

Tadeusz Rachwał

Food and Labour. Eating Epistemology

Summary

Food exists, so to speak, epistemologically, its actual existence ending in the process of digesting which, in turn, transforms food, at least partly, into ourselves. All this boils down to a simple statement of the fact that we cannot live without food, without consuming the nourishing outside which, for some reason, we simultaneously exclude as irrelevant to the epistemological constitution of ourselves. Man, the subject and object of Alexander Pope's well known "knowing thyself", for example, is, again for some reason, posited away from, and above food and eating as an inconsumable, permanent entity that itself does eat, but only for sustenance whose task it is to sustain productivity, including the production of food. This production has become a culturally gendered activity. If, as Thorstein Velben claims, in the predatory order of things it was "the office of men to consume what the women produce," with the rise of the modern bourgeois subject it is the masculine which becomes responsible for production, while the mob and the aristocracy, gendered as feminine, acquire the qualities of passivity resulting in the inability to function by themselves, even to properly feed themselves.

David Schauffler

The Dialectic of Gluttony, or The Empty Stomach of Insatiable Reason

Summary

The radical physiological limits imposed upon the gross human appetites is compensated for by their constant recurrence. The very meaning of an appetite seems to be necessarily connected with the ideas of repletion and repetition, the sense of a continual process of desire and its fulfillment. The immediate and repetitive satisfaction of the individual appetite is mirrored by the general socio-economic activity of the fulfillment of the stipulated needs of the public, a process which likewise contains a dialectical relationship between the (re)occurrence of the appetite and its satisfaction. The socio-economic level of this dialectic has received considerable attention. The paper intends to reexamine its connection to the individual, or microappetitive, dialectic, which the Author calls the dialectic of gluttony, and thereby to further draw attention to another repetitive process, another cycle of desire and fulfillment, and that is dialectical criticism itself.

Zbigniew Białas

Fat: Fat[e]s and Fa[c]ts

Summary

Fat is seen in most travel literature as inspirational towards sloth, idleness and inertia. It is frequently linked to the discourse of gluttonous excess. The essay – a reconnaissance into a potentially huge, uncharted territory of aesthetics – signals several complex relations between the traveller and the representations of fat. Presented here under several emblematic guises (body fat, fat on the the surface of the body, protective grease, etc) fat is analysed, all in all, as a convenient representational tool, not only for constructing disgust.

Alice Weinreb

Taste no Evil: The Dangers of the Mouth in Ancient Rome

Summary

The essay grapples with the erotic overtones of culinary literature of Ancient Rome. By compiling a wide range of sources, including poetry, drama, and historical writings, the author attempts to reconstruct the metaphoric and symbolic values of the Roman food-world. Locating this world around the problematic construction of an elite Roman masculinity, she argues that the mouth became both literal and metaphoric center of manliness, and ultimately thus Roman-ness. Because of its liminal position on the body and its vague gender identity and attributes, the construction of the *os impurum*, the mouth polluted by contact with the world of sexuality and food, haunts much of the Roman writing. Embodying a dangerous bridge between sexual pleasure and gustatory ple-

asure, the mouth, envisioned as cause and effect of oral sex and oral consumption, was posited as a profound threat and a main site of vulnerability for the masculine body. Descriptions of feasts, criticisms of table manners, recipes, and erotic verse, all are woven together to locate the mouth at the heart of the literary Roman self, and present to the modern reader a startlingly graphic and disturbing vision of the erotic and grotesque body.

Liliana Barakońska

Of Books and Foods

Summary

The article is an attempt to analyse the functioning of the consumption metaphor in the context of Robert Burton's work *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621) with special attention paid to the link between the writing activity and the process of digestion. Thus it explores the ways in which Burton reads Seneca's project of constructing the self out of *hypomnemata*, selected fragments of various texts to be digested and incorporated to model a new personality; a project evoked by Erasmus who advocates digestion of classical authors in order to produce a new and individual style in writing.

Establishing an analogy between the space of his book and the space of an inn, Burton establishes an analogy between words and foods, thus endeavouring to refer his work to the oral literary tradition. Writing his discourse in the Jacobean context, however, the feast Burton presents the reader with is, as he puts it, excremental: what he has at his disposal as a writer are remnants and leftovers. Hence, to study the implications of Burton's vision, it is necessary to relate it to the prevalent presentation of food imagery. The article is thus a reading of the changes in the representation of food between the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods and situates the discourse of melancholy in the digestive and excretory metaphor of the time.

John Watters

The Manners of Mass Murder: Eating Fear

Summary

The article attempts to show, through a close reading of Brett Easton Ellis's *American Psycho*, the fallacious basis of two currents in late-capitalist discourse. Firstly, through an extension of the theories of Roland Barthes on fashion, that consumer society provides the consumer with extended choice. Secondly, that the refinement of uniquely human behaviour, in this case manners, leads to moral superiority. Ellis's novel presents the reader with a sophisticated murderer who destroys choice through following fashion and manners through acts of violence. It is the author's contention, following Bataille, that the enhancement of uniquely human qualities cannot be the basis for a morality as it encompasses eroticism, perversion and murder.

Katarzyna Ancuta

A Landscape with a Slaughterhouse in the the Background. Horror or the Art of Meat

Summary

The presented article reconsiders contemporary Horror in terms of a MEATaphor, that is a metaphor of meat. The article draws on Modern Horror's fascination with such themes as the body, flesh, carnality, physicality, monstrosity, mutation, or bio-technology, all of which being, in fact, the representation of meat. Due to its interest in the human body, always treated instrumentally, Modern Horror has been frequently referred to as "meat-horror." The article examines the "meat" content of Modern Horror and the argument is divided into three parts discussing the notions of meat as food, meat as flesh, and meat as the abject female body respectively. The first part is concerned with meat consumption (including human meat) and centres on a number of cannibalistic themes of both explicit and implicit nature. The second part touches on the questions of carnality and sexuality, as well as anatomy and bodily transformations, and generally refers to the sphere of human biology. Finally, the third part concentrates on the images of the female body as the abject territory for both men and women. It evaluates Modern Horror texts from a gender perspective discussing the notion of the monstrous feminine and deconstructing *anorexia nervosa*.

