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Palatable Bugs for the Victorians: Entomophagy, Class and Colonialism in Vincent M. Holt's *Why Not Eat Insects?*

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ABSTRACT

Entomologists and proponents of insect food have often seen in Vincent M. Holt's *Why Not Eat Insects?* (London: Field & Tuer, 1885) the work of a precursor. Holt's plea to consume insects in Victorian Britain, as an aid to address food poverty and diversify Western diets, certainly resonates with the environmental and social predicaments of the twenty-first century. However, the text and the context of this publication have not been fully examined. The book has attracted comparatively little attention from historians who are yet to unravel why and how Holt could raise the very question 'why not?' This article aims to bridge this gap, with a close reading of the sources and the language deployed by Holt, who heavily relied on European travel writings to make his case. Relocating *Why Not Eat Insects?* in this context throws into relief how issues of class and colonialism were constitutive of a wider discussion about eating insects in English-speaking prints in the nineteenth century. To explore this, the article also investigates responses from readers in the 1880s and 1890s, through reviews published in the British Isles, Australia, and the United States. Ultimately, examining these aspects alerts us to the dangers of celebrating Holt as a pioneer of insect food and an inspiration for the twenty-first century, for Holt partook in what Lisa Heldke terms 'cultural food colonialism', which we are at risk of reproducing when using his text uncritically and regardless of its social and colonial context.

KEYWORDS: insects, entomophagy, food, colonialism, travel writing, transnational history, Britain, Australia, United States, French cuisine.

ABBREVIATIONS: FAO (Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations), ECHO (Educational Concerns for Haiti Organization).

Palatable Bugs for the Victorians: Entomophagy, Class and Colonialism in Vincent M. Holt's *Why Not Eat Insects?*

Elodie Duché

Who would not be tempted by a dish of 'curried cockchafers', or better even, some '*Hannetons à la Sauterelle des Indes*'?[1] Vincent M. Holt raised the question in a one-shilling booklet published in London in 1885, where he presented a plea to cast aside 'prejudices against insects' and to 'delight' in 'nicely fried' and 'roasted grubs', 'the excellency of which [he could] personally vouch for.'[2] Adorned with illustrations of invertebrates, in a fashion typical of the Leadenhall Press, the booklet of ninety-nine pages aimed to entice and entertain.[3] His *Why Not Eat Insects?* contained a potted history of insect eating from Ancient Greece to nineteenth-century Java, with examples of edible insects and, at the back, menus in French and English comprising eight to nine insect courses each. The message was clear: insects could offer opulent meals for little cost and, thus, provide both a 'wholesome source of food' for those struggling to get by, and a treat for wealthier gourmets in search of new flavours. In so doing, Holt intended to convince his contemporaries of the suitability of insect food in England, both as a delicacy and a substitute for dearer products, including meat. While we know little about Holt's life, his book divulges his taste for invertebrates, and the joys he found in collating insect recipes from near and far.[4]

Holt's text has been discussed as evidence that people have historically consumed insects in the West, or at least considered the prospect of doing so in the Victorian period. Following the 2013 report of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) on edible insects as a means to tackle the global food crisis by 2050, works in defence of entomophagy – the practice of consuming insects as food – have praised Holt's book as the first Western collection of insect recipes.[5] Unsurprisingly, insect farming companies and lobbies followed suit.[6] The FAO report had itself referred to Holt as being 'ahead of his time', having 'had the most clout in bringing insects to a larger audience through his small booklet published in 1885.'[7] Further to facsimile reprints from the British Museum, the text has also garnered interest amongst entomologists and ethnobiologists as evidence that eating insects in the West is 'neither new or recent', and that calls to integrate insects in Western diets have

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[1] Vincent M. Holt, *Why Not Eat Insects?* (London: Field & Tuer, 1885), pp. 98-99.
[2] Holt, pp. 39, 75, 77, 81, 86.
[3] 'Leadenhall Press', in *The Oxford Companion to the Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), vol.2, p. 863.
[4] Holt published another text in 1885, a social novella also priced at one shilling entitled *Damages: A Tale* (London: Maxwell, 1885). Nothing indicates in the sources consulted for this article that Holt defined himself as an 'entomologist'.
[5] See, for example, Daniella Martin, *Edible: An Adventure Into the World of Eating Insects and the Last Great Hope to Save the Planet* (Boston, New York: New Harvest, 2014), p. 230: 'Edible insect recipes have been around in books since the 1880s when Vincent M. Holt published *Why Not Eat Insects?* To help persuade his fellow Victorians to give eating insects a try.'
[6] Countless examples could be cited here. Among them are two companies with a significant online presence: 'Cricketflours' in the US <https://www.cricketflours.com/why-not-eat-insects/ > [accessed 14 July 2022] and 'Skyfood - Edible Insects' in Switzerland <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b4DloujkjVE > [accessed 14 July 2022].
[7] Arnold van Huis et al., 'Edible Insects: Future Prospects for Food and Feed Security', *FAO Forestry Paper*, 171 (2013), pp. 42-43.

'been raised before'.[8] It has attracted less attention from historians, although Darna Dufour and Joy Sander have highlighted the potential of Holt's 'delightful little book' for mapping insect species historically used as food across continents.[9] Overall, the book has sparked curiosity and praise as a 'manifesto', an 'early underground classic', and even, as a 'seminal book on gastronomy from the Victorian era'.[10] Considered together, scientific works and non-governmental organisations have presented Holt as a Victorian pioneer of 'modern' entomophagy – unsettling centuries of entomophobic opprobrium in the West –, yet without much concern about the context of his publication and the detail of the text itself.[11]

Only Timothée Olivier has recently called into question using Holt as evidence of 'Occidental entomophagy.'[12] Declaring Holt's book a classic ('*ouvrage culte*'), Olivier focused on delineating Holt's 'desired entomophagy' ('*entomophagie souhaitée*') from the actual consumption of insects, which remained marginal in England during the period.[13] In his view, the book is only proof that the 'idea' of eating insects was current in Victorian England and that Holt wished to encourage it.[14] Building on this, my point here is not so much about tracing whether the Victorians did eat insects as food, and whether Holt is proof of it. Rather, my aim is to shift the lens to consider Holt's text less as a standalone pioneering piece, and more as a contribution to a wider debate emerging in Western prints in the nineteenth century about the desirability and possibility of eating insects as food. Historians are yet to fully investigate why insect eating was a point of discussion in nineteenth-century Britain, and why Holt could raise the very question 'why not?' To address this, the article pays attention to the rationale of the publication, the language used by Holt, but also the social and colonial context of his sources and his first readers.

Relocating Holt's pamphlet in its context throws into relief how issues of class and colonialism were constitutive of a discussion about eating insects in English-speaking prints in the 1880s and 1890s. To explore this, the article looks at the ways class and colonialism featured not only in Holt's text, but also in his sources. It also investigates the responses the text generated in periodicals from the British

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[8] Ingvar Svanberg and Åsa Berggren, 'Insects as Past and Future Food in Entomophobic Europe', *Food, Culture & Society*, 24:5 (2021), pp. 624-38; Alan L. Yen, 'Foreword: Why a Journal of Insects as Food and Feed?', *Journal of Insects as Food and Feed*,1:1 (2015), pp. 1-2; Arnold van Huis, 'Edible Insects: Challenges and Prospects', *Entomological Research*, 52:4 (2022), pp. 161-77.

[9] Darna Dufour and Joy Sander, 'Insects' in *The Cambridge World History of Food*, vol. 2, ed. by Kenneth Kiple and Kriemhild Coneè Ornelas (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2000), pp. 546-54.

[10] E. C. Spary and Anya Zilberstein, 'On the Virtues of Historical Entomophagy', *Osiris*, 35 (2020), pp. 1-19; Stephen Loo and Undine Sellbach, 'Eating (with) Insects: Insect Gastronomies and Upside-Down Ethics', *Parallax*, 19:1 (2013), pp. 12-28; Alison P. Kelly, 'Entomophagy: Human Consumption of Insects for Food', *Science Reference Section. Library of Congress* (July 2017): < https://www.loc.gov/rr/scitech//SciRefGuides/entomophagy.html > [accessed 14 July 2022].

[11] Dawn Berkelaar, 'Insects for Food and Feed', *ECHO Development Notes*, 137 (2017), pp. 1-9.

[12] Timothée Olivier, 'L'Entomophagie en Occident: Cas d'Etude, Sources et Influences', in *Autour de la Table. Manger, Boire et Communiquer*, ed. by Panayota Badinou et al. (Lausanne: BSN Press, 2020), pp. 167-94.

[13] Olivier, pp. 170, 180.

[14] Olivier, p. 180: '*Ce livret ne prouve pas l'entomophagie, mais une idée d'entomophagie, une volonté de la promouvoir*.' The discrepancy between ideas and practices of entomophagy is useful to complicate Holt's reach in Victorian society. Yet a strict distinction might be a false dichotomy, if we consider how performative the act of writing about insect foods, and claiming to have eaten them, may have been at the time. Indeed, in publishing about his inclination, Holt extended the performance of sharing a meal with others through text, his stage and audience to use Erving Goffman's terminology. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (New York: Anchor Books, 1959).

