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**Austerity Measures:
Presenting Food in British Writing, 1939-1954**

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Arts in English

at

The University of Waikato

by

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato

2016

Abstract

Rationing measures in force in the United Kingdom from the beginning of the Second World War in December of 1939 until July of 1954 ostensibly ensured an egalitarian access to food and resulted in a general levelling-up of standards of nutrition in the general populace. The restrictions and shortages that plagued larders and plates, however, meant that variety and stability became preoccupations for the British public on the home front. Against the backdrop of socially levelling austerity measures, popular writers used the public's food consciousness to explore anxieties surrounding the demarcation and performance of identities challenged by the threats to Britain's physical and ideological borders. Food is an invaluable lens through which to examine the shaping of identity during a period that challenged food and ideological security in Britain, particularly with respect to the performance of socioeconomic class differences, national identity and gender binaries. Largely structured by Pierre Bourdieu's examination of consumption habits as an articulation of class and gender in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979), this thesis will examine the ways in which food representation serves as a fulcrum on which social and economic class identities pivot in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1948) and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949), and the acute awareness of the post-war custodianship of a damaged Britain. Secondly, it will demonstrate the ways in which austerity cookery literature not only upsets and recodifies national identity as constructed by quotidian consumption habits, but also the problematic configuration of duty to ahedonistic rationing as the housewife's moral obligation to the nation. Expanding on this, it will consider the reconfiguration of Britain's post-Empire relationship to the world and the

enduring legacy of culinary creolisation as demonstrated in Constance Spry and Rosemary Hume's recipe for *Poulet Reign Elizabeth* as served at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953, and the claim to the sensual rewards of gastronomy in Elizabeth David's *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (1950). Finally, it will examine the ways in which Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* (1941) and Barbara Pym's *Jane and Prudence* (1953) critique and subvert ways in which a mind-body duality structures the notions of gendered appetites, and the authors' appetites for a transcendence of the fascism of the patriarchy undergirding the twentieth century. While the austerity years are often perceived as representing a dearth of culinary culture in Britain, it is better appreciated as a period of rich innovation and adaptation, where the yearning for security and identity forged complex texts ambivalent about Britain's past, present and future.

Acknowledgements

For their ongoing support, enthusiasm and encouragement I would like to thank the following people:

The first impetus to write about food at an academic level came as a result of Associate Professor of English Dr Sarah Shieff's course *Food Writing* at the University of Waikato in my first year of Arts study. An endless debt of thanks is due Dr Shieff and her tireless expertise and encouragement supervising this thesis from those first tentative steps in 2013 to its final days.

Thanks also to the ongoing support of my family: to my parents Pat and John, who taught me to read; to my siblings Rosanne and Tony, and Michael and Bronwyn, without whom I would not have made it this far; and a special debt of love to Granma, whose encouragement throughout my studies has been without fail.

My thanks to the University of Waikato and the English Programme in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for their generous financial support which made this research possible, including the Master's Research Scholarship and the Master's Thesis Scholarship, and to my colleagues and friends in the department who have offered books, cups of tea, editorial suggestions, and kind words. Thanks to Dr Mark Houlahan who encouraged me to turn to English during the long rehearsals of *King Lear*; to Matt Elder for his kind feedback; and to Drs Tracey Slaughter and Kirstine Moffat for their support and enthusiasm.

Special love to Shaynah Jackson for her wisdom and to Theadora Allison for her kindness.

To my friends I give my thanks and love. You know who you are. Without you, this would not have been possible.

