

of land and community get in the way of the milking, she sometimes sounds wistful about what's been lost. Of the girls competing in a cow-milking contest in the annual dairy festival in Lewis's hometown, Hamilton writes that "most will be unsure how to work the udder, reluctant to wrap their hands around the soft, pink teats and squeeze" (p.68).

Most of Hamilton's musings in *Deeply Rooted*, though, feel firmly rooted in the farmers' everyday concerns, and she does a fine job of extracting drama from the seemingly mundane—a 4-H auction or meeting of a dairymen's cooperative. What keeps the book from dragging is not any blazing rhetoric or inherent narrative tension—the book ends with each of the farmers pretty much as they were in the beginning—but rather Hamilton's lovely, sparse prose and keen eye for detail. One imagines she must have pruned down her descriptions meticulously, so that only the most telling facts remain: a rancher's face is "red with sun and beer," and his "thin gray ponytail held together with a blue rubber band like you'd find on a head of lettuce." This is someone who has indeed taken the time to slow down, pull off the highway and into the fields, and see who is "still here" amid the cornfields and the ranches.

—Kaitlin Bell, New York, NY

Gastropolis: Food and New York City

Edited by Annie Hauck-Lawson and Jonathan Deutsch

Foreword by Michael Lomonaco

New York: Columbia University Press, 2008

xx + 346 pp. Illustrations. \$29.95 (cloth)

Reminiscing over the taste of the sun captured in the roma tomatoes grown in his parents' Brooklyn backyard, Michael Lomonaco, executive chef and partner at New York's Porter House, writes in the foreword to *Gastropolis* that our memories of eating define us through our "food voice," a language of memory, spoken in sights, sounds, smells, textures, and tastes. In this collection of essays celebrating New York City's ongoing relationship with sustenance, multiple, multiculturally accented food voices become a roaring chorus, a perfectly orchestrated blend of harmonious yet distinct notes.

But why New York City? Food voices are everywhere; what's so special about the food customs, traditions, and histories of the five boroughs? The editors stress that the city that never sleeps (and apparently also never misses a meal!) is unique in having been a point of entry for millions of new Americans. It is home to the world's elite and

the world's poor and has captured as much attention for its contributions to epicurean culture as it has for its role as a locus of American art, theater, music, and literature.

According to the authors featured in *Gastropolis*—serious foodies, serious scholars, or both—New York food is freshly grown food and street-cart food; it is the strange jellies and foams of the avant-garde cafés and the reliable meat and potatoes of Delmonico's. It is generation upon generation of Chinese restaurants that opened the door to other Asian cultures. It is the heat and spice of the island food of Harlem, and much more. Thus *Gastropolis* is a piled-high-to-bursting buffet, where emotionally charged memoirs of childhood meals are served up alongside highly detailed academic articles. The book tells the stories of the food and drink of the Natives and early settlers, the American revolutionaries, then wave after wave of immigrants—Irish, Italian, Korean. Here, an economic study on the city's early pushcart trade in Suzanne Wasserman's "Hawkers and Gawkers: Peddling and Markets in New York City"; there, a layman's guide to the "Jewish-ification" of bagels (originally hailing from Vienna), knishes, eggs creams (the ice cream soda's poor cousin), and hot dogs in Jennifer Berg's "From the Big Bagel to the Big Roti: The Evolution of New York City's Jewish Food Icons."

"In *Eating Out, Eating American: New York Restaurant Dining and Identity*," Mitchell Davis asks: "Is it any wonder in a city where apartments are built without kitchens and restaurant reservationists receive extravagant gifts from strangers that dining out is inextricably linked to identity... [that] eating in New York is a triple whammy: you are *what* you eat, you are *where* you eat and you are *because* you eat out?" (p.293) Social identity gives way to basic need in Janet Poppendieck and J.C. Dwyer's "Hungry City," a study of the food supply for New York's 1.6 million official poor. And in "The Chefs, the Entrepreneurs and Their Patrons: The Avant-garde Food Scene in New York," Fabio Parasecoli explores high-end eateries like Papillon, with its onion sorbet cubes that require ingestion instructions and its rosewater-infused milk suckled through a baby bottle, noting the influence New York City's master chef community exerts on global gastronomy.