Isles, Australia, and the United States, which provides useful aperture onto how notions of race, reform and class framed discussions of insect food following the publication. Exploring these aspects alerts us to the dangers of celebrating Holt as a pioneer and an inspiration for the twenty-first century. In writing about insect food, the way that he did, Holt partook in what Lisa Heldke terms 'cultural food colonialism', which we are at risk of reproducing when using his text uncritically and regardless of its social and colonial context.[15]

1. Compilations of an Armchair Traveller

Holt was an armchair traveller. His case relied on a compilation of travel notes from entomologists, naturalists and missionaries, who had studied insects and attested to their potential edibility, having witnessed insect foods overseas. In fact, Holt was only able to promote his diet because of the growing European interest in insects, which precipitated in the nineteenth-century 'heyday of natural history'.[16] Entomologists and agriculturalists, such as Peter Simmonds, William Kirby and William Spence, had already called their readers to 'lay aside [their] English prejudices' towards eating insects in the 1820s and 1850s, noting that:

> there is no reason why some of the insects might not be eaten, for those used by various nations as food, generally speaking, live on vegetable substances, and are consequently much more select and cleanly in their diet than the pig or the duck, which form a part of our food.[17]

Holt replicated this argument, through his own classification of edible insects. The preface made it clear that he had carefully selected a delectable few: 'There are insects and insects. *My* insects are all vegetable feeders, clean, palatable, wholesome and decidedly more particular in their feeding than ourselves.'[18] The singularity of *his* insects' feed responded to the issues of spoiled and adulterated food that marked the everyday of his readers; but the reference to cleanliness also echoed older normative confessional texts, including the dietary laws of the Bible and the Torah.[19] There were, of course, insects that Holt would have had difficulties including in his selection: those that preoccupied urban dwellers and colonial settlers in the British empire, such as mosquitoes or houseflies, which, as Neil Davie notes, generated debates about the possibility of fly-borne diseases in the 1880s.[20] Unsurprisingly, Holt advised against them, and other necrophagous insects

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[15] Lisa Heldke, *Exotic Appetites: Ruminations of a Food Adventurer* (2003; London and New York: Routledge, 2015).
[16] John E. Clark, *Bugs and the Victorians* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 9.
[17] Peter Lund Simmonds, *The Curiosities of Food; Or, The Dainties and Delicacies of Different Nations Obtained from the Animal Kingdom* (London: Bentley, 1859), p. 222. See also, William Spence and William Kirby, *An Introduction to Entomology*, 4 volumes (London: Longman, 1815-1826).
[18] Holt, p. 6.
[19] See Mary Douglas, 'The Abominations of Leviticus', in *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (1966; London: Ark, 1984), pp. 41-57.
[20] Neil Davie, '"An Unbidden Guest at Your Table:" Purity, Danger and the House-Fly in the Middle-Class Home, c. 1870-1910', *Cahiers Victoriens et Édouardiens*, 85 (2017): < http://journals.openedition.org/cve/3151 > [accessed 14 July 2022]. See also Neel Ahuja, 'M is for Mosquito', in *Animalia: An Anti-Imperial Bestiary for Our Times* ed. by Antoinette Burton & Renisa Mawani (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2020), pp. 117-24.

associated with diseases and decay.[21] The very taxonomy of Holt – his effort to categorise *his* edible insects – created an elastic definition of insect food. It mingled, or at least juxtaposed, a broad range of arthropods (including crustacea, such as lobsters and woodlice) with creatures outside the phylum, particularly arachnids (spiders) and molluscs (snails and slugs).[22] The common denominator was that these animals were 'strict vegetarians' and appeared, as food, 'loathsome' to his readers.[23] It was not an amalgamation per se, but a homogenisation of creatures that were othered – both in terms of their difference from Western dietary staples and from the other insects that he dismissed as unfit for human consumption.

In claiming these creatures as his own, Holt reproduced the tone and perspective of the sources he had used to collate evidence for his book. His language of ownership echoed the premise of entomological collections, the process of taming, classifying and curating the wild for a display, either scientific or recreational, which we find in the natural histories evoked in *Why Not Eat Insects?*[24] But most strikingly, Holt's efforts to identify insects worthy of 'the dignity of being edible by civilized man' mirrored the many travel writings that he mentioned to prove the existence of human 'insect eaters' in his 'present day', which, considered together, presented insect food as a curiosity.[25] Most travel narratives quoted by Holt presented eating insects as part of their 'culinary voyages of discovery.'[26] They were all penned by European travellers: entomologists, naturalists, naval officers, and missionaries dispatched or journeying to the West Indies, Africa, the Middle East, China, Indonesia, and South America. These were 'traveller(s) of note', whom Holt utilised to make a series of claims about 'insect eaters' overseas, building on works of the preceding century (texts by Maria Sibylla Merian, Anders Sparrman), the Napoleonic era (including migration novels like *The Swiss Family Robinson* and Christian R.W. Wiedemann's work on exotic diptera), and the Victorian period (particularly Peter Simmonds' *Curiosities of Food* mentioned above).[27] This category also comprised Roman and Greek authors (Herodotus, Pliny, Aelian), whom Holt cited as travel accounts of insect cuisines among 'the Eastern nations'.[28]

The European perspective deployed in these accounts, which related either witnessing or partaking in non-Western insect meals, was key to Holt's argumentation. For almost every description of a non-Western dish, Holt concluded with the validation of a European observer. Take the example of dishes

[21] Holt, p. 11: 'I shall not ask my readers to consider for a moment the propriety or advisability of tasting such unclean-feeding insects as the common fly, the carrion beetle, or *Blaps mortisaga* (the churchyard beetle).'
[22] Holt, p. 9.
[23] Holt, p. 11.
[24] This included popular economic entomologies such as Eleanor Ormerod, *Manual of Injurious Insects* (London: Swan, 1881).
[25] Holt, p. 11.
[26] Michiel Korthale, *Before Dinner: Philosophy and Ethics of Food* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2004), p. 164.
[27] There was noticeable intertextuality between these texts. While Holt cited Peter Simmonds' *Curiosities of Food* to prove that the etymology of the field cricket Gryllus was 'in itself an invitation to cook them', the claim relied on other testimonies collated by Simmonds from European travellers to Amazonia and Australia, such as buccaneer William Dampier, along with James Forbes's comments on food in Bagdad in Oriental Memoirs, notes from Elgin's mission to China and writings on sculptural representations of insect foods at Kouyunjik from the cuneiformist Austen Henry Layard in the 1850s. In fact, Kirby and Spence – one of Holt's sources – cited much of the works mentioned in Holt's book.
[28] Holt, p. 35.

of silkworm chrysalids in Asia. The brief description of how Chinese populations 'fry them in butter or lard, add yolk of eggs, and season with pepper, salt, and vinegar', is immediately followed by the opinion of European writers: 'a certain Mr. Favand', he wrote, 'a Chinese missionary, says that he found this food refreshing and strengthening', before adding, for further evidence, that 'Dr [Erasmus] Darwin, also, in his "Phytologia," mentions this dish, and says that a white earth grub and the larvae of the sphinx moths are also eaten, which latter he tried, and found to be delicious.'[29] Holt centred European opinions, linking experiments of so-far unknown ingredients with a certain kind of epicureanism, focused on taste rather than sight, which was key to his efforts to challenge the visual disgust towards insects he had identified in England.[30] He evoked the Caribbean dishes of 'Grugru' worms enjoyed by naval officer John La Forey, 'who was somewhat an epicure' and, in that capacity, 'extremely partial to this grub [...] when properly cooked.'[31] This comment on 'proper' cooking reveals that Holt emphasized the ability of European consumers to evaluate the quality of this food. There was nothing to indicate that these travellers had cooked insects themselves; most had simply ascertained the taste of 'unaccustomed dishes' prepared by an Other, often by establishing gustatory resemblance with European food.[32] 'A traveller', noted Holt, 'who on several occasions tried this dish, tells us that he thought it delicate, nourishing, and wholesome, resembling in taste sugared cream or sweet almond paste.'[33]

In accumulating European testimonies as a means of validation, Holt replicated the legitimation devices used in nineteenth-century expeditionary narratives. As cultural geographers have shown, Western travel writers faced 'the problem of credit' during the period.[34] The issue was how to establish 'trust at a distance'.[35] Authors, editors and publishers orchestrated various strategies to ascertain the veracity of travellers' findings and to demonstrate their legitimacy to different audiences, including armchair travellers like Holt. Much of the European advances in geography in fact relied on such armchair practices, which, as Natalie Cox argues, not only co-existed but overlapped with fieldwork.[36] Three main strategies emerged to entrust the reader: the use of 'scholarly citation', 'self-representation' often at the expense of indigenous guides, and 'instrumentation'.[37] Holt deployed two of these tropes. When citing the Classics, his references echoed those used by nineteenth-century explorers, who 'routinely turned to classical authorities to properly situate and contextualise their own geographical contributions.'[38] Holt also replicated a 'self-representation strategy' that placed him and his selected

[29] Holt, pp. 42-43.
[30] Holt, p. 27.
[31] Holt, p. 40.
[32] Holt, p. 30.
[33] Holt, p. 44.
[34] Innes M. Keighren, Charles J.M. Withers and Bill Bell, 'Writing the Truth: Claims to Credibility in Exploration and Narrative', in *Travels Into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2015), pp. 68-99.
[35] Keighren, Withers and Bell, p. 72.
[36] Natalie Cox, 'Armchair Geography: Speculation, Synthesis, and The Culture of British Exploration, c.1830-c.1870', University of Warwick, PhD Thesis (2016).
[37] Keighren, Withers and Bell, p. 75.
[38] Keighren, Withers and Bell, p. 76.

