

This article was downloaded by: [York University Libraries]

On: 15 May 2012, At: 08:20

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Reviews in Anthropology

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/grva20>

### Perspectives on food systems

Penny Van Esterik<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Associate Professor of Anthropology, York University, Toronto

Available online: 05 Jul 2010

To cite this article: Penny Van Esterik (1991): Perspectives on food systems, *Reviews in Anthropology*, 20:2, 69-78

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00988157.1991.9977993>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

## Perspectives on Food Systems

Penny Van Esterik

Fenton, Alexander, and Eszter Kisbán, eds. *Food in Change: Eating Habits from the Middle Ages to the Present Day*. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd., 1986. viii + 166 pp. \$29.95 paper.

Harris, Marvin, and Eric B. Ross, eds. *Food and Evolution: Toward a Theory of Human Food Habits*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987. ix + 633 pp. including references and indices. \$44.95.

It is difficult to understand how such widely divergent books as Fenton and Kisbán's *Food in Change: Eating Habits from the Middle Ages to the Present Day*, and Harris and Ross's *Food and Evolution: Toward a Theory of Human Food Habits* could both find a place in contemporary nutritional anthropology. Two stranger shelf mates, it would be difficult to imagine. But their differences serve to illustrate something of the depth and diversity of studies about food in the 1980s.

Both volumes are essentially collections of conference papers, and both are reasonably consistent theoretically. In the case of Fenton and Kisbán, this is reflected in almost atheoretical eclectic vignettes of food practices from different places and periods in European food history. This collection, like the earlier Fenton and Owen volume, *Food in Perspective* (1981) is based on papers presented at the International Conference on Ethnological Food Research, this one held at the Institute of Ethnology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Mátrafüred, Hungary in 1983. Solidly based in the tradition of European ethnology, the papers provide pieces of puzzles that fit within a number of national and regional classifications of dietary styles.

Harris and Ross's collection is based on a Wenner Gren Foundation symposium on food aversions and preferences held in Florida in 1983. It builds from a well articulated and by now very familiar materialist strategy. Although the papers range through the disciplinary perspectives of primatology, nutrition, biological anthropology, archaeology, psychology, agricultural economics and cultural an-

---

PENNY VAN ESTERIK is Associate Professor of Anthropology at York University, Toronto. Her research interests center on nutritional anthropology, gender and development, cognitive theory, Southeast Asia, and advocacy anthropology. Recent publications include "The Cultural Context of Breastfeeding in Rural Thailand" (1985, In *Breastfeeding, Child Health and Child Spacing*, V. Hull and M. Simpson, eds.); "Intra-Family Food Distribution" (1985, *International Nutrition Monograph*, Cornell University); "Feeding Their Faith: Recipe Knowledge among Thai Buddhist Women" (1986, *Food and Foodways*). This review was submitted for publication in April, 1988.

thropology, the authors appear to accept the theoretical position set forth by the editors in the first two chapters of the book. Only Cohen identifies how his position differs from that of the editors, and acknowledges that "cultural evolution theory can no more predict all the features of cultural design than the rules of biological evolution can predict the design of specific organisms" (p. 279).

It is a long, long way from Mátrafüred, Hungary, to Cedar Bay, Florida. At times, it feels as if there are no possible paths, no imaginable routes between these two very different places. At other times, it is hard to imagine that any one person would ever consider making the trip, and there is therefore no point in looking for connections and commonalities. The books are products of very different theoretical and disciplinary histories. Yet they both reinforce the importance of studying food systems in order to understand related changes in economic, social, and political systems.

*Food and Change* describes changes in the eating habits of regions in Austria, Bulgaria, East Germany, Greece, Ireland, Poland, Romania, Russia, Scotland, Slovakia, and Moravia. In addition, there are three contributions on American food habits, and two papers on Medieval fasting which appear totally out of place in the volume. The editors make no attempt to link any of the papers to each other or to themes in European food ethnology. Furthermore, the papers range in length from 4 to 13 pages, permitting only the most superficial treatment of each regional style. One needs a working knowledge of European regional history to place these studies into any explanatory context. As a result, each local case study only hints at possible connections with broader processes of change.

