Editor’s note

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To cite this article: Amy Bentley (2018) Editor’s note, Food, Culture & Society, 21:4, 425-426, DOI: 10.1080/15528014.2018.1480585

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2018.1480585

Published online: 03 Sep 2018.
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I am delighted to introduce this issue of *Food, Culture and Society*. While the scholarship is diverse in method and focus, the articles delve with particular intensity into important issues surrounding food, culture, and identity, and their larger implications for health, politics, class, and gender.

The first two articles examine indigenous populations, food, and health. Courtney Lewis’s “Fry-bread Wars: Biopolitics and the Consequences of Selective United States Healthcare Practices for American Indians,” provides a nuanced discussion of this food’s complicated history and multiple meanings. Applying Foucault’s notion of biopolitics, Lewis locates fry-bread within the larger context of settler-colonialism and Native American health vis-à-vis United States institutions. Next, Jessica Loyer’s and Christine Knight’s article, “Selling the ‘Inca Superfood’: Nutritional Primitivism in Superfoods Books and Maca Marketing,” critiques marketing messages of indigenous foods. Employing the term “nutritional primitivism,” Loyer and Knight regard the “superfoods” knowledge framework as challenging nutrition science, highlighting global environment and health concerns, and also essentializing producers and production practices as “traditional and timeless.”

The next two articles examine recipes, identity, and the state. Albena Shkodrova’s “From Duty to Pleasure in the Cookbooks of Communist Bulgaria: Attitudes to Food in the Culinary Literature for Domestic Cooking Released by the State-Run Publishers Between 1949 and 1989” explores the fascinating topic of what happens to cuisine and cooking in totalitarian state regimes. To serve the purposes of the state, cookbooks denigrated home cooking, emphasized calories and nutrients, and downplayed the pleasures of food. Similarly, though to less extreme effect, in their article “Tradition and Novelty: Food Representations in Irish Women’s Magazines 1922–73,” Marzena Keating and Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire capture notions of Irish cultural and religious identity as reflected through recipes, food, and cooking columns.

The next set of articles feature food, class, and social status. In her article “Moderation, Refined Luxury, or Extravagance? Fattened Animals and Ancient Roman Norms and Values” Kim Beerdan suggests that serving and eating fattened animals was more emblematic of conspicuous consumption than was the Roman elite penchant for extravagant dishes with exotic ingredients. Ellen Turner approaches food and class from a quite different angle in “Margarine, Mystery and Modernity: Margarine and Class in Literary Texts, 1880–1945.” Calling margarine the “foodstuff of modernity,” Turner considers the deep-seated working-class implications of this butter replacement.

Our final two articles explore food and heritage through generational and gendered lenses. Francesco Cucinotta’s and Andrea Pieroni’s “‘If You Want to Get Married, You Have to Collect Virdura’: The Vanishing Custom of Gathering and Cooking Wild Food...
Plants on Vulcano, Aeolian Islands, NE Sicily” captures local knowledge and use of foraged plants by older community members. The resilience of the traditions, the authors note, is related to the complexity of tastes and to their perception as healthy foods. Hadas Ore’s article, “Ambivalent Nostalgia: Jewish-Israeli Women ‘Cooking’ Ways to Return Home,” employs Berdahl’s theory of everyday nostalgic consumption to understand how Jewish-Israeli women immigrants to New Zealand share an “ambivalent nostalgia” that enables them to negotiate kinship relationships.

As usual, I would like to thank the many people involved in bringing this volume to print: Assistant Managing Editor Katherine Magruder, Book Reviews Editor John Lang, Taylor & Francis editors Alison Daniels and George Cooper, the authors of the scholarship you see here, as well as those involved in the peer review process.

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