Western writers as prime witnesses, testifying of *their* experiences of insect food.[39] This trope tended to silence those who had facilitated such encounters: local guides, translators, chefs and chiefs. As scholars have noted, this 'erasure of the facilitators of Europeans' travel reflected and encouraged a rhetoric that emphasized the individual author's achievement over a collaborative effort.'[40] While Holt often named European individuals who had tried insect food abroad – Mr. Favand, Erasmus Darwin, John La Forey, for example – rarely did he name Non-Western facilitators of such experiences. When acknowledged, these people were referred to by 'race or tribal affiliation': 'the natives of Australia', 'Turkish women', 'the Chinese', 'an Arab', 'the inhabitants'.[41]Their contributions featured in the passive rather than the active voice. Holt wrote of European travellers partaking in insect dishes being 'served up at their table, according to a recipe used by the inhabitants', which, despite the shared meal, further detached the travel writer from the culture they visited.[42] Overall, in aligning overseas insect food within a European sensory world and codes of the travel writing genre, *Why Not Eat Insects?* was not only a compilation of travel notes compounding a European gaze on non-Western insect eaters, but an active effort from Holt to turn the food of Others into a resource for his readers: a new foodstuff that could, in a colonial manner, be decontextualised, reframed and enhanced by adventurous Westerners.

2. Insectivorous 'Cultural Food Colonialism'

Collecting experiments with foods perceived as 'new', if not 'strange', is a trait of what Lisa Heldke terms a 'food adventurer'.[43] The whole premise of *Why Not Eat Insects?* relied on this adventure, which is also perceptible in the semantic field of newness that permeated the text. Holt referred to insect food as a 'new departure in the direction of foods', 'new delicacies at home', lamenting that 'people do not look around them for the many new gastronomic treasures lying neglected at their feet.'[44] Elsewhere, he implored his readers to consider the excitement of breaking a dull diet with insect food: 'let us, then, welcome among our new insect dishes ...what a godsend to housekeepers to discover a new entrée to vary the monotony of the present round!' The novelty was to pique the interest of 'mistresses, who thirst to place new and dainty dishes before [their] guests.' He invited them to consider the novelty of '"Curried Maychafers" – or, if you want a more mysterious title, "*Larvae Melolonthae À la Grugru*"?'[45]

In conjoining travel writings with a quest for 'mysterious' gustatory novelty, Holt partook in a wider practice concomitant of food adventuring, namely 'cultural food colonialism', a process also identified by Lisa Heldke. She coined the term to characterise an appropriation of foods as new to Westerners, resulting from the attitude of 'nineteenth- and early twentieth-century European painters,

[39] Keighren, Withers and Bell, p. 83.
[40] Keighren, Withers and Bell, p. 83.
[41] Keighren, Withers and Bell, p. 83; Holt, pp. 14, 42, 49.
[42] Holt, p. 49.
[43] Heldke, p. xxi.
[44] Holt, pp. 23-24, 30.
[45] Holt, pp. 56-57, 62-63.

anthropologists, and explorers who set out in search ever "newer", ever more "remote" cultures that they could co-opt, borrow from freely and out of context, and use as the raw materials for their own efforts at creation and discovery', the whole process being underpinned by a 'deep desire to have contact with, and to somehow own an experience of, an Exotic Other, as a way of making [oneself] more interesting.'[46] For Heldke, the process relies on three aspects: 'the quest for novelty', 'the pursuit of authenticity', and using 'the Other as a resource'.[47] Holt's text covered them all, by presenting insect food as new to his readers, evidencing his claims with authentic eye-witness accounts, the whole purpose being to use these non-Western foods as a resource that could profit English readers in need of ingredients that could 'pleasantly vary [their] monotonous meal'.[48] To achieve the latter, Holt resorted to three strategies: he objectified non-Western practices of insect food, suggested improvements to make the matter palatable for his readers, and contrived to ground insect meals in longer European traditions, which, ultimately, exposed a tension of civilisation he struggled to resolve in his plea.

Holt further objectified and racialised African 'insect eaters'. He drew on Anders Sparrman's *Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope* (1785) to depict the consumption of insects among the Khoekhoe, a pastoral people in Namibia racialised by Dutch colonists as 'the Hottentots.' He wrote: 'the Hottentots, according to Sparrman, welcome the locusts as a godsend, although the whole country is devastated […] and these locust-eaters grow round and fat from the incredible quantities they devour of their nutritious and appetizing persecutors.'[49] For Holt, this was proof that consuming agricultural parasites as food – in other words, pest harvesting – was not merely desirable for the perennity of colonial crops, but also nourishing. The comment on the fatness of insect eaters was Holt's addition to Sparrman's notes. As Sabrina Stings has shown, while Sparrman did not comment on such aspects in the 1780s, a noticeable shift occurred in European accounts around the nineteenth century, when representations further racialised Black bodies in relation to fatness, with particular attention to the figure of 'the Hottentot', which shifted 'from slender to stout'.[50] Holt used this racialised trope to argue a logical loop: African insect eaters were corpulent, so their insect food was fattening, not least because insects had fattened on crops, tormenting colonial farmers, who could simply, in turn, 'grow fat' if they were to eat them too. The whole sequence echoed his address to white farmers, in the epigraph: '"Them insects eat up every blessed green thing that do grow and us farmers starves" | "Well eat them, and grow fat!"'

[46] Heldke, pp. xvi-xviii. Lisa Heldke's theory speaks to another useful framework devised by Brenda Assael to evaluate the impact of global influences on Victorian food. 'Gastro-cosmopolitanism', as coined by Assael, refers to the globalisation of London restaurants via the the presence of foreign-born staff, transnational supply chains, and hybrid menus that mirrored the so-called city of nations. See Brenda Assael, 'Gastro-Cosmopolitanism and the Restaurant', *The London Restaurant, 1840-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), pp. 154-178. Both theories highlight how culinary influences extended, materially as well as discursively, beyond the confines of the formal British empire. However, they do differ in other respects: one is restricted to the specific context of urban restaurants, while the other captures a broader cultural process. Heldke's framework is particularly useful to study Holt's plea, because it complicates the idea of hybridised foods to recognise that attitudes towards, and uses of, foreign foodstuffs and foodways were not horizontal, but asymmetric; something that cosmopolitanism does not highlight.

[47] Heldke, pp. 1-60.

[48] Holt, p. 93.

[49] Holt, pp. 35-36.

[50] Sabrina Strings, *Fearing the Black Body. The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia* (New York: New York University Press, 2019), pp. 88-89.

Like other travel accounts of nineteenth-century Africa, Holt's description of 'the Hottentots' naturalised and deindividualized groups of insect eaters. Aside from describing the corpulence of Black bodies, Holt devoted little attention to South-African communities. They were hands, actions, users of cooking utensils, a collective simplified to the habit of eating insects. We see this in a passage where Holt combined writings by Anders Sparrman and Erasmus Darwin, to assert that:

> the Hottentots eat caterpillars, both cooked and raw, collecting and carrying them in large calabashes to their homes, where they fry them in iron pots over a gentle fire, stirring them about the while. They eat them, cooked thus, in handfuls, without any flavouring or sauce.[51]

The collective was static and ahistorical, despite the significant disruptions brought by colonialism. They simply cook and eat insects, in a permanent present tense. As Mary Louise Pratt notes, by portraying African people 'not as undergoing historical changes in their lifeways', such accounts also denied them a culture, a culinary one more specifically here: 'without any flavouring or sauce', but also, most importantly, no sense of where the meal would fit in the life and rhythm of this community.[52]

What Holt's description elided was an understanding of how central arthropods were in the foodways and culture of Khoekhoe-speaking communities during this period. Not only did they consume 'insect larvae, caterpillars, termites, locusts' in their everyday diet, using grilling practices that were documented in Sparrman's account in the 1780s and the aquatints of Samuel Daniell during the Napoleonic Wars, but arthropods also featured prominently in key healing and spiritual rituals that Holt simply did not present to his readers.[53] Cape pastoralists used a variety of insects in child medicine, often in association with rituals revering the mantis and the stick insect, which they worshiped in circular dances designed to protect or heal. The veneration of the mantis in times of famine brought to the fore how much meaning and faith pastoralists placed into the power of insects in bringing sustenance in transit, particularly as colonists dispossessed them of the large areas of land they relied upon to gather food. Insect worship was a deep-rooted and long-lasting belief system which, as Chris Low notes, 'remains visible in contemporary Khoe society in the use of the word *//gâuab* for the praying mantis.'[54]

Invariably, Holt recommended elevating overseas insect dishes, often by using colonial products or naming the dish in French. Holt's presentation of Moroccan locust dishes is apt to show this process. Quoting Rev. R. Sheppard's account of 'common large grasshoppers served up at his table, according to the recipe used by the inhabitants of Morocco', Holt claimed that although the original was 'simple', 'anyone with a knowledge of cookery would know how to improve upon it, producing from this source

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[51] Holt, p. 43.

[52] Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992; London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 52-53.

[53] Peter Illgner and Etienne Nel, 'The Geography of Edible Insects in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Study of the Mopane Caterpillar', *The Geographical Journal*, 166:4 (2000), p. 340; Samuel Daniell, 'Bosjesmans [sic.] Frying Locusts, 15 October 1805', in *African Scenery and Animals* (London, Dowdeswell: 1805), p. 78.

