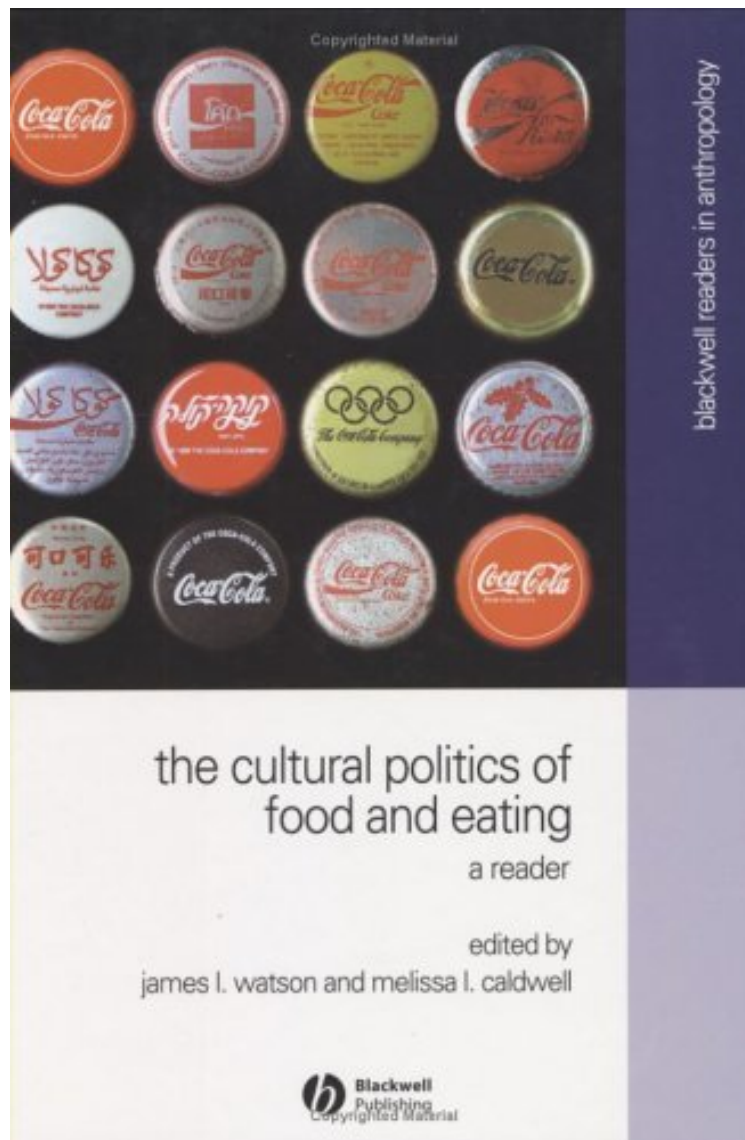


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The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader (Wiley Blackwell Readers in Anthropology)

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From Wiley-Blackwell : The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader (Wiley Blackwell Readers in Anthropology) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader (Wiley Blackwell Readers in Anthropology):

25 of 25 people found the following review helpful. Culture through the lens of food - and vice versaBy DoraThis

book is a collection of essays that were previously published in journals such as "Foreign Affairs" and "Journal of Consumer Culture." The authors are anthropologists, political scientists, and historians among others. Most essays focus on one piece of food item, brand or food related issue (such as McDonalds, green beans, or Mad Cow disease) and examines this issue within the context of a country (such as China, Burkina Faso, or the U.K.) The essays are academically written, but highly readable and they give interesting and unique information about the country as well as the food issue in question within the context of the country. The overall theme of many of the essays seemed to be that food influences culture, and culture interprets food so that the influence is two-way. Some of the articles were fascinating to read. For example, I enjoyed learning about how McDonalds in China was accepted into the local culture, and how its meaning in China is significantly different from that in the USA. I liked learning about the functions served by Indo-Pak grocery stores in Indian communities, of how sushi became a well known product across the world, and how and why French chocolatiers opposed Belgian ones. The most interesting article to me was one about the reactions to genetically manipulated crop in the USA and Europe, and how these reactions affect those in developing countries in adverse ways. Even if I did not know anything about the country in question, the book gave sufficient background information about the country and the issue to make it interesting and exciting. While reading about one product or issue, I found that I learned a lot about the country and its people. The essays differed in their approaches to the issues. I guess this reflected the backgrounds of authors (whether they were anthropologists or political scientists). For example, there were two articles about McDonalds in China where the writings mainly focused on how McDonalds was accepted and interpreted in China, without a discussion of any health implications of these changes. As someone who read *Fast Food Nation*, I was saddened by the seemingly unquestioned acceptance of junk food into foreign countries and was curious to know the most recent developments if any. This issue was more prominently discussed in essays written by political scientists. One author discussed the implications of fast food for Mexican diet, and rising health concerns traced to changes in diet, which I found interesting and important. All in all, this is one very good book. I highly recommend it if you are interested in food, culture, or both.

