private farms could yield a better harvest of both varieties and accounts of their traditional uses. After visits to both sides of the Tuscan-Umbrian border, Livio had collected several hundred fruit varieties and their histories. *Arboreal Archaeology* is chiefly his account, as recorded in his diary, of the individual varieties, their natural history, and how he encountered them (hence the title of the Italian original). He eventually propagated nearly all of the varieties and added them to the orchard at S. Lorenzo.

The present book is an embellishment of the 1997 original, the passage of time having afforded the authors a more mature reflection upon their work, as well as an update on particular fruit varieties that they believed had been lost. This is encouraging news. Over the intervening decade Livio and Isabella were able to cover more territory and interview more landowners than they had for the first edition. The illustrations of each of the outstanding varieties they found make an important contribution to the record of the traditional fruits of Italy.

A countryside that has been cultivated for two millennia necessarily yields up many and diverse local fruits and makes for a big assignment. But there is something unique about fruit exploring in Italy: the court of the Medici, never far from its native soil, delighted in fruits, and for over two centuries commissioned the greatest documentation of fruit varieties in the history of horticulture. Soderini, Micheli, Trinci, de Crescenzi, and above all Mattiolius, all patronized by the Medici, form the foundation of fruit science, and the family commissioned the earliest translations of Theophrastus, Cato, Varro, and Columella into a modern tongue. Most outstanding of all are the immense oil paintings depicting some thousands of fruits grown in the several Medici properties around Florence, which Cosimo iii ordered Bartolomeo Bimbi to produce (they are now at the Pitti Palace and the Museo Botanico dell’Universita). All of these sources are available to fruit explorers there; we in the States have nothing like that.

Some of the fruits Livio found will be recognized in this country (Kadota fig, Vicar of Winkfield pear) while many others are new even to those who live not far from their place of discovery. The orchard at S. Lorenzo remains today, but additions are now fewer and less frequent. The Italian countryside is much emptier of fruits now than when Livio began his collection; fruit trees do not survive their owners forever. Along with the farmers who chose a life of subsistence farming, the farms and fruit trees are also now gone.

Livio died in 2007. Isabella continues to hunt for fruits.

—C. Todd Kennedy, Esq., San Francisco

Edible Ideologies: Representing Food & Meaning
Edited by Kathleen LeBesco and Peter Naccarato
Albany: State University of New York, 2008
xiv + 252 pp. Illustrations. $24.95 (paper)

In their introduction to *Edible Ideologies* the volume’s editors make a recurrent assertion about hegemonic power and challenges to it—for instance, “representations produce both power and pleasure…representations actively produce cultural sensibilities and the possibility of transgression” (p.2).

Well, I’m tempted to reply, maybe yes, maybe no. To assume that wherever power appears, resistance automatically arises is to forestall analysis before it starts. Putting it bluntly, the problem with power is that it pretty much is everywhere, while the problem with resistance is that it can pretty much be imagined to be everywhere. Despite the editors’ declaration a few pages in that French philosopher Michel Foucault serves “as a theoretical guide throughout the book” (p.3), their contrast of “repressive power” and “opportunities for pleasure” is not Foucauldian. Pointedly, Foucault himself, in his classic *History of Sexuality*, strongly critiqued conceptions of power as repressive: for him, power was productive of pleasures, and that explained how power pulled ordinary social subjects into its web, making adherence to it seem desirable and fun. In specific instances power may in fact *cultivate* “opportunities for pleasure,” all the better to discipline them (which is not the same as repressing them).

Thus, in *Edible Ideologies*, Kathleen Banks Nutter’s essay on chocolate chronicles a shift in advertising from sweets as something offered by women to others (a beau, for instance) to something consumed lasciviously by oneself, thereby pinpointing a new twist in the dynamics of power, whereby collective advancement (of women) actually becomes a narcissism of individualized, isolated enjoyments. Likewise, Jean P. Retzinger’s contribution on the rhetoric of healthiness in ads for chain restaurants’ salad bowls shows how such ads invoke a strong and hip consumer, though at the cost of exploitation—for example, African American women are often depicted in such ads as the epitome of Cool and thereby exoticized.