Always,

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Introduction: Grace

Soya Beans and Basic English

It was a bleak period of present privation and threatening disaster—the period of soya beans and Basic English—and in consequence the book is infused with a kind of gluttony, for food and wine, for the splendours of the recent past, and for rhetorical and ornamental language, which now with a full stomach I find distasteful.¹

Evelyn Waugh, 'Preface' (1959) to *Brideshead Revisited* (1949)

[F]ood is never 'just food' and its significance can never be purely nutritional.²

Pat Caplan, *Food, Health and Identity* (1997)

In January 1940, food in Britain became vulgar. For the first time since the First World War, the United Kingdom introduced sumptuary laws designed to mediate the nation's expenditure and consumption of food products. For fourteen years, from December of 1939 and the introduction of petrol restrictions to the formal end of food rationing in July of 1954, Britons had wavering access to bacon, butter and margarine, sugar, meat, tea, jam, wheat products, cheese, eggs, lard, milk, canned and dried fruit, and potatoes. As the national diet became increasingly prescriptive, dictated by public broadcasts, nutritional guides and cookery texts designed to make the most of cheap cuts and produce grown in

¹ Evelyn Waugh, 'Preface' (1959), in *Brideshead Revisited* (1949) (London: Penguin, 2011), pp. ix-x.

² Pat Caplan, 'Approaches to the study of food, health and identity', in *Food, Health and Identity*, ed. by Pat Caplan (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 3.

“Victory Gardens”, the distinctions between social groups that were previously articulated by sharp demarcations in consumption habits began to soften. As Philippa Pullar remarks, perhaps oversimply, everyone, ‘whether rich or poor, whether in the town or country, was eating the same food.’³

According to John Burnett, Britain’s remarkably advanced preparedness for rationing and the significant expansion of British agriculture in the 1930s made self-sufficiency more possible and subsequently engendered confidence from the British public, resulting in the realisation of a dietetically adequate rationing scheme.⁴ In 1939, Britain was approximately 30% self-sufficient in food; thanks to Victory Gardens, public allotments, and the significant advances in mechanisation and fertilization since the First World War, by 1944 there was a 90% increase in domestic wheat production, 87% in potatoes, 45% in vegetables, 19% in sugar beet and 100% in barley and oats compared with pre-war levels.⁵ By 1944, imports of food halved from the pre-war total of 22,026 kilotons to 11,032 kilotons.⁶ This had a discernible impact on public nutrition: in terms of kilocalories, ‘the pre-war average of 3,000 per head per day in 1940 and 1941 to 2,820, but increased to 3,010 by 1944.’⁷ Protein intake increased by 6%, and calcium, iron, vitamins B, B2, B3 and C all increased considerably under rationing.⁸ Rationing resulted in a “levelling-up” of standards: data collected on spending habits during this era suggested little difference in the diets of middle-

³ Philippa Pullar, *Consuming Passions: A History of English Food and Appetite* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971), p. 216.

⁴ John Burnett, *Plenty and Want: A social history of food in England from 1815 to the present day* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 289-91.

⁵ Burnett, p. 289.

⁶ [Ministry of Food], *How Britain Was Fed in War Time: Food Control, 1939-1945* ([London]: HMSO, 1946), p. 5.

⁷ Burnett, p. 295.

⁸ Burnett, p. 295.

class and working-class households.⁹ Coupled with almost full employment, steadily rising wages, and public broadcasts and pamphlet distributions designed to provide education on cheap and nourishing cookery, the 1940s saw considerable increases in the standards of living of the poorer third of the population who had previously endured widespread malnourishment.¹⁰ ‘Luxury items soon disappeared, it is true,’ Burnett reminds us, ‘and meals tended to become monotonous, particularly when the U-boat campaign was at its height, [but] it was nevertheless, always physiologically a better diet [...] and more evenly distributed’ than pre-war.¹¹

Just as the diner gives grace to acknowledge the origins of the culinary meal, this thesis opens with *Grace* to acknowledge the importance of context in the literary meal. The facts and figures of nutrition weave throughout this thesis; they are inseparable from the literature written during Britain’s austerity years, but provide only a small part of the picture. At its core, this thesis is concerned with the representation of food in a time of bleak privation when the Great British Empire was threatened by full-scale war, and the ways in which the relationships represented by food help to define identity during a period that challenged food and ideological security. Britain suffered a sharp contraction of its culinary pool as a result of rationing, symptomatic of the threat of the Second World War to the United Kingdom’s long history as a centre of imperial power and its entrenched class structures. The Second World War should be regarded as a defensive war for the United Kingdom, both of its literal borders and its long and complex history of expansion, colonisation and Empire that, at its peak in 1922, covered one fifth of

⁹ Burnett, p. 295.

