs to address the topic in terms of its increasingly broad scope. From Australia to South America, Bourdeaux to Lebanon,