5 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Left me hungry for more!

By Robin Orłowski
The book makes an interesting case using good evidence for most of its text.

Susanne Friedberg argues that in spite of egalitarian origins to transform the world, the organic/natural foods revolution begun in the 1960's has done little to eradicate the conditions in other countries--where tainted food is a defacto way of life for people. The most careful washing cannot fully eliminate everything every time. However, ongoing disparities in America where people on public assistance cannot presently afford to eat healthy--regardless of how much they want to also needed to be addressed in Warren Belasco's essay on how the hippies introduced organic food. Low-income people do not necessarily have to contend with the same degree of food impurity as overseas, but are also subject to economic disparities in their access to healthy food. They ironically remain stuck with the brands the hippies and their present day counterparts shun because it IS the cheapest to purchase with the resources they do have and the organic companies have not found a way to make the American dollar stretch further. Why should only certain groups of people be able to eat safe and healthy food?

The editor and her contributors are empathetic to the subject matter--which I have not previously seen in other anthologies. Yet, they mostly present it with a critical perspective, demanding that the reader examine previous assumptions about the relationship between food and politics--and our own personal relationship.

15 of 22 people found the following review helpful. A useful and timely collection

By Customer
Despite the fact that, through some oversight, the editors neglected to include any of my own writing in the collection, it is the state-of-the-art in the cultural anthropology of food. I will definitely be using it as a basic text in my food and culture class. The chapters include contributions by many of the best people working in this growing subfield, and they really show how much the field has changed in a relatively short period. It has a good balance of cultural analysis, political-economy and culture history. I plan to supplement it with Lien and Nerlich's "The Politics of Food" collection from Berg, which is more issues-oriented and has more on food safety, the politics of localism, and fast/slow conflicts.

The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating offers an ethnographically informed perspective on the ways in which people use food to make sense of life in an increasingly interconnected world. Uses food as a central idiom for teaching about culture and addresses broad themes such as globalization, capitalism, market economies, and consumption practices. Spanning 5 continents, features studies from 11 countries--Japan, China, Russia, Ukraine, Germany, France, Burkina Faso, Chile, Trinidad, Mexico, and the United States. Offers discussion of such hot topics as sushi, fast food, gourmet foods, and food scares and contamination.

"Here at last is a comprehensive, thoroughly absorbing reader on contemporary culinary tastes and techniques. No student of food, globalization, or political economy can afford to overlook this valuable collection." Stanley Brandes, University of California, Berkeley

"A fascinating collection of essays that ranges from everyday food consumption to the global politics of food. The analyses yield surprising insights into familiar products and the social world of which they are such an important part. While the book, unlike its subjects, is inedible, it is highly readable and intellectually nutritious." George Ritzer, University of Maryland "...provides fascinating glimpses of the

behind-the-scene world of global food distribution and economics and their societal impacts on people living very different lives on opposite ends of the world" *Journal of Sensory Studies* "The book provides a fascinating journey through the politics, economics and culture of food in a globalized society...this book is a gold mine of thought-provoking facts, ideas and concepts...a literary delight." *Journal of Sociolinguistics* "A good tool for an introductory course on culture and society or perhaps a more advanced course on food, politics and global movements." *Social Anthropology*

From the Back Cover Food is an important and endlessly fascinating lens for social and cultural analysis — not only for anthropologists, but also for scholars of history, literature, cultural studies, political economy, and public policy. The subject is a central idiom for understanding cultural practices and for teaching about culture on many levels. *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating* is a collection of readings that uses the study of food as a vehicle for addressing broad themes that are emerging in social anthropology: globalization, capitalism, market economies, and consumption practices. *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating* offers an ethnographically informed perspective on the ways in which people use food to make sense of life in an increasingly interconnected world. It includes studies from eleven countries across five continents on such hot topics as sushi, fast food, gourmet foods, and food scares and contamination.

About the Author James L. Watson is Fairbank Professor of Chinese Society and Professor of Anthropology at Harvard University. His books include *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia* (edited 1998), *Village Life in Hong Kong* (with Rubie Watson, 2004), and *Between Two Cultures* (edited, Blackwell, 1977). Melissa L. Caldwell is Assistant Professor of Anthropology at University of California, Santa Cruz. She is the author of *Not by Bread Alone: Social Support in the New Russia* (2004).