[54] See Chris Low, 'Khoisan Healing: Understandings, Ideas and Practices', Christ Church, University of Oxford, D.Phil. Thesis (2004), p. 82.

such dishes, say, as "Grasshoppers *au gratin*," or "*Acridae sautés à la Maitre d'Hôtel*."'[55] As Stephen Mennell has shown, 'food culture among the middle and upper-middle classes of Victorian England' had two main traits: 'an increasing taste for French food as a means of expressing social distinction', combined with a concern with 'renewing English traditions', which, in the 1880s, included invented imperial traditions that amalgamated South Asian 'curries' as a British dish.[56] Seasoning ingredients with curry powder was common not only in Holt's text but in most English cookbooks. Indeed, the Victorians added a spoonful of curry spices to almost every dish as a celebration of the so-called 'jewel in the crown'. Because the powder in question was a British blend based on the flavours of India, 'eating curry was in a sense eating India', to use Uma Narayan's words.[57] Given this context, it is not surprising to see that Holt combined his readers' colonial taste for curry with their interest in French food, which is exemplified in the diptych of 'curried cockchafers' and '*Hannetons à la Sauterelle des Indes*' in his menus.[58]

Concurrently, the book reached back to the ancient classics, as a reservoir for culinary references, to ground certain insect dishes in European traditions. Holt's claim also drew on texts from the perceived cradle of Western civilisation: from Ancient Greece and Rome, along with practices documented in the Scriptures, particularly Moses' injunction to feed on grasshoppers (Lev. xi. 22) and John the Baptist's survival upon locusts and wild honey in the desert (Matthew 3:4, Mark 1:6).[59] After quoting the Romans' fondness for the goat moth larvae – also known as '*cossus cossus*' – Holt concluded that eating insects in England was the next step in neoclassicism.[60] In emphasizing discontinued forms of insect eating, Holt highlighted a hiatus in European food culture, exemplified in the problem of the cicada. The insect had been 'the theme of every Greek poet, in regard to both tunefulness and delicate flavour', Homer and Aristotle both telling 'us that the most polished of the Greeks enjoyed them', but it had somehow fallen out of fashion, as an article of food, by the nineteenth century. 'Why this taste should have died out in modern Greece one cannot tell', he concluded, before adding that: 'cicadae are eaten at the present day by the American Indians and by the natives of Australia.'[61]

Insect eating thus connected ancient and Christian canons with the daily lives of perceived 'savage nations' in the nineteenth century, which fed into a tension of civilisation palpable in Holt's plea. The essence of this tension was that, foodwise, perceived 'savages' might have had more in common with the great Classical authors – those acclaimed as the founding fathers of European civilisation - than his Victorian readers. Quoting the writings and voyages of Pliny, Holt likened 'the Cossus, which the Romans used to fatten for the table upon flour and wine' to 'the Grugru and the Moutac grub in the East

[55] Holt, pp. 49-50.
[56] Quoted in 'Food writing', in *Food and Cultural Studies*, ed. by Bob Ashley et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 157.
[57] Uma Narayan, 'Eating Cultures', *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013), p.165.
[58] Holt, pp. 56, 98-99.
[59] Holt, pp. 34, 48-49.
[60] Holt, p. 47: 'We pride ourselves upon our imitation of the Greeks and Romans in their arts; we treasure their dead languages: why not, then, take a useful hint from their tables?'
[61] Holt, p. 38.

and West Indies.'[62] He associated Aelian's description of a 'great treat [of] roasted grubs' served by 'an Indian king' for 'his Greek guests' with the food consumed among Black Caribbean communities. 'There is very little doubt', he wrote, 'that these were the larvae of the palm weevil (Calandra palmarum), huge grubs as large as a man's thumb, which are, at the present day, extracted from the palm trees and eaten with great relish by the negroes in the West Indies under the name of Grugru.'[63] Colonial spaces brought these tensions of civilisation to the fore. Holt claimed that time spent away from the metropolis connected settlers to an 'epicurean' community of insect eaters that included both Classical authors and those perceived as uncivilised. Using Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's *A Voyage to Mauritius* (1775), Holt noted that, on the island, away from European metropolises, the 'Moutac grub' was 'eaten by whites and natives alike.'[64] He reached a similar conclusion, reading Maria Sibylla Merian's account of shared insect meals in Surinam.[65] Holt thus amalgamated ancient authors, colonial settlers, creoles and 'natives' partaking in insect food as 'epicures', capable of appreciating the sensory pleasures of the 'taste' and 'smell' of insect food, which the 'delicate [...] shudder[ing]' people of mainland Europe would reject as 'loathsome' upon seeing insects on their plates.[66]

His question 'What valid objection can there be to eating these insects, when the larvae of similar beetles are eaten all over the world, both by natives and by whites, and when such larvae are unanimously pronounced to be wholesome and palatable?' did not, however, resolve the tension mentioned above.[67] 'Civilised' and 'uncivilised' were kept distinct, although connected by the very possibility of eating insects. His conclusion made it clear that his aim was to produce a 'number of precedents for the eating of insects, both in ancient and modern times, by nations civilized and uncivilized.'[68] The latter should, in his view, be the object of colonial 'imitation' in a fashion akin to the Columbian Exchange, which, after an initial 'aversion and sicknesses', had meant that Europeans could now 'feed daily on the imported potato [and] numberless drugs, spices and condiments.'[69] This would, in turn, and much like the potato, allow insect food to solve another pressing issue: feeding the poor in England.

3. Between Poverty and Fashion

The potential consumers of insect food targeted in *Why Not Eat Insects?* were two social groups identified by Holt as being in want of either exciting foodstuff or any food at all. 'The rich long for new dishes to tempt their jaded palates, and the poor starve', he wrote.[70] The whole text built on this tension

[62] Holt, pp. 39, 51.
[63] Holt, pp. 39-40, 51.
[64] Holt, p. 41.
[65] Holt, p. 41.
[66] Holt, pp. 10, 20, 65-66.
[67] Holt, p. 53.
[68] Holt, p. 46.
[69] Holt, pp. 33-34.
[70] Holt saw the labourers' meals as equally tiresome, consisting of 'bread, lard, and bacon, or bread and lard without bacon, or bread without lard or bacon.' Holt, p. 14.

between culinary fashion and food poverty, which, in his view, insect eating could respectively enhance and address. The duality between the rich and the poor – primarily the 'labouring poor', I should add – permeated the whole publication, right through to the final menus presented in elaborate French courses with a translation into plain English, turning, for example, a dish of '*Phalènes Au Parmesan*' into 'Moths On Toast'.[71] Although cheaply priced at one shilling, the publication was not directly addressed to the working poor Holt aimed to relieve. His target readers comprised those he placed, along with himself, in the middle of a social spectrum between 'the upper classes' and 'the poorer classes'.[72] They were those equally versed in the sources he quoted, and for whom contemporary issues of food reform intertwined with concerns about poverty and fashionable dining in the 1880s.

Holt's use of the pronoun 'we' suggested that both his readers and he were distinct from the rich and the poor, in terms of earnings, knowledge and ethos. 'All this would not be so absurd if it were only the rich that were concerned, for they can afford to be dainty', he wrote, 'but while we, in these days of agricultural depression, do all we can to alleviate the sufferings of our starving labourers, ought we not to exert our influence towards pointing out to them a neglected food supply?'[73] Elsewhere, we find that Holt rhetorically included himself in the visitors to the Chinese 'Healtheries' restaurant set up at London's International Health Exhibition in 1884. 'We have thus recently had an opportunity', he wrote, 'of tasting some of the varieties of a usual Chinese menu, and our verdict upon them was proved to be favourable.'[74] As Ross Forman notes, the event relied on 'the management and packaging of alterity for middle-class consumer culture', making Chinese food seem 'authentic' despite the middle-class sightseers' 'intolerance of what that authenticity might entail.'[75] The food served was deliberately Europeanised, with a French chef and a Continental-style service, to appease the anxieties of middle-class consumers: something that Holt emulated with his own French menus.

The principle of imitation – of the classics, of the Scriptures, of overseas dishes altered to fit a Western palate – extended to Holt's vision of society as entirely driven by fashion.[76] In this framework, 'masters might prepare savoury snail dishes, according to the recipes used in all parts of the Continent, and in course of time the servants would follow suit.'[77] Social aping was to be the channel to expand insect eating in late-Victorian Britain. 'Why does not someone in a high place set the common-sense fashion of adding insect dishes to our tables?', he asked before concluding that 'the flock would not be long in following.'[78] Further to a criticism of the poor's 'neglect [of] wholesome foods', he argued that 'it should be the task of their betters, by their example, to overcome' such negative views of insects.[79] The notion of 'betters' spoke to the 'fiercely hierarchical' nature of Victorian Britain, to use Susie

[71] Holt, pp. 98-99.
[72] Holt, pp. 23, 82.
[73] Holt, p. 31.
[74] Holt, p. 28.
[75] Ross G. Forman,'"Nothing Corresponding to It in China:" Asian Food at London's International Health Exhibition, 1884', *Food, Culture & Society*, 24:2 (2021), pp. 202-26.
[76] Holt, p. 29: 'fashion is the most powerful motive in the world.'
[77] Holt, p. 83.
[78] Holt, pp. 29-30.
[79] Holt, pp. 14, 81.