The book begins with two general surveys of changes in European food habits by Kisbán and Teuteberg. Both authors present classificatory schemes of dietary phases in Europe and produce fairly consistent classifications, although Kisbán's four periods (1300–1500, 1500–1650, 1650–1800, 1800–2000) is much simpler than Teuteberg's scheme which includes prehistoric hunter-gatherers, settled farming and stockbreeding, intensification of agricultural production in the Graeco-Roman era (BC800–AD500) and the manorial-nobility phase (500–1300). The fifth period (1500–1680) saw a restructuring of the food production system following famines and plagues; the sixth (1500–1680) reflected both the beginning of colonial trade leading to increasing supplies of spices and sugar, and the concomitant developments of courtly culture with its high cuisine. His seventh phase (1680–1770) introduced hot drinks, coffee houses, and other signs of bourgeois culture. His last two phases saw the adoption of food innovations such as the potato by rural populations, and finally the beginning of modern mass consumption around 1850.

Neither author sought explanations for these stages. They are simply classification systems with no explanatory power and very little discussion of criteria for identifying "turning points" from one stage to another. Given that the authors are working with related ethnological and culture historical assumptions, one would expect the regional studies of Austria, Bulgaria, or Scotland to build on or critique these classifications. But the regional studies fail to address the schemes presented in the first two chapters and therefore appear to be of dubious value in reconstructing European dietary history.

Hörandner provides a brief historical survey of the storage and preservation of meat in Europe (inexplicably included in a subsection on Austria). Kundegraber looks at the impact of post World War Two urbanization on eating habits in the farming area of West Steiermark, Austria, including changes in the timing and format of meals. Redeva, on the turning points in the history of Bulgarian food, relates “the question of food in Bulgaria [to] history, environment, availability of raw materials and a range of social and other factors” (p. 65). Lysaght’s essay on diet provides an overview of continuity and change in Irish diet from before the introduction of the potato, through the great famine of 1845–1849, to the present time. She documents changes in the kinds of grains grown, and the use made of dairy products, meat, fish, vegetables, fruit, and seaweed. Two brief papers on Poland examine the significance of the potato in the Polish diet (Kowalska-Lewicka), and the influence of urban eating habits on rural meals in southern and southwest Polish villages (Szromba-Rysowa).

Brief papers on popular Romanian food in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (Văduva) and eating habits in Russian towns of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries (Rabinowitsch) offer opportunities (unfortunately not taken) to explore topics such as delocalization, item substitution, and food diversity, particularly in relation to class. Three papers on Slovakia and Moravia (Ludvíková, Markuš, and Stolična) make inferences about transformation in diets without specifying how or why these changes occur. Markus does, however, pay particular attention to how new equipment such as cooking ranges, cast-iron pots, and steam mills influenced both recipes and meal formats.

Other papers focus on specific topics within the history of food habits research—Imellos on Greek hard tack, Fenton on coastal resources in the coastal and island parts of northern and western Scotland, Walker on slaughtering in Scotland, and Cheape on food related pottery in the Hebrides. These latter two papers provide interesting but underdeveloped opportunities to explore the relation between material culture and food preservation, preparation, and serving. Walker’s paper on slaughtering techniques is a reminder how much pleasanter it is to move directly from analysis of food production to consumption without considering the intervening transformative steps.

Papers on medieval fasting by Dembinśka and van Winter provide overlapping and unfocused discussions of fasting rules; their descriptions draw attention to the need to consider how fasting fits with the agricultural cycle, and how rules change as monasteries acquire political power through land grants.

The papers on North America fit only tangentially into the theme of the book. Arnott’s paper on Philadelphia breads and Weaver’s on white gravies provide evidence that a single food item can provide a useful means for examining change in food habits. With their more narrow focus, these case studies can be linked to changes in methods of food processing to some extent. The paper by Apte and Katona-Apte on diet and social movements in American society explains how changes in food patterns relate to the social movements of the sixties and seventies—“counter culture,” ethnic resurgence, and consumerism. Because their theoretical assumptions and objectives are clearly stated, the paper stands out from the rest in the book. However, Harris and Ross would probably disagree with

their argument. But in the 1980s fashion breads, food boutiques, and yuppie high-tech kitchens bring a whole new meaning to the term "Counter" Culture.

## FOOD AND EVOLUTION

Harris and Ross have taken on an enormous task in producing *Food and Evolution*—an undertaking that is particularly important because it explores evolutionary and materialist theories in a number of different subdisciplines in anthropology. The 24 articles are all impressive contributions within their own domains of expertise, providing the reader with very useful reference materials. What is more impressive and rare in an edited collection of this size is the extent to which the editors have succeeded in integrating the papers through their two introductory theoretical chapters, brief introductions to each section, two broad concluding chapters discussing the book as a whole (by Roosevelt and Armelagos), and a short Afterword by the editors. I will briefly describe the content of the central portion of the book, and then discuss the broader theoretical issues raised in the introductory and concluding chapters.

