

the importance of mining by engaging in a more sustained discussion on how the Chinese experience of mining and appropriation of geology contribute to our understanding of broader issues such as labor-intensive industrialization.

Despite these comments, Wu's account is one of the most important works to date to put German and Chinese history into conversation since William Kirby, *Germany and Republican China*, 1984. This is especially important given the tendency to overlook continental European perspectives in works on nineteenth-century Chinese history, and the growing historiography on German capitalism in the global context. The author's adept handling of the institutional complexities of nineteenth-century Germany combined with her sound knowledge of late imperial Chinese intellectual trends is a great strength of the work, and makes this a valuable contribution to the history of Asia-Europe relations and global business history.

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E.C. Spary. *Feeding France: New Sciences of Food, 1760–1815*. Cambridge University Press, 2014. xi + 418 pp. ISBN 978-1-107-03105-0, \$99.00 (cloth).

Today the food world is mostly divided among mutually antagonistic camps. On one side are the food scientists and all the various cohorts of the food industry such as agronomists, the flavor and fragrance wizards, marketers and advertisers, etc. Their goal is to invent the next Dorito, even if that might be organic, low fat, gluten free or whatever fad following consumers happen to desire this week. On the other side are the activists, the sustainable agriculture advocates, the just, fair, artisanal, slow food proponents and food studies scholars, all of whom regard the industry and its political power with contempt. A third camp, the chefs and foodies have often sided with the latter as opponents of mass produced convenience and junk food, but have lately warmed up to technology in the kitchen, using toys like sous vide machines, alginates, liquid nitrogen and centrifuges. We might assume these food fights are natural and perennial.

But as Emma Spary's new study *Feeding France* reveals is that in the late 18th and early 19th century these animosities were not only

absent, but it was one and the same people promoting food science, nutritious and even good tasting food. Brillat Savarin might come to mind as indicative of this era with his landmark *Physiology of Taste*, but the real hero of this book is Antoine-Augustin Parmentier, the champion of potatoes, as well as a handful of like-minded progressive scientists like Cadet de Vaux, who somehow managed not only to embrace research, but public service and lucrative business.

How surprising, too, that the French who invented fine dining were equally devoted to industrial food. Who knew that the critic Grimod de la Revière, was at one and the same time a founding father of French gastronomy but his panel of experts also tasted and rated all the latest industrial foods? This is a story largely neglected by food historians: how chemists and food magnates, government officials, nutritionists and gastronomes collaborated closely to improve the food supply of France. These figures became public experts in nutrition, offering their services to governments and corporations in ways that seem impossible to us today, while at the same time promoting local, regional and artisanal specialties.

Parmentier, for example, was a brilliant marketer of the potato, not only getting the king to wear a potato flower in his buttonhole to promote the new starchy tuber, but inventing a potato bread which would be the envy of our own gluten free industry. In the process, he examined the nutritive properties of starch with an eye to public good and pure science. That there was an argument over the value of bread in the 18th century, paralleling current debates, is itself startling. Gluten intolerance wasn't the problem, but rather the dependence on bread among the lower classes, which many claimed was the cause of their physical debility. This became a political issue during the revolution as savants proposed not only the potato but maize and rice as superior substitutes. Parmentier's real triumph was creating a space for chemistry in evaluating the nutritive properties of plants, one step on the road toward modern food science.

There are many other fascinating surprises in the book: the enlightenment focus on *économie* in the older broader sense of the word, applying to household and personal management. Rather than images of gustatory excesses we immediately conjure up, eating frugally and simply became fashionable and experts advised people to cook economically in the interest of public welfare. Equally interesting are the debates over nutrition and the scramble to explain physiology in the years after humoral physiology had been abandoned but before the modern science of protein, carbohydrates and fats. Various chemical and mechanical theories competed for dominance. That people several hundred years ago became concerned with obesity as a medical issue is one among many subjects that parallel our own food anxieties.

So too were debates over the value of meat versus vegetables and the importance of nourishing concentrated broths, not unlike the very current rage over bone broth among paleo dieters today. The chapter on health foods reminds us that there is very little new under the sun. That manufacturers and entrepreneurs were selling various processed concoctions such as “health chocolate” and “health coffee” shows that the mass production and commodification of good nutrition is not a recent phenomenon. Nor is the branding and advertising of these goods. Potato starch, touted as a pure form of nourishment, along with a range of other vegetable flours are a great example of this. The irony of course is that these health foods eventually became staples of the food industry, much like breakfast cereals a century later.

The latter chapters follow the political vicissitudes of the new food sciences through the revolution and empire. Dietary reform programs, attempts to prevent food shortages, the drive to establish national nutritional standards, all remind us that our own obsessions over food as a political matter did not materialize out of thin air but have a long historical precedent. This is a remarkable book and one that food historians and general readers will find meticulously researched and argued, at times seemingly arcane, but in fact always relevant to today.

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Gregory Clark. *The Son Also Rises: Surnames and the History of Social Mobility*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press: 2014: xxi + 384 pp. ISBN 978-0691162546, \$29.95 (cloth); 978-0691168371, \$19.95 (paper).

Many of capitalism’s defenders argue that capitalism, despite its inevitable (and often extreme) inequality, is essentially “fair” because it provides each of us with the *opportunity*—“a fair chance”—to succeed. Class, status, and income mobility are possible for those who make the right choices.

Efforts to measure mobility have typically looked at economic and social outcomes for individuals relative to those of their parents. How likely, for example, is a person born in the bottom quintile of the income distribution to rise to the middle quintile, or the top quintile?