¹⁰ Burnett, p. 297.

¹¹ Burnett, p. 296.

the Earth's land surface and held one quarter of its population. Ingrained within nationalistic propaganda is the idea of preserving the fluid and contiguous ideas that constitute one's concept of a homeland. The threats to Britain's import lines, for instance, stunt the state's ability to articulate food habits, especially those which embody class differences, or those made "traditional" thanks to Britain's expansion—particularly during the "imperial century" from 1814 to 1914—and therefore these threats challenge the authority and power of Britain as a dominating global force.

Rationing, then, while generally regarded as a success, was also regarded with ambivalence by authors such as Evelyn Waugh, whose quote opens this introduction. The quote from his 1959 preface to *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) highlights the anxieties of the aggressive restriction of culture—in this case, with especial focus on food and language—Waugh felt while writing between December of 1943 and spring of 1944. Here 'soya beans and Basic English,'¹² or simply banality, encroach on the ancient institutions and traditions of the privileged that Waugh regards as vital to national identity, infusing the disappearing past with golden light and the then-present with grey despair. It is a sentiment echoed a generation earlier by Florence White, who compiled *Good Things in England* in 1932 'in an attempt to capture the charm of England's cookery before it is completely crushed out of existence.'¹³ Although *Brideshead Revisited* imagines a fiction of the 1920s and 1930s, it should be regarded as 'a souvenir of the Second War,'¹⁴ to use Waugh's phrasing. This somewhat facile observation foregrounds the ways in which anxieties surrounding the

¹² Waugh, p. ix.

¹³ Florence White, *Good Things in England* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932), p. 9.

¹⁴ Waugh, p. xi.

contemporary experience in relation to wartime conditions are articulated through the imagery and symbolism within each text examined in this thesis, particularly in relation to food.

This thesis is about the significance of food beyond the nutritional, and tries to answer the question: *what did food mean to authors writing during Britain's austerity years?* During the austerity years, food became a preoccupation for Britons on the Home Front owing to the restrictions and distributions of rationing, the black markets and wavering access to goods. Orbiting the core of this preoccupation are perhaps two or three main ideologies: as a constant across human cultures, nutrition is a fixture throughout our lives and necessary to our survival. However, food is never 'just food', to borrow Pat Caplan's aphorism,¹⁵ and eating never simply consumption. Whether we are conscious of the fact or not, every time we put food into our mouths we perform a series of identities inscribed and re-inscribed from birth and inflected by our cultural predilections and desires, access to resources, and ideas of gender-based consumption difference; equally, these find potent articulations in eating too. Food is 'intimately bound up with social relations, including those of power, of inclusion and exclusion, as well as with cultural ideas about classification,' Pat Caplan reminds us.¹⁶ 'Dis-moi ce que tu manges,' said Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, 'je te dirai ce que tu es.'¹⁷ The meal matters because it is never denotative (that is scientific, value-free), but connotative, with socio-cultural phenomena bustling whether visible to the eater or in their proverbial blind spot. Therefore, pure nutrition is rarely at the centre of food representations in literature. In the

¹⁵ Caplan, p. 3.

¹⁶ Caplan, p. 3.

¹⁷ Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *Physiologie du Goût*, Vol. 1. (Paris: Just Tessier, 1834), p. 13.

literature of the Second World War studied in this thesis, value judgements and symbolic connotations of, and surrounding, food are heightened and used to reinforce themes, meanings and character demarcations, ultimately expressing the anxieties around the interweaving concepts of class boundaries, national boundaries and gender expectations of the people of Britain in the first half of the twentieth century.

Rationing had an ostensible levelling effect on resource distribution, and as a result the average diet of Britons was also the most common; the rich variation between members of the lower and the middle and upper classes, particularly in their respective accesses to exogenous goods almost disappeared; the diet became vulgar, commonplace, designed by committee according to the lowest common denominators. *Ostensible* is used here to describe levelling because, as this thesis explores, the distribution of food during the austerity years follows paths inscribed long before the Second World War and re-inscribed throughout, according to the performances of gender and class described by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and discussed in his seminal work *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (1979).¹⁸ The performance of eating habits according to Bourdieu is a motif woven throughout this thesis.

