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Review of Beer and Revolution, by Tom Goyens

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Beer and Revolution: The German Anarchist Movement in New York City, 1880-1914.

By Tom Goyens. Urbana/Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007. x + 263 pp. \$42.00.

Liquid Bread: Beer and Brewing in Cross-Cultural Perspective.

Edited by Wulf Schiefenhövel and Helen Macbeth. The Anthropology of Food and Nutrition 7. New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2011. x + 247 pp. \$95.00.

Liquid Bread is a collection of papers presented at the International Commission on the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition's conference at the Max-Planck-Institut in Seewiesen, Bavaria, in 2001. Essays by twenty-eight scholars from eight European countries, New Zealand, and the Philippines cover a spectrum of topics related to beer, focusing on the history, production, consumption, and marketing of the sudsy beverage. The academic essays, enriched with endnotes and references consisting primarily of scholarly books and articles, are accessible to laypeople; since beer is a universally valued beverage, this concession to a more general audience is welcome and appropriate.

The essays begin with a discussion querying human ingestion of ethanol, a poison; the next essay provides an answer, i.e., beer's positive contributions to nutrition and general health. Other, later essays also treat health-related concerns. Chapter 10 provides an overview of beer consumption in the Czech Republic, which boasts the world's highest per-capita beer consumption and suffers from predictable health problems as a result. (This essay describes the history of famous beers like Pilsner as Czech developments [102], a claim that those familiar with the German history of the region would dispute.) Chapter 11 compares and contrasts the consumption of beer in German and American fraternity life, pointing out the contribution of beer to sociability, the effects of the abuse of beer, and the mediating effect of a German cultural taboo against loss of control on overconsumption by German college-age men.

The book's most interesting chapters treat historical, sociological, and anthropological topics related to beer and culture. Three essays (Chapters 3-5) demonstrate the extent of beer production across time and space as they discuss beer brewing in modern times, the ancient Near East (based on archaeological evidence in Northern Syria), and prehistoric Europe (based on similar evidence in Southern Germany).

Chapters 6 and 7 treat a perceived north-south distinction aligning the consumption of beer and wine with northeastern and southwestern Germany, respectively, and with northern and southern Europe, respectively. While beer has long been associated with Germanness, Germany itself has only in the last several centuries linked the construction of a German identity with beer. Ironically, while Germany is perceived as the "beer-drinking country par excellence" (68), beer consumption is, in fact, decreasing there due to health concerns. The identification of beer with Northern Europe belies Southern European production and consumption of beer. While the "Mediterranean diet" explicitly excludes beer because of health concerns, Southern Europeans enthusiastically partake of local beers (e.g., Spain boasts the second highest beer consumption in Europe [77]). The construction of beer as "northern" is reinforced by marketing that aligns local southern European beers with images of a Germanic north that evoke notions of tradition,

quality, and naturalness. Chapter 19's detailed examination of beer advertising as communicative practice identifies four predominant discourses: tradition, body image, sexual pleasure, and social differentiation, all of which are paradoxical, as modern beer is mass produced, does not of itself provide beauty or sexual gratification, and is not affiliated with local tradition.

Subsequent chapters highlight the interplay between globalization (and the resulting reduction of beer producers and products) and the marketing of beer, which evokes images of authentic ethnic experience while exploiting local distribution networks and promoting beers that are not genuine local cultural products. Essays on the increased acceptance of beer culture in Seville, Spain, (Chapter 8) and the changing function of the British pub (Chapter 9) reveal the exploitation of consumers' local loyalties and desire for community and tradition by international breweries that commodify regional cultures and identities. Chapter 20 provides a nuanced examination of the current tension between the global and the local, claiming that beer advertising assumes a mixed position, promoting a global product through local images.

Other chapters demonstrate the universally important roles of beer in sociability and social standing, and its interplay with gender identity. Chapter 12 succinctly treats the alignment of beer consumption with public drinking by New Zealand men in the all-male contexts of rugby and racing. Moving beyond European and Anglophone contexts, subsequent chapters examine sociocultural aspects of beer production and consumption in Africa. Chapter 13 treats Northern Cameroon, where beer is a "locus of value" (144) used both to enhance sociability and to establish and maintain social position. In sub-Saharan African cultures described in Chapter 14, beer has economic and social functions aligned with gender, where males brew beer for ritual use, and females for consumption and profit. Chapter 15's examination of beer production, ritual, and social standing in Tanzania aligns beer production and consumption with females and males, respectively, with females who sell beer outside of the home and ritual use endangering their reputations if they profit from this activity. Chapter 16's study of beer brewing terminology in Burkina Faso indicates that while the brewing process parallels that of other cultures, the inherent processes are organized and named differently; this essay, while inherently interesting, is the weakest in the book, as it is longer on linguistic data than analysis.

Chapters 17 and 18 deal with changes in beer consumption in the Asian cultures of Sarawak (Borneo) and Northeast Luzon (Philippines), respectively. Sarawak has forsaken the production of rice beer as inhabitants have converted to Christianity. Simultaneously, social prestige associated with hospitality has been replaced by individualistic, materialistic behavior; excess rice is now sold rather than brewed. Religion has the opposite effect on beer consumption in the Philippine culture explicated in Chapter 18; Catholicism's lack of restrictions on alcohol plus the "ideology of macho behavior" have made drinking part of the public culture of males.