While the more academic contributions are enriching and illuminating, it is the memoirs written in intimate, often poetic food voices that are the most satisfying, like the first-person narrative on three centuries of Chinese cuisine in "Chow Fun City" by self-confessed one-time meat-and-potato man Harley Spiller. There is Mark Russ Federman's "The Soul of a Store," scribbled in the scent of smoke and fish from the other side of the counter by

one of the several generations of Russes who have operated Russ and Daughters Fish Shop in the Lower East Side; and the wildly passionate, poetic prose of Annie Rachelle Lanzillotto in her constant search for a respectable answer to her grandmother Rose's "*Cosa mangia oggi?*" (What did you eat today?)

With such a rich mixture, *Gastropolis* should not be wolfed down; each of the seventeen essays must be individually savored. The collection is more illustrative than exhaustive, whetting appetites and inferring that the riches of New York's food culture are too vast to be contained in a single volume. If New York City is the ladle of America's melting pot, then the stew simmering within is a fusion-inspired dish, seasoned with history and flavored with the cultures and memories of all who have made Gotham the epicurean epicenter it has come to be.

—Joy Parks, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

Diets and Dieting: A Cultural Encyclopedia

Sander L. Gilman

New York: Routledge, 2008

xii + 308 pp. \$55.00 (cloth)

Although Sander Gilman's encyclopedia contains many interesting and informative passages pertaining to both well-known and obscure diet practices, it belittles the obesity epidemic, and instead of defining *diet* in terms of a healthy, long-term lifestyle, it confines the term to issues of control and deprivation. This approach limits the scope of what this "cultural encyclopedia" actually reveals about our own diet culture.

Many of the topics relating to nutrition are well done and informative. An entry on "Men: Dieting and Eating Disorders" offers many different angles and explains why few men are diagnosed with eating disorders: "It is difficult...to accurately measure the prevalence or increase of eating disorders in men because male anorexics and bulimics have been frequently misdiagnosed or overlooked by doctors who were culturally and scientifically conditioned to recognize pathological eating primarily in women" (p.182). This entry is helpful in the way it uses facts to make conjectures and question assumptions.

There is a cute (or frightening, depending on how you look at it) section on how pets are gaining weight along with the general population: they are getting "not enough exercise and too much food" (p.212). This observation seems so obvious, yet I have never thought about it before. Pets

are mostly kept indoors. Their owners work and don't have enough time to attend to their pets, just as they don't have enough time to attend to their own bodies. This entry offers another example of how Gilman successfully discusses cultural implications beyond the data presented.

There are also entries that will delight anyone interested in the history of which foods were once believed to be healthy. The entry on Horace Fletcher, "better known as 'the great masticator'" (p.100), describes Fletcher's belief that "Nature will castigate those who don't masticate" (p.101). Gilman describes how intellectuals of the day, including Franz Kafka, followed Fletcher's prescriptions: "Franz Kafka's father hid behind the newspaper at the dinner table, not wanting to watch his son compulsively chew" (p.101).

Such interesting anecdotes from the past are especially engaging. But once the book moves into the realm of health and nutrition, Gilman does not give the experts a voice, and there is no chance for *diet* to mean anything other than what the diet industry promotes. Gilman questions the validity of the term *obesity epidemic* many times, stating in the section on "Advertising": "In light of the obesity epidemic that is claimed to be sweeping the nation..." (p.3). It is unclear why Gilman chooses to make light of the situation. Had he offered data to support his stance it would be one thing, but he does not; neither does he discuss statistics regarding increased obesity rates. In a section called "Obesity Epidemic" (pp.201–203) he fails to consider a few crucial points, mentioning neither the documented increase in portion sizes nor the billions of dollars spent on marketing by the food industry to get people to eat more. Although Gilman states seven potential reasons for the obesity epidemic, none explain what has precipitated this public-health crisis.

The book suffers from some repetition and poor editing. Can an encyclopedia use Wikipedia as a source? This one does, under the entry on "Bodybuilding" (p.30).

What, ultimately, does this volume say about our culture of eating? It ends up being more about dieting than about diets. I wish Gilman had included more discussion of our culture today, how we are eating more processed food than ever before, how we are cooking less and taking less time to eat. These important and worrisome characteristics of our current diet and dieting culture are missing from this book.

—Rachel Berger, New York University