Class performance, national identity and gender performance structure the three chapters of this thesis, but it is impossible to separate fully each subject from the others owing to the complex interconnections between them. Chapter I (*Distinction*) considers how food representation serves to delineate class identities in Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1948) and George Orwell's *Nineteen*

¹⁸ Pierre Bourdieu, 'Taste of Luxury, Taste of Necessity', in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. by Carolyn Korsmeyer (Oxford: Berg, 2005), pp. 72-8.

Eighty-Four (1949), but as these texts demonstrate, class is also intimately bound with the performance of heteronormative gender identities during wartime. Chapter II (*Absorption*) examines the austerity cookery text as symbolic of a quotidian nationalism constructed from patriarchal domesticity. The obverse to the cookery text, the mid-century gastronomic text, such as Elizabeth David's *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (1950), reclaims both the rewards of sensuality and the culinary exploration hindered during wartime. Chapter III (*Appetites*) highlights how Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts* (1941) and Barbara Pym's *Jane and Prudence* (1953) critique and subvert the mind-body duality and the associated concept of gendered appetites, which in turn draws attention to the persistent fractures that result from patriarchal ideologies and class anxieties.

The polysemy of consumption interlink distinctions according to resource distribution. For example, geography is intimately bound to class: in 'Retrieving Tastes: Two Sources of Cuisine', Jean-François Revel touches on the idea that the "popular" cuisine of a country corresponds with local production, consumption and the direct fruits of the earth; conversely, the consumption of imported or travelled goods corresponds to those with the economic capital to afford exotic or exogenous goods. Because eating is also an act of incorporation, eating local produce is to literally incorporate the local earth into one's self, an act of national embodiment; to eat regional cuisine is also to support the production of those unexportable symbols of the nation. Further, as Pierre Bourdieu observes, the 'sign-bearing, sign-wearing' body articulates the cultural class of the consumer,¹⁹ an articulation bound to the performance of economic capital. Bourdieu goes on to observe that the male body demands bigger, stronger portions of food than the

¹⁹ Bourdieu, pp. 72-8.

female body.²⁰ Performed taste preferences shape the class body, the national body and the gendered body according to prescriptions grounded in dichotomies of inclusion and exclusion.

While these three topics are intrinsically linked, each chapter of this thesis is respectively centred on the performance and anxieties surrounding class, nation and gender in texts published between 1939 and 1954. The theoretical grounding of Pierre Bourdieu's structuralist argument behind the performance of class and gender as it appears in *Distinction* recurs throughout this thesis. In the first part of his discussion, Bourdieu argues that a 'fundamental opposition' exists between the antithetical concepts of 'quantity and quality, belly and palate, matter and manners, substance and form.'²¹ At one end, the "popular" tastes are the most economical to produce and the most filling; they are the tastes of necessity associated with the working class members of society who do not possess sufficient economic and cultural capital to express a taste for less fattening, lighter, leaner foods that are the purview of the bourgeoisie.²² Bourdieu goes on to consider how and why women might prefer smaller, weaker portions of food such as crudités, while men prefer 'strong and strong-making [meat], giving vigour, blood, and health.'²³

These theoretical axes of consumption ground the examination of the articulation of distinction in Chapter I, considering the ways in which Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* and George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* examine the performance of class and gender distinctions according to taste preferences, and the ways in which the ostensible levelling of the Second World

²⁰ Bourdieu, p. 75.

²¹ Bourdieu, p. 73.

²² Bourdieu, pp. 73-4.

²³ Bourdieu, p. 75.

War and its fictional equivalents magnify class disparity. This chapter borrows its title from *Distinction*, owing to the subtle us-and-them demarcations articulated through, and indicative of, consumption habits as made evident in the works of Waugh and Orwell. Economic capital does not solely undergird class difference in *Brideshead Revisited*, but a cultural capital invariably favoured as more valuable, and of greater importance to British identity. Conversely, the failure to perform adequate class distinction in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* because of the oppressive hegemon of Big Brother forever stomping on individuality satirises the fascism Orwell saw in Nazism, Stalinism and his own country. This chapter also considers alcohol and the ways in which the state of intoxication and the failure (or denial) of gendered roles of consumption.