Steinbach's words; hierarchy being one aspect of the fluid and complex concept of class that formed a 'meaningful social reality' for many Victorians, particularly those concerned with social reform and educating the poor, and who were seen, by Holt, as the prime vector to promote his question 'why not eat insects?' to 'the starving labourers'.[80]

The task of his readers was to bridge a knowledge deficit, blatant in what Holt perceived as 'the foolish prejudice' of 'half the poor of England [who] would actually die of starvation before stretching out their hands to gather the plentiful molluscous food which their neighbours in France delight in.' His book aimed to equip them to do so, in a context of middle-class efforts to study and combat poverty.[81] It even envisioned conversations with rural labourers to reason with them on the cost of living and pest harvesting.[82] As the work of Robert Haggard has shown, 1883 – two years prior to the publication of Holt's text – marked the 'revival of the "Condition of England" question,' initially raised by Thomas Carlyle in the 1840s to voice concerns about the role of industrialisation in widening the gap between the rich and the poor, creating, in effect, two nations in Victorian England.[83] The 1880s reframed the question around an examination of the nature of poverty. Books and press articles on 'the poor, poverty, and social questions … began pouring' from publishing houses, with, this time, a square focus on poverty in metropolitan London.[84] Most texts focused on issues of urban housing and morality, depicting what their middle-class authors perceived as the sins and depravity of the poor in slums and insalubrious tenements, before offering solutions for social and religious change in the city. Holt echoed some of these portrayals, not least in his moral indictment of the poor's reluctance to consume food available gratuitously on their doorstep. For him, refusing to eat insects while in poverty was 'a sin'; the 'starving poor' simply could not afford to have a choice, unlike wealthier classes who could 'afford to please themselves and reject a pleasant, wholesome food if they choose.'[85]

Holt's plea to harvest urban pests built on common portrayals of poverty, but it simultaneously pictured a different vision of London, as a pleasing oasis of insectile abundance, which could, if perceived as such by his readers, aid to feed urban dwellers and reacquaint social reformers with the natural gems of the capital. Trees, pavements, and the air of London were, according to Holt, teeming with 'handsome' and 'delicious' insects, quite unlike the filthy vermin usually depicted in the slumming reports mentioned above. His depiction of London's lime trees, as populated with the 'common Buff-tip, a handsome moth' and its vivid yellow caterpillars, captured a scene of natural abundance that reconciled London with the English countryside.[86] 'They swarm', he wrote, 'at the end of June, in town and country alike upon their favourite lime trees', their caterpillars being 'well known to everyone,

[80] For an overview of Steinbach's argument on class, and the wider historiographical debate on the concept, see Susie Steinbach, '"Born Into the Lower-Upper-Middle:" Class', in *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 125-26; Holt, p. 31.
[81] Holt, p. 81.
[82] Holt, p. 92.
[83] Robert F. Haggard, 'The Revival of the "Condition of England" Question, 1883-1893', in *The Persistence of Victorian Liberalism: The Politics of Social Reform in Britain, 1870-1900* (London: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2001), pp. 27-52.
[84] Haggard, p. 28.
[85] Holt, p. 82.
[86] Holt, pp. 75-76.

whether Londoner or countryman.' 'Buff-tip caterpillars', he continued, 'swarm upon the trees in such numbers, in favourable seasons, that many a dish can be obtained with a little trouble', yet 'it never strikes the Londoner, as he hurries along beneath the shady trees, that these caterpillars are good to eat.'[87] Reconnecting with rurality by identifying insects in one's environment was a key to Victorian amateur entomology, which, as John F. Clark notes, functioned as 'a nostalgic bid to capture lost nature in an increasingly urban Britain.'[88] But Holt went further by orientalising the climate of the capital, with caterpillars 'crawling across the arid desert of the London pavements,' moths 'voluntarily and suggestively sacrific[ing] themselves upon the altar of our lamps, as we sit, with open windows, in the balmy summer nights.'[89] The dish people could enjoy, by simply collecting these, would 'rival the torch-cooked delicacies of the traveller's tale', thus completing Holt's efforts to bring the exotic home to feed Londoners.[90]

4. Reviews, 1885-1895

Why Not Eat Insects? quickly sparked interest in 1885, with forty-three reviews published in the United Kingdom in May alone. More than a hundred responses appeared in the following months in periodicals aimed at readers with leisure time and interests in social reform, the sciences, but also satirical and recreational reads on angling, natural history, international affairs, and cookery. What features below is a study of a sample of sixty-four original reviews published in the British Isles, Australia and the United States, looking at how they entrenched issues of class and colonialism in a discussion of eating insects between 1885 and 1895.[91] Aside from a unanimous curiosity for the 'startling question' raised by Holt, and the logic of his argument, these responses were mixed as to the appeal of what most termed his 'specimen menus.'[92] In their efforts to scrutinise Holt's examples, they further identified insect diet with a food adventure, discussing its value against the grain of current colonial affairs, issues of social reform, and other Western testimonies of this 'new' food. The number and nature of these responses do not suggest that Holt started a conversation about insect food in Britain and other English-speaking countries, but rather that he tapped into an existing one.

Reviews formed transregional and transnational spaces to collect anecdotes on adventurous foragers of wild food. In 1891, readers of *American Notes and Queries* shared newspaper clippings and notes they had collated on the subject to add to a discussion of Holt's findings, which was prompted by a

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[87] Holt, pp. 75-77.
[88] Clark, p. 10.
[89] Holt, pp. 76, 79.
[90] Holt, p. 75.
[91] By original reviews, I exclude advertisements for the book, articles replicated across newspapers, and announcements of acquisitions of the book for review or for circulating lending libraries, which would bring the total number of responses to a little more than a hundred between 1885 and 1890.
[92] Reviews often characterised the question as 'startling', 'breath stealing' or 'unappetising', see: An., no title, *Liverpool Weekly Courier*, 9 May 1885, p. 2; An., 'By the Way', *Northern Chronicle*, 17 June 1885, p. 3; An., no title, *Wigan Observer and District Advertiser*, 16 May 1885, p. 21; An., 'Cricket', *Paisley and Renfrewshire Gazette*, 9 May 1885, p. 3; An., 'Snails', *Medical Times and Gazette*, 20 May 1885, 1, p. 716.

reader in New Jersey who had 'mislaid' her copy of the book after 'rushing through England'.[93] A first response came from a reader in Buffalo, who had kept a note on the book in '[their] scraps' from 'one of [their] English exchanges'. Responding to this, another reader from Knoxville in Iowa, shared that they too had kept a scrapbook of notes on insect eating.[94] 'The article with the above head in *American Notes and Queries* caused me to look up a newspaper article which I "scrapbooked" in 1881', they wrote, before quoting the selected extract, which summarised a travel account from Lieutenant D.A. Lyle, who had 'eaten grasshoppers out West, and [had] lately read a paper before a Springfield Scientific Association praising them as an article of food.'[95] This testimony of trying food from the 'wild' West framed insects as one of the last culinary frontiers of America, which some settler communities crossed in the South as a form of food adventure: 'some residents of St Louis have tried a dinner of these insects, which was skilfully prepared, and report that it was liked very well.'[96] Similarly, in 1889, the New York periodical *Current Literature* compiled previous travel accounts from 'educated Europeans [who had] been known to eat them [insects]' to add to Holt's examples, quoting Humboldt, Schurman, Réaumur, Rösel, Jackson on locust meals in Barbary, and yellow ant dishes in Brazil and New Caledonia.[97]

Holt thus became part of a wider chain of armchair travel writers, who compiled and centred Western views on 'human insect eaters'.[98] In London, the *Saturday Review* compared Holt's examples with 'books on the scientific aspect of diet', including Simmonds' *Animal Food Resources*, which touched on insect food.[99] Holt himself partook in this process. In 1885, he responded to 'a review of [his] book in a Cheltenham paper' from Revd H. Amstrong – who had shared a Bristolian anecdote about eating snails, and a 'recipe for cooking the larvae of cockchafers' sourced in accounts of 'certain parts of France [where] the *vers blanc*, or cockchafer worm, is freely eaten' – by replicating his notes in the *Standard*, which were then reported back locally in the Bristol-based *Western Daily Press* and the *Swindon Advertiser* in Wiltshire.[100] This accumulation of testimonies and recipes was essential for reviewers' efforts to ascertain Holt's legitimacy. Indeed, reviewers became arbiters of Holt's credibility in ways that were similar to the scrutiny expeditionary narratives underwent during the period. As mentioned above, the use of scholarly citations and personal testimonies, often silencing non-Western go-betweens, were used to bolster the credibility of printed travel narratives.[101] In this context, it is perhaps not surprising to see that Holt's American readers focused on these aspects to assess his

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[93] 'Absent-minded' Elizabeth, NJ, 'Why Not Eat Insects?', *American Notes and Queries*, 18 July 1891, 17:12, p. 138.
[94] W.W.D., Buffalo, 'Why Not Eat Insects?', *American Notes and Queries*, 8 August 1891, 17:15, p. 174.
[95] J.W.W., Knoxville, IA, 'Why Not Eat Insects?', *American Notes and Queries*, 5 September 1891, 17:19, p. 222.
[96] J.W.W., *Notes and Queries*, p. 222.
[97]An., 'Human Insect Eaters – from "the Old Gourmand"', *Current Literature*, December 1889, pp.792-94.
[98] *Current Literature*, p. 492.
[99] An., 'Some books on food and cookery', *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 9 May 1885, 59:1541, pp. 620-21. Other reviews highlighted how the book 'may receive some elucidation from Mr. Kirby's volume', see An., 'Elementary Textbook of Entomology', *The Bookseller*, 4 June 1885, 28, pp. 554-55.
[100] Vincent M. Holt, 'Insects as Food for Man – to the editor of the Standard', *The Standard*, 27 May 1885, 18991, p. 3. Holt sent other letters to editors, see, for example: Vincent M. Holt, 'What's in the name? To the editor of the Globe', 16 May 1885, p. 6; Vincent M. Holt, 'Letter to the Editor', *Drogheda Argus and Leinster Journal*, 23 May 1885, pp. 5-6. An., 'Insects as food for man', *Western Daily Press*, 28 May 1885, p. 8. An., 'Insects as food for man', *Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle*, 30 May 1885, p. 5.
[101] Keighren, Withers and Bell, pp. 68-99.