Part two of the book, on bioevolutionary antecedents and constraints, contains papers by Milton on the implications of primate diets and gut morphology for hominid evolution, Hamilton on omnivorous primate diets and human overconsumption of meat, and Katz on fava bean consumption. The evidence presented indicates that human physiology is poorly designed for processing large quantities of both bulky, fibrous plant material and animal flesh. The first two papers explore in some detail the meaning of omnivory for human dietary evolution.

Katz argues for the co-evolution of genes and culture in his exploration of fava bean consumption in the circum-Mediterranean region. In brief, people with G6PD deficiency, an inborn error in metabolism, are sensitive to fava beans and in the past often died of anemia (favism). But people without this deficiency have a selective advantage since fava bean consumption offers protection against malaria. Cultural responses to favism include the development of elaborate techniques to reduce the toxicity of the bean and taboos prohibiting fava bean consumption among some groups. Although this case has been in the literature for the last ten years, this paper is important because it proposes a model for the complex interaction between biological changes in the gene pool and the transmission of cultural knowledge.

The mechanisms of evolution that change the gene pool of a population can also be conceptualized as shifting the genetic 'information' pool of the population. Cultural traditions, practices, and knowledge form a 'cultural information pool' which complements and supplements the 'biological information pool' and the processes of interaction form a dynamic equilibrium over time in any particular ecosystem. (p. 135)

Biocultural models should reflect current interpretations of concepts like culture. Information pools may work for biological information, but they do not reflect current thinking about the construction and transmission of cultural knowledge.

Part three explores nutritional and biopsychological constraints on food habits, with papers by Pellett on problems and pitfalls in the assessment of human nutritional status, Rozin on psychobiological perspectives on food preferences and

avoidances, Abrams on the preference for animal protein and fat cross-culturally, and Lieberman on the biocultural consequences of animals versus plants as sources of fats, proteins and other nutrients. These essays, together with those in part two, complete the book's treatment of genetically determined factors affecting foodways. They raise a number of current issues including the "small but healthy" argument debated at the 1987 AAA meetings. Pellett does not resolve the issue but raises it in his discussion of adaptation. He points out that while food preferences and aversions may affect nutritional status, they may be extremely difficult to prove. Monotonous diets composed of few components are most likely to be adversely affected by dietary avoidances. Abrams argues that the preference for meat may be related to the higher density of calories and nutrients packed into meat and fat. His analysis includes insects but does not explain differences in the use of insects cross-culturally (cf. Dufour 1987).

Lieberman returns to the argument raised in part two that neither plant nor animal food can be said to be more suitable as a source of essential nutrients; each dietary trajectory has a different set of costs and benefits. She concludes that "our genetic adaptations are designed for diets containing a wide range of plant and animal foods, moderate energy intakes, a fair amount of dietary fiber, and an energetically more costly lifestyle than is pursued today by most people" (p. 252).

Ironically, it is psychologist Rozin whose essay provides potential linkages to cultural anthropology. His extensive experimental work on innate taste preferences complements current work on food classification and food socialization. The mouth as guardian of the transactions for incorporating external substances into the internal body is also the basis of transformative metaphors which would enrich Rozin's arguments and build bridges between materialist and other approaches in anthropology. Rozin himself argues that 'ideational factors predominate in many food rejections, but are less common in acceptances' (p. 185). He also concludes that "there are no sound theories as to what the other paths [in addition to the diet taste-nausea linkage] to distaste might be" (p. 187).

The largest section of the book is part four on past and present pre-state foodways. Here cultural materialism is in its element, accounting for the enormous variation in the food habits of pre-state societies. Cohen's paper on the significance of long-term changes in human diet and food economy reviews the transition from hunting and gathering to agricultural modes of production using a wide range of archaeological evidence including skeletal pathology. He views food habits as "localized idiosyncratic cultural, solutions to common nutritive problems" (p. 261). He refers to the nutritional deprivation of some of society's members (usually women or children) as part of a group's successful adaptation (p. 261). His review confirms that the transition to farming resulted in decline in the overall quality of nutrition and increased infections, but a reduction in physical stress and workload. This latter point does not indicate that farming resulted in the reduction of time invested in the food quest. But it does not fully support Harris' argument that the adoption of agriculture would have resulted in a temporary improvement in health and nutrition.