Absorption informs Chapter II, through the ways in which eating is a literal act of incorporating the earth into the body; how Elizabeth David claimed the sensuality of gastronomic literature from male writers; and how appropriation or envelopment of other countries' exportable culinary cultures remains a continuous thread in British culinary history. Chapter II begins by considering the ways in which, by challenging and reconfiguring the daily habits of consumption that contribute to the "imagined community" of nation-state identity explored influentially by Benedict Anderson,²⁴ the Second World War upset the amorphous concepts of nationhood and empire for Britain. Because the Second World War forced Britain toward self-sufficiency, the importance of make-do and go-without shifted culinary attention away from imported goods and towards the products of the soil. As a result, rationing recipes code economy and duty as the moral

²⁴Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

obligations of the housewife-as-cook, both bargaining the fate of the nation on her domestic contribution and adherence to the principles of make-do.

While women were encouraged to serve in some public wartime roles (including as “Land Girls”), the rhetoric of domesticity and economy during the austerity years emphasised women’s domestic contributions as the most pertinent and effective contributions to the preservation of the nation. Chapter II considers the ways in which rationing recipes, including the infamous Woolton pie, configure a focus on care, health, and economy in the kitchen as the moral obligations of the culinary landscape to the nation at war. The second section of this chapter investigates the ways in which *Poulet Reign Elizabeth*, or “Coronation Chicken” from the Coronation Dinner of Queen Elizabeth II in June of 1953, channels a multitude of ingredients designed to celebrate Britain’s post-war relationship with Europe. Finally, the chapter concludes by considering the ways in which Elizabeth David’s gastronomic text *A Book of Mediterranean Food* speaks to Britain’s attitude towards exploration, creolisation and empire to transport her readers to the Mediterranean. Published after the conclusion of the war, David’s work ideologically opposes the austere rationing cookery guide and harnesses the appetites of her readers and the sensuality of gastronomic literature for a mid-century audience.

Returning to the performance of gender—that is, “masculine” and “feminine” eating habits as expressed according to assumptions surrounding appetite and taste preference—Chapter III considers the ways in which Virginia Woolf and Barbara Pym in *Between the Acts* and *Jane and Prudence* problematize Bourdieu’s models of gendered consumption and explore the *Appetites* of the authors for a world moving beyond the patriarchy of the early twentieth century.

As made evident in the domestic cookery text, austerity femininity is constructed upon duty to the body, rather than an exploration of the sensory qualities of food. This is, in part, thanks to the association between culinary and sexual appetites that, because they are both intimately bound as acts of sensory experience, incorporation and interconnection with the world, are historically regarded with suspicion in women but given to men with free licence. The corporeality of Mrs Manresa in *Between the Acts*, and the appetite for good food and continental fashion of Prudence Bates in *Jane and Prudence*, for example, expose both the limitations of the mind-body duality, and the anxieties surrounding the consuming woman and the implicit sexism of Bourdieu's gendered dichotomy of consumption and the mind-body division associated with austerity-era consumption. Both Woolf and Pym make evident their awareness of the criticisms launched at those characters that close the gap in bodily articulations, and ultimately the fascism of gendered appetites.

The Second World War resulted in psychic fractures unseen since the First World War a generation earlier, bringing to the fore once again the questions about Britain's place in the world. While Britons were better nourished than ever before, there remained a hunger for a better understanding as to the nation's place, future, and the structures that undergird a sense of identity. Ultimately, this literature examines how Second World War culinary austerity forms a backdrop for Britain's anxieties regarding self-identification and the articulation of relationships and demarcations between socio-economic classes, the nationalism both banal and overt, and the performance of genders. Eating is the common thread in human life, but it is never just eating; it is the daily expression of one's relationship to the world.