proposal. Holt's textual baggage, primarily his use of classical authorities and European travel accounts, was discussed at length in the New York periodicals *Current Literature* and *The Nation*.[102] The quantity of examples mattered. The *Indianapolis Journal* considered the 'seriousness' of the book based on the 'numerous historical instances' provided 'to prove that [insects] are palatable'.[103] Midwestern periodicals, in Indiana and Iowa, focused on the precedent set by 'the old Romans' rather than the habits of non-Western insect eaters. Even the abolitionist magazine *The Nation* – which had published reports on the lives of freed slaves and food post-abolition in their regular feature 'The South As It Is' – favoured the Classics as an authority on the subject. While their review acknowledged that 'most of what we call the less cultivated races have eaten insects', they concluded that Holt' claim had value because 'the classical authorities are also on his side.'[104] Overall, most American reviewers focused on the exegesis of the textual evidence provided by Holt, rather than a wider discussion of insect food practices that were current on the American Continent – in Mexico, for instance – or indeed within the United States, such as slaves' uses of insects to complement meagre rations or Native American seasonal efforts to gather the pupae of Californian tortoise-shell butterflies as a source of food.[105]

However, Holt's reliance on European accounts led to some criticism too. In Maryland, the *Midland Journal* lamented that 'his argument rests mainly on the descriptions of half-starved travellers concerning their personal enjoyment of cooked insects, and the fact that certain savages thrive on such diets.'[106] The duality between famine and feast, between a dish for 'half-starving' Westerners so inclined and a diet to 'thrive on' for Others, permeated most American reviews keen to evaluate Holt's diet as a form of survival food.[107] These reviews often picked on Holt's examples of insects consumed in times of dearth. *The Nation*, for example, considered the resilience shown by the 'strong-stomached and hungry sailor' who, accustomed to weevils and maggots at sea, simply 'raps his sea-biscuit on the table to shake out the worms before eating it.'[108] Others, like the Democratic newspaper *St. Paul Daily Globe* in Michigan, objected to Holt's interpretation of the Scriptures, particularly what the Gospels of Matthew and Mark had to say about the diet of John the Baptist. 'There has been a discussion between Bible students in attempting to reconcile modern ideas to John the Baptist's diet of locusts and wild honey,' they wrote, before adding that 'even orthodox believers have had their faith shaken in the story that as good a man as John would voluntarily go out into the wilderness to satisfy a depraved appetite

[102] An., no title, *Indianapolis Journal*, 21 May 1885, p. 4; *Current Literature*, pp. 792-94.
[103] *Indianapolis Journal*, p. 4.
[104] An., 'Notes', *The Nation*, 41:1046, 16 July1885, p. 54.
[105] This is only one example of Native American uses of insects as food. On this, see M. Kat Anderson, 'Gathering, Hunting, and Fishing', *Tending the Wild: Native American Knowledge and the Management of California's Natural Resources* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), pp. 47-48. For mentions of reports of insect eating in the United States during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see also, Julieta Ramos-Elorduy, 'Entomophagy in the United States', *Creepy Crawly Cuisine: The Gourmet Guide to Edible Insects* (Rochester: Park Street Press, 1998), pp. 26-37.
[106] An., 'Hems of Interest', *The Midland Journal*, 7:44, 14 August 1885, p. 3, The review was copied verbatim in a range of local newspapers, which suggests that the criticism was widely shared. See, for example: *Evening Capital.*, 18 July 1885, p. 3; *Maryland Independent*, 30 October 1885, p. 1; *The Londonderry Sifter*, 9 July 1885, p. 1, and 22 October 1885, p. 1; *Connecticut Western News*, 15 July 1885, p. 1 and 28 October 1885, p. 1; The Portland Daily Press, 22 June 1885, p. 2; *The National Tribune*, 9 July 1885, p. 5; *The Democratic Press*, 12 November 885, p. 4; *The Sun*, 19 June 1885, p. 2.
[107] *Midland Journal*, p. 3.
[108] *Nation*, p. 54.

by subsisting on such an abominable insect as the locust.'[109] After all, locusts had long been perceived as un-Christian. Their consumption in times of famine had been – for most Christians, and since at least the medieval and early modern period – a 'common feature of apocalyptic visions of the end of days'.[110] For the newspaper, Holt's presentation of locusts, as a form of sustenance with Biblical credentials, was therefore both a theological stretch and a leap back in time to pre-modern eating habits that had little chance of resurrecting in the 1880s. 'The naturalist' was 'seeking to lead the world back to the modest taste of the first century' at a time when 'the modern prejudice against eating insects [was] so strong.'[111]

In Britain, most reviews fed into a wider debate about food reform.[112] 'What shall we eat?', exclaimed the *Sheffield Independent*, 'the food reformers tell us our diet is altogether wrong – that we eat too much meat and the wrong kind of bread', before concluding that, in a fashion similar to followers of the vegetarian diet – a movement gaining traction during the period – consumers might, in renouncing beef and bacon for vegetables and insects, become 'like the beasts of the field.'[113] The fears of animality, of dissolving the boundaries of humanity in consuming insects as food, permeated most responses. A consensus emerged around the idea that 'if the English [were to] ever become an insectivorous race', they would usurp small birds, by depriving them of their food, which would, in turn, worsen depleting wildlife.[114] The whole food chain would be disturbed to the point of turning humans into insects too. Satirical newspapers portrayed Holt's proposed diet as transforming the 'insectarian' into 'a new insect'. *Funny Folk* (Figure 1) exposed the metamorphosis in its most 'advanced' and 'fearful' stages.[115] The trope of becoming what you eat echoed other satires of the food reform movement, particularly the ways *Punch* lampooned vegetarians as resembling vegetables.[116] But it also emulated Holt's argument on fashion and social aping, by representing the hungry poor as requesting 'spare' from the entomologist's basket, and maids listening to their masters, who, dressed in insect embroidered gowns, advised on collecting spiders and caterpillars to eat at home.

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[109] An., 'Insect Eating', *St Paul Daily Globe*, 9 June 1885, p. 4.

[110] See Rebecca Earle,'"Maize, Which Is Their Wheat"', *The Body of the Conquistador* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 118-155.

[111] *St Paul Daily Globe*, p. 4.

[112] Some magazines focused on such issues, particularly American periodicals campaigning for temperance. See, for example, An., no title, *Midland Journal*, 14 August 1885, p. 3.

[113] See An., 'Notes of the Week', *Sheffield Independent*, 23 May 1885, 79:9554, p.1; An., 'Passing Notes', *Illustrated Police News*, 16 May 1885, 1109, p. 3.

[114] See *Police News,* p. 3; An., 'The Reader', *Graphic*, 6 June 1885, 810, p. 583.

[115] An., 'Why Not Eat Insects?', *Funny Folk*, Saturday 13 June 1885, 10:550, p. 187.

[116] See James Gregory, *Of Victorians and Vegetarians: The Vegetarian Movement in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (London: Tauris, 2007).

Figure 1: An., 'Why Not Eat Insects?', *Funny Folk*, 13 June 1885, 10: 550, p.187, published with kind permission of the British Library © British Library Board (PENP.NT152).

Reviewers' concerns about the feasibility and desirability of an insect-filled diet can be read against the backdrop of wider debates about access to meat during this period. As Paul Young and Rebecca Woods have shown, the British food system underwent profound changes in the Victorian period, as new technologies for the preservation and transformation of meat enabled the country to outsource much of its industrialising meat production to Australasian colonies and the Americas.[117] The promotion of frozen and tinned meat imports was a response to growing anxieties, from the 1860s onwards, that the cost of animal protein was on the rise and beyond the reach of the working poor, leading to what Woods terms a 'rhetoric of scarcity' that persisted into the following decades.[118] While issues of cost drove such change, these transformations were controversial. The issue was much debated among policy makers, agronomists, and other concerned parties, particularly as consumers grew wary of the intensive rearing conditions of livestock abroad, and more generally, of mass-produced imports after

[117] Rebecca Woods, 'The Shape of Meat: Preserving Animal Flesh in Victorian Britain', *Osiris: History of Science Society*, 35 (2020), pp. 123-141; Paul Young, 'Carnivorous Empire: The Global Growth of Victorian Britain's Meat Markets', *Victorian Review*, 45:2 (2019), pp. 177-181.
[118] Woods, p. 218.

scandals involving rotten meat. One central concern was how animals were fed in the first place, an issue which Holt had tried to address with his selection of 'clean' and 'vegetable feeders'.[119] Reviews of his text in medical periodicals spoke to these anxieties regarding what constituted safe and palatable animal protein. In December 1885, the *Dublin Journal of Medical Science* claimed that insect food was doomed to fail, because British consumers already shied away from protein alternatives, as a matter of taste or economy. They wrote: 'a people whose poorest artisans – nay, whose pauper – will not tolerate Australian tinned meat, and whose middle classes hesitate to save 20 per cent by buying American beef and New Zealand mutton, and make merry over "hippophagy" and "omophagy", will not take to entomological food, in spite of precedent and argument and experiments made by enthusiastic entomophagists.'[120] Anticipating readers' response to the book, the author simply concluded: 'we decline to taste.'[121] Such reviews thus placed Holt within a range of controversial efforts to diversify access to animal protein that were much debated during the period, including the campaign to encourage 'hippophagy' among the middle classes and the urban poor.[122] In fact, opposition to Holt built on the arguments put forward by those reluctant to consume horsemeat in England. We find similar connections to issues of identity and animal welfare in responses to the book. As opponents to horsemeat rejected the idea of consuming equine companions as revolting and the meat as inferior to the celebrated English beef, so did reviewers of Holt, who declared: 'only leave us liberty to enjoy the roast beef of Old England.'[123] Not only was Holt's diet 'repulsive, even disgusting', but reviewers also expressed concerns that insects were to become 'a new class of victims to the palate' of human consumers.[124]

For most periodicals, Holt's text took the logic of social reform to the extreme.[125] The *Sporting Gazette* declared that that it '[went] too far,' the Graphic found it 'too thorough', while the *Standard* bemoaned that there were 'so many reforms on hand just now either in progress or suggested, in food, drink, clothing, housing, and deportment', so much so 'that a recommendation to be insectarians – "insectarian" is as good as vegetarian – will not, we imagine, be likely to find many persons with leisure to take it up.'[126] *Fun* described the insectarian as an advanced kind of reformer, 'an experimentalist',