This book is both an excellent source of original interdisciplinary research on many aspects of beer and an entertaining read, suitable for both scholars and the educated general public. It contains well written studies of a beverage that has become a staple in many cultures, including those of the German-speaking peoples. Readers will not wonder that this work was

named both the *Choice* Outstanding Academic Book and the winner of the Gourmand World Cookbook Award in 2011.

While beer figures prominently in the title *Beer and Revolution*, this social history focuses on the German-American anarchist movement in the Greater New York Metropolitan Area during the latter part of the long nineteenth century, “highlighting its ideological, spatial, and historical dimensions” (9); beer is present due to its association with Germans and the saloons in which they constituted radical space. This book serves two important functions. First, it fills a gap in the history of American radicalism by tracing the rise and fall of the first group of anarchists in the United States. Additionally, it examines the anarchists’ “geography of resistance,” mapping the “topography...of the movement...the places and spaces” in which anarchists lived, worked, socialized, and engaged in radical activity (7).

Author Goyens provides background information on the roots of German anarchism in European socialism, focusing on the roles of Marx and Bakunin and the development of social revolutionaries’ key ideological principles: antiparliamentarianism and internationalism. The suppression of socialists under Bismarck brought about a rejection of political action by anarchists in favor of Bakunin’s “revolution by deed” (76), trade unionism, and group life that attempted to realize a “humanist vision for society” (82). Goyens devotes considerable attention to the great men of the anarchist movement (Frederick Hasselmann, Justus Schwab [who was also an innkeeper who provided social, radical space for the movement], and Johann Most) and provides extensive coverage of their biographies, personal proclivities, anarchist activities, leadership philosophies, and effects on the movement. As with any movement, a history of anarchy reveals a tension between leaders and the rank and file; this tension is particularly compelling in the case of German-American anarchists, who espoused autonomy and resisted the efforts of the movement’s great men (e.g., Most) to exercise control over publications and activities.

In the wake of Bismarck’s *Antisozialistengesetz*, German anarchists were attracted to the United States for its revolutionary past and proclaimed personal and civil liberties; however, they were disillusioned by the realities of the workplace, urban squalor, and incidents like the Haymarket and its repressive aftermath. Times of economic hardship and political repression were, however, boom times for anarchists, as their context provided convincing evidence of the need for worker organization and social, economic, and political revolution. Alexander Berkman’s assassination attempt on the industrialist H.C. Frick and the resulting negative mainstream reaction to both Germans and anarchists helped push the movement away from terrorism and toward an autonomist philosophy that found expression in intellectual and cultural activities. Prosperity and progressive reform in the twentieth century deprived anarchism of its agenda.

Over a period of about forty-five years, the nation’s largest ethnic group produced the first American radical subculture, which was eventually absorbed by the mainstream progressive movements of the twentieth century. Goyens assembles this story from a wealth of sources including scholarly books and journal articles, archival sources located in both the United States

and Europe, and web sites of scholarly projects (e.g., Pritzker College's Anarchy Archives, the Haymarket Affair Digital Collection, and the Emma Goldman Papers).

The author's second purpose, to provide a spatial geography of the anarchist movement, is more interesting to readers who concern themselves with cultural studies, like this reviewer. Goyens provides a fascinating study of the movement's use and constitution of space in its political, educational, and social activities. The subjects of this study were radicals who were also Germans, and they reflected the ideologies and cultural attitudes and constructs of both groups, as the book's title suggests. German anarchists were typically German in their sociability and love of leisure and family activities, founding clubs, and societies, visiting beer halls, and attending festivals "accompanied by a plentiful supply of beer" (34). In these activities, beer offered both an avenue of sociability and a means of concealing political activity, as venues offered both drink and camouflage for German anarchists planning and executing political and social action. German owners of beer halls and recreational areas were amenable to the radicalized use of their premises because of their personal convictions and the profits earned from beer-drinking anarchists. Activism within a beer hall allowed the German-American radicals to operate "under the radar" of the larger Anglo-American milieu, since beer was associated with lower-class, immigrant Germanness; while it was a social indicator, beer was not associated by Anglo-Americans with dangerous political action. Goyens provides similar description and analysis of other venues of anarchist activism in the Metropolitan Area's German neighborhoods and their lecture halls, clubs, parks, and cultural activities (publications, music, and theater), allowing a glimpse into the daily lives of radical German-American immigrants.

The anarchist geography, while fascinating, is more difficult to determine and, perhaps, therefore receives less coverage in this book than the history of the movement. Organizationally, the chapters are oddly arranged; since the book begins with a discussion of radical space, it gives the impression that it will deal more fully with this subject than it actually does (coverage is limited to two out of eight chapters). The remaining chapters present the history of the movement and its leaders, and there is little connection between the two different topics within the book, which can be disconcerting to the reader. Those who know German will also be disconcerted by the author's mistakes in a language important for this book: German words are misspelled or rendered grammatically incorrectly (e.g., *Bierhalle* is not a plural noun [34]), and *Wirthaus* should be spelled *Wirtshaus* [35]), and there are awkward translations of German into English (for instance, *Weinlesefest* is translated as "vintage harvest festival" [134]). Since the author is not a native speaker of English, his editor shares responsibility for these errors.

These limitations aside, this book provides a fascinating look into the lives of a vibrant minority of the German-American population in the Greater Metropolitan area during the Gilded Age and early twentieth century. Of particular interest is Goyens' study of the constitution of radical space and the alignment of this "radical geography" with the anarchists' daily lives and activities, which, being expressions of German culture, included beer.