Chapter I: Distinction

Class and Gender Performance in Evelyn Waugh's Brideshead Revisited and George Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four

Taste is *amor fati*, the choice of destiny, but a forced choice, produced by conditions of existence which rule out all alternatives as mere daydreams and leave no choice but the taste for the necessary...¹

Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction* (1979)

In 1949, British readers of George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* found themselves confronted with images of grim familiarity.² Orwell imagined a bleak near-future: a panopticon London of military time, "Hate Weeks" and "Thought Police"; of persistent varicose ulcers and powerless lifts; of the smell of boiled cabbage and old rag mats; of blunt razors, coarse soap, cardboard-patched windows, bombed-out streets and plaster-dust eddies; a desiccated world, paralysed in the long autumn of a seasonless war. Through this world the everyman "hero" Winston Smith trudges, while the perfect "doublethink" of threat and comfort BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU looms over.³ War had taken, and was still taking, its toll in both the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and Orwell's Britain. Orwell's imagining of the British Isles—now "Airstrip One"—was grim, but no gross exaggeration to Britons for whom the ostensible victory over the Axis forces

¹ Pierre Bourdieu, 'Taste of Luxury, Taste of Necessity', in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. by Carolyn Korsmeyer (Oxford: Berg, 2005), p. 74.

² George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in *The Complete Novels of George Orwell* (London: Martin Secker & Warburg, 1976).

³ Orwell, p. 744.

had led to a decline in quality of life with the continuing and increasingly aggressive rationing in the war's immediate aftermath.

Readers of Evelyn Waugh's 1945 *Brideshead Revisited* too opened the covers to a prologue of grey wartime imagery: stationed at Marchmain House, Captain Charles Ryder slips away from his stagnant, bloodless present of the prologue, through to his gold-tinted memories of 1920s Oxford University, the intoxicating Sebastian Flyte, and the upper-class tastes and luxuries now so distant, now that Charles is in his late thirties. Waugh's preoccupation is with the preservation of the long English past, the sumptuous language and decadence of the pre-war upper-class life threatened by what Waugh would in a 1959 preface call a 'bleak period of present privation and threatening disaster—the period of soya beans and Basic English'⁴ before stepping into Charles's prologue and narrative. Echoes of Waugh's lament for the dissipating past can also be felt throughout Orwell's Swiftian satire: both Orwell and Waugh call into question the nature of victory, the high cost of war, they bring to the fore the destruction of the past and future to feed the present. Concerned with the loss of distinction between men and women, past and present, and the performance of socioeconomic class, the works of Waugh and Orwell undermine and subvert the traditional paradigms of consumption to reflect the prolonged period of national anxiety that resulted from the Second World War. This chapter considers these novels in relation to the work of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, whose discussion on taste, luxury and necessity in *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* focuses on how representations of consumption inscribe and re-inscribe class identities and underpin the concept, performance and rejection of gendered appetites.

⁴ Evelyn Waugh, 'Preface' (1959) in *Brideshead Revisited* (London: Penguin, 2011), p. ix.

Both *Brideshead Revisited* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* acknowledge a familiar pattern of consumption that maps geography onto class distinctions, a subject considered in some detail in Chapter II: Absorption concerning the egalitarian coding of rationing recipes. By confirming or subverting the respective paradigms, Waugh and Orwell use food symbolism to critique life in austerity Britain. In *Brideshead Revisited*, taste distinctions articulate class distinctions by demonstrating limited shared habits or preferences *between* classes, in particular how Charles's narration contrasts the worlds of the wartime prologue with his Brideshead and Oxford days. In 'Retrieving Tastes: Two Sources of Cuisine' Jean-François Revel identifies the "popular" cuisine of the dominated class with the unexportable products of various regions and different seasons that are closely linked with the soil, while the habits he terms "erudite" corresponds with the well-travelled and educated gastronomes of history.⁵ The distance from the circumstances of production correlates to the class of the consumer: closer to the soil corresponds to the foods of the working class or those who work with the fruits of the earth directly; further from the raw produce of the earth marks the elite tastes of the ruling class.⁶

It is on the matter of "popular" cuisine that the prematurely aged and dispirited Charles reflects in the prologue to *Brideshead Revisited*: for Charles, the plebeian eating habits of the uneducated, undistinguished ranks symbolise the threats to the erudite elite English past. Charles describes the conscripts as dog-like in the way they 'snuffed the smell of the fried-fish shops and cocked their

⁵ Jean-François Revel, 'Retrieving Tastes: Two Sources of Cuisine', in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. by Carolyn Korsmeyer (New York: Berg, 2005), p. 53.