Yesner explores the increased utilization of maritime resources at the end of the Pleistocene, concluding that coastal resources are not second rate nutritional resources but rather can be intensively exploited with a high sustained yield

resulting in semi-sedentary populations, increased population density, and varieties of social stratification.

Winterhalder and Hawkes both apply optimal foraging models to a number of ethnographic cases such as the Cree, Inuit, Ache, Yanomamo, and !Kung. Winterhalder discusses the development of optimal foraging strategy models within evolutionary ecology. He explains the diet-breadth model, the marginal-value theorem, and opportunity-cost models, and expresses the need for caution in the use of determinate models. Hawkes asks what determines the amount of time hunter-gatherers devote to foraging—just enough hours to meet their consumption needs or more hours to produce more than they need? Using a sociobiological perspective, she accounts for variations in foraging behaviour of the !Kung and Ache by reference to features of the local ecology such as seasonality and water. She asks why the !Kung do not work harder, eat more, and turn more resources into babies? The answer, as Lee's work repeatedly demonstrates, is that the !Kung stabilize below their carrying capacity or they would eat themselves out of house and home within a few generations. She asks why the !Kung hunt more intensively during the hot wet summer than during the cool, dry weather. Lee points out that the summer camps are specialized short-term hunting camps where short, hard bursts of hunting activity take place (Richard Lee, personal communication). Optimal foraging theory's predictions are not inconsistent with Lee's presentations of !Kung behavior.

Essays by David Harris, Johnson and Baksh, and Good explore dietary patterns in tropical forest settings. Harris' case study in northeastern Australia shows how "closely the cultural system was integrated with the rain-forest ecosystem" (p. 382). Even cannibalism is adaptive, as it meets the need for fat in the diet. Men ate women and children, a point that underscores the fact that women were more valued as food procurers (or food itself) than as mothers. Johnson and Baksh argue that the dietary patterns of two communities in the Peruvian Amazon can be explained as "reflections of the cost of obtaining each food given the nutritional value of that food" (p. 387). Emic considerations such as subjective evaluation of the costs and benefits of wild food production and the existence of taboos and food restrictions support etic ecological constraints. Good places more emphasis on protein rather than fat as a limiting factor in Amazonian ecology. While he finds that protein consumption is adequate, demographic and residential adjustments are necessary to maintain the pattern. Plantains are often eaten alone, but when meat is available, more plantains are eaten during a meal than when the meal consists solely of plantains (p. 415). This underscores the importance of the reciprocal exchange of meat within the village. Part five adds an important new dimension to the theory of human food habits—the political economy and political ecology of contemporary foodways. With the shift in emphasis to state level societies, new linkages to the world system influence food habits. Wider markets, capitalization of agriculture, new cropping patterns, colonial institutions, and the actions of transnational institutions, multinational food corporations, international trade boards, the World Bank, etc. make it difficult to talk about dietary patterns as adaptations to local ecological conditions. This complexity encourages more speculative thinking, more contradictions within and between papers, and thus more interesting reading. Lindenbaum's paper is an excellent illustration of more innova-

tive work in nutritional anthropology. Within the specifics of Bangladeshi culture and history, she asks “if Bangalees are not born-again wheat-eaters, but continue to see themselves as rice people, where does wheat enter into daily life, cultural conception, and world view?” (p. 432). No etic-emic, ecological determinist models constrain this paper, and it is typical of the best work in the field—not the straw persons created by the editors in the opening chapters. If this is their ‘emic,’ what the book needs is more emic. Lindenbaum has no difficulty integrating a historical account of the political economy of the region, consumption patterns, and “shifting political and economic forms at the level of symbolic communication” (p. 428). Changes in the relations of production caused by the introduction of wheat leave an impact on cultural categories. Nair takes us back to more familiar sacred and rather dead cows. Surely this argument can be applied to other parts of the world where cattle complexes are an equal ecological and intellectual challenge. Nair does add the fact that the consumption of beef is increasing among upper class Hindu as cows lose their sacredness. Edelman’s analysis of the production of beef in Costa Rica for American fast food chains contrasts with Nair’s, since Edelman shows how local consumption of beef in Costa Rica has been sacrificed to meet foreign demand. He argues that “decisions about who eats what cannot be understood apart from the unequal power relations that exist between rich and poor nations and between social classes in the underdeveloped countries” (p. 541).

