

was prosecuted differently, and by the eighteenth century, sodomy was its own style of “uncleaness.” Around the same time, Louis-Félicien de Saulcy claimed to have found the historical city of Sodom (1851), with Darwinism on the rise and social sciences brewing, sodomy was still considered a branch of excessive lust. Sodomites and whores were lumped together as both working against the laws of nature (reproduction), although sodomites also represented a type of so-called old world morality, meaning depravity and sin connected all the way back to the Fall.

Cocks does all of this to contextualize the modern fascination with the darkness of Sodom and its instant connection with homoeroticism, as well as to provide a new, layered exploration of the development of discourse about sodomy and the sodomite. His focus throughout on theology, prophecy, and the political serves the subject well. To some extent, portions of the book may have been better served with a more straightforward chronological approach; however, by the end of the book, it becomes clear how and why the discourses of several centuries are inextricably intertwined. It is impossible, for instance, to understand the effeminate frippery of the eighteenth-century lustful sodomite without recognizing the underpinnings of the subject found in early Protestant providential writings. This is indeed an important volume on the history of sexuality and on the modern applications of far-reaching terms.

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LIZZIE COLLINGHAM. *The Taste of Empire: How Britain's Quest for Food Shaped the Modern World*. New York: Basic Books, 2017. Pp. 367. \$32 (cloth).
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Over the last three decades, it has become fashionable in the world of fine dining to offer customers a tasting menu that varies from a handful of courses to a meal that consists of forty single bites. In this engaging monograph, Lizzie Collingham offers a tasting menu that distills the history of Britain's empire into twenty meals, and thus twenty chapters. From Kikuyu irio to iguana curry, Collingham emphasizes the importance of ordinary, unusual, and prestigious foodstuffs, and she reminds the reader that Britain's population came to identify with national dishes like plum pudding “not in spite of but because of” their foreign ingredients, such as spices (264).

Several important themes emerge from *The Taste of Empire*: the interconnectedness of Britain's colonies around the globe, empire's debilitating effects, and the mutually constitutive projects of fashioning taste and fashioning empire. Between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, Britain's imperial peripheries became more closely linked—to Great Britain, and to each other. In the seventeenth century, earthenware pots went from Bideford, England to Ireland, where the pots were filled with Irish butter and sent onward to other places, like Newfoundland. There, people traded butter for salt cod, which they sent to Virginia, where it was, in turn, used to feed enslaved Africans who produced tobacco to ship back to Bideford (26). During the early 1800s, American maize fed the laborers who produced poppy in the province of Bihar, which the East India Company controlled (148). This sense of interconnectedness persisted in some places even until today. In a fascinating chapter on the late 1990s, for instance, Guyanese diamond miners, who were descended from enslaved Africans, prepare a riff on Indian curry, which they made from iguana (199–200).

But if Britain's empire brought people symbolically closer together through a shared knowledge of foodstuffs, it also divided people by solidifying class inequalities. One of the most

prominent themes in Collingham's book is the story of how empire created subsections of the population more prone to famine than others—both at home and abroad. In England, the lower classes drank sweet, malty beer because it was “an alternative way of turning grain into edible food” (95). When the empire's booming sugar plantations met imperial tea production, producers incentivized the swap of beer for sweetened tea. Marketers trained Britain's population to rely on a new beverage that contained fewer vitamins and protein than did its predecessor. Changes outside of the island were also damaging. British officials often pushed imperial populations to change their farming techniques without understanding the rationale for previous methods. In the process, they advocated “drought-prone, less nourishing replacement crops” while taking and preventing access to land—which in turned increased rates of disease and malnourishment (267). In Bengal, British officials created a substratum of opium cash-crop producers more prone to famine than were others when food prices rose, and in West Africa, British advocacy of maize failed to explain the liming processes necessary to help the grain yield niacin.

Collingham develops these themes with a lovely, engaging, and thoroughly researched details. Readers will enjoy learning that English officials made themselves at home in India by importing a pale ale that only insiders knew how to pronounce (120). They will be intrigued by the half-century between 1730 and 1780 when Irishmen drank more rum than whiskey (132). Transatlantic researchers will appreciate learning that Americans only figured out how to market bacon that would meet with British approval by bringing Cork and Liverpool meat packers to Cincinnati and Chicago to provide producers with careful instruction (227). And they will sympathize with the less fortunate swathes of the population forced to subsist on unsuccessfully marketed tinned meat, such as the Cardiff lock hospital patients, who became so exasperated by the fare that they protested “by pelting a nurse with spoons, bread and other missiles and disporting themselves in the garden like lunatics” (228).

This is a work of popular history that draws extensively on scholarly books and articles. Collingham might have done two things to make this book even more persuasive to academic readers. First, at times the book becomes too caught up in public debates about whether or not the British Empire was “good” or “bad.” Collingham often spends time answering both sides of this question—as she does in her discussion of opium cultivation—but historians are less interested in this debate, and more focused on reasons why change occurred. Collingham's other observations, such as her discussion of opium's role as a hunger suppressant, will be more valuable to academics interested in food and hunger. Second and relatedly, there is a tension in this book's argument, which might have been further refined. It is not clear whether Collingham thinks that “Britain's quest for foodstuffs gave rise to the British Empire,” whether that empire shaped “the eating habits of the modern world,” or whether these two developments were inter-related (xv, xvii). Penguin has published this book under the title *The Hungry Empire*, and Basic Books as *The Taste of Empire*. This title shift is indicative of this tension because taste and hunger are two different themes in food history; well-fed people want food to taste delicious, while famished people wish not to die. These distinctions matter because taste and hunger have yielded different power dynamics in the history of empire.

These issues aside, Collingham makes a very useful contribution. The book would work in a class on the British Empire, on trade and economics, and on food, and several chapters, such as chapter 15 (about the Guyanese miners' iguana curry) stand strongly on their own. Collingham has a keen eye for relevant, interesting anecdotes, and a talent for synthesizing a huge amount of the most current scholarship in several fields.

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