[119] Holt, p. 6.
[120] An., 'Why Not Eat Insects?', *Dublin Journal of Medical Science*, July to December 1885, 80, pp. 43-44.
[121] *Dublin Journal of Medical Science*, p. 43.
[122] Campaigns to encourage the consumption of horsemeat grew during the period, although the movement gained more traction in France than in Britain in the 1870s and 1880s. Proponents claimed that horseflesh could provide practical and humanitarian solutions to the meat crisis mentioned above. Horsemeat met opposition in Britain, partly because of its association with poverty and desperation, having been used as a meat substitute during the Napoleonic Wars. See Kari Weil, 'Let Them Eat Horse', *Precarious Partners: Horses and their Humans in Nineteenth-Century France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), pp. 84-102.
[123] An., no title, *The Alcester Chronicle*, 23 May 1885, p. 7. On the significance of beef in debates about entitlement to food during the period, see Nadja Durbach, 'Roast Beef, the New Poor Law, and the British Nation, 1834–63', *Journal of British Studies*, 52:4 (2013), pp. 963-989.
[124] *Police News*, p. 3; *Dublin Journal of Medicine*, p.43.
[125] See *Police News*, p. 3; An., 'A Crossing-sweeper', *Moonshine*, 16 May 1885, p. 239.
[126] An., 'The Man About Town', *Sporting Gazette,* 18 May 1885, 23:1201, p. 618; An., 'The Reader', *Graphic*, 6 June 1885, 810, p. 583; An., 'Why Not Eat Insects?', *Standard*, 15 May 1885, 18981, p. 4. See also A.A. 'Correspondence', *Fishing Gazette*, 30 May 1885, 10:423, p. 261.

before concluding that promoting this diet was an issue of class.[127] In a poetic satire, they reproduced Holt's stratification of society – made of the poor, the middling sort, and the 'upper Ten-dom' – to suggest that only those with means and leisure time could promote such a 'dainty' diet: 'the middle classes might regale | On half an ant, or wire-worm's tail [...] to wit: our poor folk might do well | on common fly, *au naturel*.'[128] Elsewhere, readers critiqued pest harvesting as a false economy, as one could not have both grub and insect on their plate.[129] One solution, discussed in the *Age*, was insect farming – rearing insects, in different stages of development, for human consumption – but one 'would soon find that the luxury was a rather expensive one' and 'he [who] can afford to pay a high price for his insect food [...] should not do it at the expense of his neighbours.'[130] For satirists, Holt's proposed reform to tackle rural and urban poverty not only failed to be economical, but it was also patronising to the poor to the point of stirring up their revolutionary spirits. In 'Stupidity to the Starving Poor', *Punch* ridiculed the idea that 'the grub of timber, – plank or tub, – should be the toiler's daily "grub"', before predicting the demise of Holt, and that of other proponents of scientific diets, at the hands of revolted paupers, who might, in a fashion akin to Foullon de Doué's execution during the Revolution of 1789, have their heads 'stuck on a pike' and 'stuffed with what [they] recommend.'[131]

In the United States, some reviewers ridiculed the very title of the book. Holt's question seemed futile in a country where people struggled to cohabitate with locusts and house flies in the summer months.[132] 'Did the author never eat huckleberry pie in a restaurant?', responded the *Phrenological Journal,* implying that the dish already contained insects drawn to the sugariness of the pie.[133] Similarly, newspapers in Oregon and Boston responded to the 'odd title' by speculating that 'the question probably occurred to the man who ate a piece of cake in a dark closet.'[134] Such satirical responses spoke to a growing realisation of the frequency with which insects came into contact with food. In this context, Holt's solutions did not seem to resolve the pest control problems discussed in American local periodicals. In July 1885, the *Indianapolis Journal* noted that '"How to eat insects" is a popular theme since the invention of the seventeen-year locust'; however, 'in gnat, fly, and mosquito time, a few points on "how to keep insects from eating us" would be gratefully received.'[135] When they considered the principle of pest harvesting, local American newspapers simply highlighted the discrepancy between, on the one hand, Holt's handpicked English 'garden marauders' and, on the other, the major and fast-

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[127] An., 'Entomological Edibles', *Fun*, 13 May 1885, 41:1044, p. 201. See also, An., 'Multiples News Items', *Morning Post*, 9 May 1885, 35220, p. 3; An., 'Reviews', *Dublin Journal of Medical Sciences*, July 1885, 80, pp. 43-44.
[128] *Fun*, p. 201.
[129] See the often-quoted statement 'you cannot eat your caterpillar and eat your moth' from *Standard*, p. 4.
[130]An., 'Science Notes by Oedipus', *Age*, 27 June 1885, p. 4.
[131] An., 'Stupidity to the Starving', *Punch, or the London Charivari*, 16 May 1885, 88, p. 229.
[132] See James E. Williams, *American Pests: The Losing War on Insects from Colonial Times to DDT* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
[133] An., 'Mirth', *Phrenological Journal*, 8, September 1885, p. 180. Other references to insects found in huckleberry pies can be seen in: An., 'At the Country Boarding House', *Harper's Weekly*. 10 August 1889, p. 173; An., 'The New Party', *American Garden*, October 1887, p. 339.
[134] *Boston Post* reprinted in An., 'All Sorts', *Daily Morning Astorian*, 31 December 1885, p. 4.
[135] An., no title, *Indianapolis Journal*. 12 July 1885, p. 4.

spreading insect pests that ravaged key crops of the American food system and industry.[136] An article from the democratic *St. Paul Daily Globe* in Minnesota made this contrast very clear, and with a good dose of irony:

> [Holt] has made one important discovery … He finds that the insects of finest flavor and most nutritious are the ones most injurious to vegetation. When our prejudices have been dispelled and our tastes adapted to the use of insect diet, what a pleasant sense of revenge, in addition to the luxury of it, we will enjoy, as we go out among our potato vines in the early morning to gather a mess of Colorado beetles for breakfast! How the good people of Kansas will enjoy their savory dishes of fried grasshoppers, or the California vine dressers their locust stews. Or what a gamy, spicy, peppery flavour cotton or tobacco worm pie will have for the Southern epicure. Thinking of these delicious morsels it is no wonder this eminent naturalist asks why we do not eat insects.[137]

Most reviews interwove issues of wealth with race, not least because they replicated the racialised examples of Holt's sources and the language of *Why Not Eat Insects?* While *Punch* decried Holt's suggestion that the poor should adopt 'the food that suits the Hottentots [and] what fattens the Australia Murri', non-satirical periodicals simply copied Holt's passages on 'uncivilised' insect-eaters, sometimes quoting the text at great length.[138] Three colonial issues took hold of their discussion of the tension of civilisation mentioned above. First, the Scramble for Africa led some, like *Leisure Hour*, to comment on the impracticality of pest harvesting in missionary work. Presenting the Ituri Forest as assailed by insectile opponents 'digging their scissor-like mandibles in your neck', the magazine lamented: 'what a pity the author of that book did not put an appearance at the starvation camps, which formed the most unpleasant experiences of the Emin Relief Expedition.'[139] Second, fears of the so-called 'yellow peril' affected reviewers' assessment of the book's value for Europe, the *Fishing Gazette*, noting, for example, that 'there is Chinese flavour about this idea [;] in the "society" novel of the future we shall no doubt read something like this.'[140] Thirdly, ambivalent British efforts to engage with the 'funny foods' of colonised populations made the book of relevance to colonies like Australia.[141]

Most Australian reviewers omitted Aboriginal insect foods and focused on white settlers. They perpetuated the white settler narrative of 'our Saxon ancestors', which was, in part, the result of direct quotes from Holt and a perceptible effort, on the part of reviewers, to position themselves as the Western Anglo-Saxon consumers Holt aimed to convince in his initial address to English readers.[142] Most periodicals discussed Holt's suggestions in terms of survival food and rural economy, stressing the

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[136] An., 'Multiple News Items', *Morning Post*, 9 May 1885, p. 3.
[137] *St Paul Daily Globe*, p. 4,
[138] See, for example, A. M'Neil, 'Facts, Art, Miscellaneous', *Bow Bells: A Magazine of General Literature and Art for Family Reading*, 3 June 1885, 42:1088, p. 574.
[139] James Macauley, 'Darkest Africa', *The Leisure Hour*, August 1890, p. 700.
[140] 'Occasional notes', *The Fishing Gazette*, 8 August 1885, 11:433, p. 47. See Ross G. Forman, *China and the Victorian Imagination: Empires Entwined* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
[141] See review in Arthur Somerset, 'Some funny foods', *Little Folks: The Magazine for Boys and Girls*, 1 May 1889, p. 330.
[142] An., no title, *The Kiama Independent, and Shoalhaven Advertiser*, 14 August 1885, p. 2.

specificity of local wildlife and settler food. In New South Wales, the *Kiama Independent* declared: 'we antipodeans have certainly no present necessity of being enthusiastic in the matter of an insect diet,' given the 'unlimited' stock of 'bunnies' and supply of 'kangaroo, wallaby, opossum', which 'though diminishing, is not likely to be cut off for some time, and till such a calamity befalls us we shall probably defer the serious consideration of Mr Holt's proposal.'[143] In the gold mining districts of Victoria, the *Avoca Mail* expressed a similar view, with self-deprecating irony regarding settlers in the area:

> The trouble involved in catching and preparing a quart of ants, a pint of butterflies or a tureen of honeybees will probably prevent the lethargic Australian cook from trying the recipes of Mr Holt even if the public should favor the introduction of these new comestibles.[144]