Papers by Francke, Orlove, and Pelto examine changes in dietary patterns under the impact of neocolonialism. Examples from different parts of the third world reflect similar disruptions in traditional economic patterns, substitutions or additions of new foods, destruction of the environment, displacement of subsistence crops for more profitable cash crops, increasing differences in diet by class and between rural and urban households, and more of the world food system controlled by transnational corporations in search of cheapest inputs and maximum profit. Francke identifies some of the local mechanisms of pauperization resulting in increasing dietary insufficiencies and inequalities and concludes that socialist policies may be the most efficient means of achieving nutritional improvements in low-income underdeveloped countries (p. 470). I would, however, disagree with his concluding sentence that “science is an anti-authoritarian, democratic, egalitarian and progressive form of thought.” I am more disturbed by the funding of scientific research by the food industry. Orlove reviews stability and change in Highland Andean dietary patterns, identifying the common trend towards replacing locally produced native foods with purchased western-style foods. His work raises the important problem concerning the definition of “traditional foods” and the need for careful attention to material conditions such as government subsidies for certain new foods. Gretel Pelto describes the dietary contrasts between rich and poor in Mexico, linking them primarily to rural-urban differences. Beginning with case studies of a rural village family and a family in Mexico City, she examines the health consequences of each pattern, and finds that “the maintenance of healthy eating patterns in the midst of plenty is apparently not easy in the modern world” (p. 535). The hidden costs of these contemporary food patterns in terms of energy expenditure and environmental decline are particularly high under conditions of “internal colonialism” linking marginal rural areas and urban power centres.



### WHERE'S THE BEEF?

Winterhalder's comment about optimal foraging models applies equally well to cultural materialism: "We seek, then, simple models that are good to think" (p. 315). Cultural materialism is certainly a simple model that is good to think. But at the risk of identifying myself as a hopeless eclectic, I take issue with the editors' insistence on creating a nutritional anthropology based exclusively on materialist approaches. To create this uniformity, the editors create "the other" nutritional anthropology—the unidentified 'other' who assumes that "purely 'culturally' determined economics exist," who maintains that "dietary customs emanate from within a discretely defined cultural domain," who "concedes that the matter of cultural determination is, like language, either universal or nothing," who resists historical analysis and insists on the "relative historical impermeability of culture," and who "exaggerates the ideological, if not the behavioral, unity of social groups" (p. 43). Who are *they*? It is no longer productive to refer back to Lowie (1938), Lévi-Strauss (1963), or Mary Douglas (1972) to justify excluding symbolic, cognitive, and affective levels of analysis from explanations of human food use.

Ross has sought to demonstrate how impoverished such approaches would leave the examination of dietary custom. But what impoverishes both books is their lack of engagement with current analyses of social, symbolic, or meaning-centred interpretations of food use.

Harris writes that "the proposition that food is good for thought before it is good to eat has many ardent supporters" (p. 59). I suspect that Harris and Ross would be surprised how few nutritional anthropologists would be ardent supporters of such a position. And I suspect that fewer still would disagree with his explanation of materialist strategies: "Cultural materialist strategies are based on the assumption that biopsychological, environmental, demographic, technological, and political-economic factors exert a powerful influence on the foods that can be produced and consumed by any given human population" (p. 58). Harris writes that "materialists do not seek to deny that food conveys meaning as well as nourishment" (p. 60); if the editors were serious about that, they would have created a context where such dialogue might take place, rather than perpetuate the antagonisms by exaggerating the opposition between the positions. These oppositions are as unproductive in general anthropology as they are in nutritional anthropology. They obscure the key question of how to explain the relation between material conditions and the social formations, symbolic systems, and cognitive processes related to them.

For example, a topic such as food aversions and preferences lends itself well to an analysis of food taxonomies and classification systems, not as mentalist abstractions, but "the coded language of ecological and political context, debate, and reflection" (Lindenbaum, p. 432). Since food often marks conditions and categories of people, we need careful attention paid to the emic classification of kinds of people and kinds of food, since these marking functions of food are important in maintaining systems of unequal distribution of food within households. Harris himself writes that "taboos are culturally selected for their ability to overcome the ambiguity and ambivalence generated by the complex systemic interrelationships in which foodways are embedded" (p. 78). If so, why denigrate approaches that can probe deeper into such ambiguities and ambivalence?