Indeed, a number of the essays in *Edible Ideologies* suggest that in cases where they empower the consumer, food representations do so by disempowering others. Thus, the exoticism that Retzinger trenchantly uncovers in the salad-bowl ads compares to the invocation of Sephardic cuisine that Eric Mann pinpoints in new Jewish cookbooks that mythologize Sephardi culinary practices as proto-global counter-representations of bland and backward-looking...
koshert food. Comparable exoticism appears too in the packaging for the Canadian food line President’s Choice, which, as Charlene Elliott shows, pretends to scour the world for new tastes all the better to reinvigorate the values of the dominant culture at home. In these essays, the attribution of culinary pleasures to exoticized others enables the dominant culture to revitalize itself by playing on consumers’ investments in the ever new and the ever special. In complementary fashion, Lynn Fallwell’s contribution, on the image of German food in English-language travel guides, deftly shows how cultural empowerment can operate through a kind of self-exoticizing: the guides frequently present German food as fatty, meaty, and too wedded to a brutish past, therefore necessitating the intercession of other nations to bring it into the modernity of new, better cuisine. In similar fashion, Amanda Cozzi shows how dominant Victorian representations of London dining (as, for example, in Dickens) dealt with the threat of social enfranchisement of the working classes by imagining that workers who acceded to the pleasures of the table were alien upstarts incapable of appreciating the real values of English cuisine.

To be sure, the premise that power needs the panache of pleasure can become no less an a priori theoretical dogma. In this respect, some essays in Edible Ideologies do deal usefully with historical situations in which the cultivation of pleasure might indeed have seemed transgressive. For example, Marie I. Drews’s essay on the Holocaust cookbook In Memory’s Kitchen examines how in the camps the invocation of gustatory delight was a resilient resistance to attempts to crush spirit as well as body. Here, indeed, power and pleasure might be seen as irreconcilable contraries but only because of the irreducible specificity of this particular (and particularly horrific) historical case. In a different vein, Celia M. Kingsbury studies food restrictions during World War I, when there was little pleasure, just a blunt sense of spartan, communal sacrifice in service to the state. These cases represent unambiguous assertions of relentless power.

Many of the essays, then, treat power (and pleasure, too) as historically variable rather than as a fixed a priori concept. Not for nothing did Michel Foucault speak of the “spirals” of power and resistance. Here, Nathan Abrams’s essay, on the role of Jell-O in the spy case of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg (who used a cut-up Jell-O box as a contact device), is particularly intriguing. On the one hand, Jell-O was an all-American product that signaled assimilation into the national project. On the other, in a complicated twist, by using ersatz products like Jell-O in her supposedly Jewish kitchen, Ethel “proved” her inauthenticity— as dutiful Jew, as dutiful mother and housewife, and therefore as dutiful American.

The contributions to Edible Ideologies show a richness of concrete argument that theoretical simplicities simply cannot account for. Even LeBesco and Naccarato’s own essay—on the ways Julia Child and Martha Stewart play on democratic offers of culinary skills only to maintain boundaries between their celebrity privilege and actual culinary opportunities for ordinary citizens—demonstrates a complexity of analysis that complicates simple power/pleasure binary opposition.

Vividly and vibrantly, the essays in Edible Ideologies reveal multitudes of meaning when they stay close to concrete cases and read them for their historical complexities. Through diverse examples and divergent methods of cultural analysis, the essays offer rich interpretations of multifarious resonances of food in modernity.

— Dana Polan, New York University

Hog and Hominy: Soul Food from Africa to America
Frederick Douglass Opie
238 pp. $24.95 (cloth)

Scholarly explorations of the importance of soul in black American culture often carry an elegiac tone. Just as Peter Guralnick has waxed nostalgic about the “brief flowering” of southern soul music, so the African American Review dedicated the entire Winter 2007 issue to the “post-soul aesthetic” that Bertram Ashe and others espied in the more anxious and ironic cultural works that followed the exhilarating breakthroughs of the 1960s. Soul itself, as it emerges from these and other studies, can look like a meteoric phenomenon—like a phenomenon that flared brightly but briefly in the Civil Rights era, leaving behind traces that we cannot repeat but under whose glow we remain caught. Soul, these studies suggest, might well have grown out of the ordeal of white supremacy, but, precisely because of this, it provided practitioners and audiences alike with opportunities for spiritual recovery, offering a sense of belonging and togetherness that can feel somewhat absent from the culture of our own period.

Frederick Douglass Opie’s new history of African American cooking, Hog and Hominy: Soul Food from Africa to America, in some ways demurs from this common view. Three of Hog and Hominy’s best chapters are devoted to the rise of soul food in 1960s ghetto communities, and, while Opie is no less successful when chronicling the critics of this phenomenon than he is its advocates, the