Those who evoked Aboriginal diet used Holt to reflect on issues of race and civilisation. In Melbourne, the *Age* commented on Aboriginal insect food only to argue that it was an unsustainable diet: 'the Australian Aboriginal would be delighted to live on the large grubs which are to be found in decaying timber if he could find enough for them, and he may take to mosquitoes if they would pay for the catching', before concluding that 'no tribe of mankind, savage or civilised, has ever found it economical to have a diet of insects.'[145] Some repeated Holt's questions to express their own concerns about race, and what eating Aboriginal foraged food would mean to white settlers. This featured in the *Mildura Cultivator*, the official organ of an irrigation company based in the United States and Victoria, which considered Holt's plea as 'a suggestion for locust districts.'[146] Although the newspaper was concerned with agricultural improvements and pest control, the main issue was how far insect food could be regarded as 'civilised'. After quoting Holt's examples from Pliny, Herodotus, Homer and Aristotle, the journalist stressed a question that might resonate with their readers:

> Mr Holt remarks that in bringing forward examples from ancient times and from among those nations in modern times, which are called uncivilised, he foresees that he will be met with the argument: 'Why should we imitate these uncivilised races?' But upon examination, he says, it will be found that, though uncivilised, most of these peoples are more particular as to the fitness of their food than we are.[147]

Holt's text had thus the potential to sanction 'uncivilised' insect foods in settler societies, at a time when 'culinary experimentation with native produce was a widespread colonial practice' in nineteenth-century Australia.[148] As Blake Singley notes, settlers' experiments with native fauna and Aboriginal foodways were mixed. They elicited ambivalent views, because they were 'framed by the contradictory imperatives of necessity and the desire for new tastes.'[149] Such ambivalence speaks to the settlers'

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143 *Kiama Independent*, p. 2.
144 An., no title, *Avoca Mail*, 25 August 1885, p. 2.
145 *Age*, p. 4.
146 An., '"Why not eat insects?" A suggestion for locust districts', *The Mildura Cultivator*, 12 October 1895, p. 4.
147 *Mildura Cultivator*, p. 4.
148 See Blake Singley, '"Hardly Anything Fit for Man to eat": Food and Colonialism in Australia', *History Australia*, 9:3 (2012), pp. 27-42.
149 Singley, p. 41.

accounts studied by Rebecca Earle in *The Body of the Conquistador*.[150] In examining the complexities of foodways in colonial Spanish America, Earle argues that early modern Europeans had 'vacillated in their views about how much of the new American environment they could incorporate into their own bodies, and, by extension, into their culture.'[151] A similar process was at play in nineteenth-century Australia. The incorporation of insects into the settlers' culture and bodies seemed unnerving. While the *Kiama Independent* conceded that 'it has been left to an English writer to reveal the hitherto untasted luxuries we have so long despised', the author swiftly proceeded to voice concerns about the bodily and sensory changes an insect diet could bring: 'Mr Holt has evidently made the discovery that his own taste exactly coincides with that of the trout, but it is rather problematic if many of his readers could develop a fish's taste with the same celerity.'[152]

As mentioned above, Holt's proposals spoke to this tension between the new and the needed, and in so doing, it sharpened the moral judgment some Australian settlers cast on other colonists who experimented with insect food. We see this in a response to Holt from Arthur Sidney Olliff – the Government entomologist at the Australian Museum in New South Wales – who wrote that 'it may not be out of place to add that in Australia [...] many wood-boring Coleoptera – particularly Longicorns and Rhynchophora – are eaten, either raw or cooked, by the aborigines and by not a few depraved members of the white community.'[153] Such a response suggests that Australian reviews of *Why Not Eat Insects?* both reflected and entrenched the colonial differentiation studied by Singley; in reviewing Holt's work, white Australian settlers found a space to articulate not only their own degree of openness towards Aboriginal foodways, but also an opportunity to further construct the culinary and moral confines of their colonial collective, as settlers.

Conclusion: Victorian Solutions for the Twenty-First Century?

Although Holt did not use the word itself, his plea was a defence of entomophagy: a Western term crafted in English-speaking prints in the nineteenth century, which, as food scientists have recently shown, was 'used by largely non-insect-eating researchers to denote an eating habit that was not [perceived as] appropriate in their own cultures.'[154] In so doing, and as demonstrated above, Holt partook in 'cultural food colonialism', which his readers and reviewers contributed to, by elaborating on the issues of class and race raised in the text and the travel writings Holt used to build his case on the edibility of insects and ways to cook them. Collectively, these prints often racialised overseas 'insect eaters' and their food, and always centred testimonies of adventurous Western consumers as a potential

[150] Earle, pp. 118-155.
[151] Earle, p. 148.
[152] *Kiama Independent*, p. 2.
[153] Arthur Sidney Olliff, 'Giant Lepidopterous Larvae in Australia', *The Entomologist*, January 1888, 21:296, p. 19.
[154] J. Evans and all, 'Entomophagy: An Evolving Terminology in Need of Review', *Journal of Insects as Food and Feed*, 1:4 (2015), pp. 293-305.

'pointer to the future'.[155] Holt did not usher in this trend. Rather, he contributed to it, by compiling earlier European writings that fed into a wider debate emerging in Western prints about the desirability and possibility of eating insects as food. His text, in turn, was compiled by reviewers who assessed both the logic of his argument and his sources in their periodicals, extending the debate to their own readers in the late nineteenth century.

Because of this, we should reconsider extolling Holt's book as pioneering work with solutions for our current social and environmental predicaments. Non-governmental organisations, museums, and promoters of insect food in Europe and the United States have repeatedly done so in the last ten years. To cite but a few: the FAO has praised the book as 'founded on high moral Victorian values' showing 'an awareness of entomophagy in other cultures'; museums have drawn on Holt's plea to build interactive exhibits, like the Wellcome Trust 'Insects *au Gratin*' workshop exploring 'new ways of consuming insects'; in 2017, ECHO Hope Against Hunger used Holt's examples to tabulate 'commonly eaten insects' across the globe, an approach validated by researchers in food sustainability, who, in 2019, quoted Holt's book as at the vanguard in promoting an 'economic and ecological' entomophagy.[156] Countless examples of uses of Holt in the media, including social media, could be cited here; most of them are, in 2023, promoted by Western insect food lobbies and 'epicurious' consumers, who tend to share Holt's recipes and text to further their cause.[157] I would argue that *Why Not Eat Insects?* does not provide solutions that could be applied a-historically to our present. Rather, it raises interesting questions about the ethics of insect food: a growing concern among entomologists.[158] Being mindful of the issues of colonialism and class that compounded in Holt's text throws light onto the complexities of promoting insect food as 'new' foods for the West, and in this sense, Victorian entomophagy invites us to consider how to mitigate continuing issues of power, privilege, and 'cultural food colonialism' in the marketisation and production of insects for Western consumers today.

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[155] An., 'Miscellaneous Extracts', *Manchester Times*, 15 February 1890, p. 6.

[156] Huis et al., pp. 42-43; Berkelaar, pp. 1-9; Angela Last, 'Who's the Pest? Imagining Human ─ Insect Futures Beyond Antagonism', *Science as Culture* 23:1 (2014), pp. 98-107; Susana Soares, 'Insects au Gratin Project ─ Why Not Eat Insects?' *Susana Soares Designer* < http://www.susanasoares.com/index.php?id=82 > [accessed 14 July 2022]; Minna Santaoja and Mari Niva, 'The missing animal in entomophagy – ethical, ecological aesthetic considerations on eating insects', in *Sustainable Governance and Management of Food: Ethical perspectives*, ed. by Eija Vinnari and Markus Vinnari (Leiden: Brill & Wageningen, 2019), p. 314.

[157] See, for example, websites and blogs promoting insect food, including: Meghan Curry, '6 Legged Lit: 6 Must-have Edible Insect Books and Cookbooks', *Bug Vivant: Gastronomy on Six Legs* < http://bugvivant.com/6-legged-lit-6-must-have-edible-insect-books-and-cookbooks/ > [accessed 14 January 2023]; Michael Y. Park, 'Eating Maggots: The Explorers Club Dinner', *The Epicurious Blog* < https://www.epicurious.com/archive/blogs/editor/2008/03/eating-maggots.html> [accessed 14 January 2023]; BugsAndBeasts.com < https://bugsandbeasts.com/WhyNotEatInsects/ > [accessed 14 July 2022]; Stephanie Bailey, 'Insects as Food!?!', *Kentucky 4-H and Youth Entomology* < https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/content/insects-food > [accessed 14 July 2022]. See press coverage, such as: 'Insects: the future of food?', Fraser Lewry, *Guardian* < https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/wordofmouth/2011/sep/16/insects-arachnids-future-food > [accessed 14 July 2022]; Stefan Gates, 'Why Not Eat Insects?', *BBC Food Blog* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/food/2011/03/why-not-eat-insects.shtml> [accessed 14 July 2022]; Dean Irvine, 'Crickets, Grubs and Bugs: Will Insects Be the Next Thai Food Phenomenon?', *CNN* < http://edition.cnn.com/2014/11/06/world/asia/will-insects-be-the-next-thai-food-phenomenon/index.html > [accessed 14 July 2022].

[158] A. Müller et al., 'Entomophagy and Power', *Journal of Insects as Food and Feed*, 2:2 (2016), pp. 121-36.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Franziska Neumann, Sam Hill, Sarah Trott, Elizabeth Goodwin and the two anonymous reviewers for their advice on this paper.

FUNDING

This work was supported by United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) Research England Quality-related Research (QR) funding at York St John University, United Kingdom.

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.