It is curious that cultural materialism seems better equipped to account for food aversions, proscriptions, or taboos than for food preferences, prescriptions, or food intake in ordinary meals. As Rozin points out, it is harder to establish preferences than aversions (p. 188). But there are inherent difficulties in working with the ethnographic evidence on food proscriptions. Much of the literature consists of inventories of proscriptions, often with no information on the relative strength of such beliefs, actual food intake, or generational or socioeconomic differences in their distribution in a society. How often are verbal responses of food items thought to be prohibited in a society taken as evidence of food proscriptions? "Pregnant women should not eat X." Rarely are direct questions and observations on current dietary changes the basis for determining food proscriptions (cf. Hull 1986 for a review of Dietary Taboos in Java). This makes it particularly difficult to explore and explain intrahousehold food distribution. For example, if lactating women need more nutrients per unit of body weight than adult men, how is it that women's food intake is so often subordinated "to the prerogative of male consumption" (p. 22)? Can cultural materialist explanations adequately account for this situation without reference to gender ideology or ritual displays of power?

### Towards a Theory of Food Praxis

One approach to breaking down these false oppositions between materialist and idealist approaches would be the development of a theory of food praxis—the practical mastery of the activities and routines of producing and consuming food. Ortner (1984:148), building on Bourdieu (1978), laid out some preliminary ideas about what a theory of practice might look like. We are currently building on these ideas to construct a model of food praxis to guide field research in Thailand. The proposed model of food praxis would integrate assumptions from several different theoretical approaches around the concept of praxis. What would a theory of praxis look like?

1) It would be a non-reductionist theory combining materialist and symbolic explanations of behavior; components of the system—economic arrangements, ecological context, or cultural categories would not be ranked so that one has primacy over the other.

2) The aim of a praxis analysis would be to explain the food system as an integrated whole, within a particular social and historical context.

3) The core of the food praxis model is the human need to consume calories and nutrients to sustain and reproduce life and the recognition that there are political forces influencing people's access to food resources.

4) Food praxis explains both change and continuity; change may emerge from individuals acting out of habitual routines, producing intended and unintended results which change *habitus* (or dispositions) which in turn change material conditions and interpretations of those conditions; continuity results from the stability of routines of food production, processing, preparation, and consumption.

5) A praxis model takes the perspective of the social actor or social collectivity;

the system acts on the individual, and the individual on the system, providing both micro- and macro-perspectives on the food system.

6) Food praxis defines the temporal organization for routines of food production and consumption; for food production, routines might include those for food procurement or production, preparation, distribution, consumption, and waste disposal (cf. Goody 1982:37). Food consumption includes routines for preparing recipes, meal formats, and meal cycles.

7) Food praxis builds on gender sensitive assumptions about women as gatekeepers of the food system and mediators between food produced and food consumed; it requires examination of women's power in relation to the food system.

8) Food praxis places attention on food sharing, intimacy, commensality, nurturance, and reciprocal exchange, in addition to relations of domination, exploitation, delocalization, and food hegemony.

9) Praxis theory is broadly reflexive, encouraging critical reflection on how "our" food system affects "other" food systems.

10) Consequently, food praxis models assume that knowledge produced can be put to use to improve the quality of human diets; it is thus a potential guide to advocacy action.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to thank Richard Lee and Marilyn Walker for their assistance with ideas expressed in this review.

#### REFERENCES

- Bourdieu, Pierre  
1978 *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. R. Nice, transl. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Douglas, M.  
1972 *Deciphering a Meal*. *Daedalus* 101:61-82.
- Dufour, Darna  
1987 *Insects as Food: A Case Study from the Northwest Amazon*. *American Anthropologist* 89: 383-497.
- Fenton, A., and T. Owen  
1981 *Food in Perspective*. Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers.
- Goody, Jack  
1982 *Cooking, Cuisine and Class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hull, Valerie  
1986 *Dietary Taboos in Java: Myths, Mysteries, and Methodology*. In *Shared Wealth and Symbol*. L. Manderson, ed. pp. 237-258. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levi-Strauss, C.  
1963 *Totemism*. Boston: Beacon Books.
- Lowie, R.  
1932 *Subsistence*. In *General Anthropology*. F. Boas, ed. pp. 282-326. New York: D.C. Heath.
- Ortner, Sherry  
1984 *Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties*. *Comparative Study of Society and History* 26: 126-166.