⁶ Revel, p. 53.

ears to familiar, peace-time sounds of the works' siren and the dance-hall band.'⁷ He notes how 'the wireless played incessantly in the ante-room nowadays and much beer was drunk before dinner,' concluding that 'it was not as it had been.'⁸ Beer and chips, produced on British soil, are staples of working-class consumption habits, owing equally to their popularity and proliferation as cheap, filling foods. Yet this Hogarthian image clearly upsets Charles, who associates with the freedom of the *élite* and erudite tastes of Oxford, Paris and Brideshead manor since disrupted by the class levelling of the war's egalitarian rhetoric and the grey uniformity of the army.

Chips and beer also align with Pierre Bourdieu's paradigms of class-based consumption: Bourdieu argues that a rise in the social hierarchy negatively correlates to the proportion of a food budget spent on 'heavy, fattening foods, which are also cheap.'⁹ This underpins his discussion of the oppositions between "the tastes of luxury (or freedom)" that stem from the possession of social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital, and "the tastes of necessity", which Bourdieu also describes as "popular" tastes. While 'income plays an important part in determining distance from necessity,' this relationship is not exclusive: Bourdieu considers the foreman who earns a teacher's salary but remains attached to "popular" tastes.¹⁰ Once again, the choice of chips and beer, rich in nourishment, cheap and historically relatively plentiful, confirm this foods' class status.

While the men drink beer, a working class beverage, Charles marginalises himself by regularly drinking 'three glasses of gin before dinner, never more or

⁷ Waugh, p. 3.

⁸ Waugh, p. 3

⁹ Bourdieu, p. 73.

¹⁰ Bourdieu, p. 73.

less'¹¹ in an act which subtly plays to gin's association with Empire and class. While gin had fallen into disrepute during the so-called "Gin Craze" of the first half of the eighteenth century, as memorably depicted in the rot of Hogarth's *Gin Lane*, the nineteenth century offered refined distillation and flavouring techniques to produce a higher quality, more palatable and respectable drink. The author of *The New Mixing and Reducing Book* of 1869 claims that 'strong or unsweetened gin is in comparatively little request and then with few exceptions only amongst the respectable or monied classes.'¹² By nature of production, however, distilled spirits have historically been the purview of the upper classes; beer, containing more calories and nourishment than distilled spirits, as well as being cheaper to manufacture, displaced spirit consumption during the war. Charles's gin drinking represents his need to separate himself from the working class officers by consuming in a manner that identifies him as different; it is a demonstration of consuming differently according to cultural and economic value rather than caloric or nutritional value.¹³

As Lesley Jacobs Solmonson reveals in *Gin: A Global History*, as the officers' drink of choice in the British Royal Navy throughout the British West Indies (with lime, for scurvy, or Angostura bitters to reputedly prevent seasickness, resulting in "pink gin"), gin became associated with the colonial expansion in the nineteenth century.¹⁴ In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries gin-based drinks became the symbol of both British colonialism and the

¹¹ Waugh, p. 4.

¹² William R. Loftus, *Loftus's New Mixing and Reducing Book for the Use of Publicans and Spirit Dealers and Retailers in General* (London: William R. Loftus, 1869), pp. 23-4.

¹³ Sydney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: the place of sugar in modern history* (New York: Viking, 1985), p. 185.

¹⁴ Lesley Jacobs Solmonson, *Gin: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), pp. 60-1.

officer or upper-class traveller for authors from W. Somerset Maugham to Graham Greene, Ian Fleming to Raymond Chandler.¹⁵ Terms such as “London Dry” and “Plymouth Gin”, or brands such as Bombay Sapphire and Beefeaters encapsulate the deep Britishness of gin’s history; it is the quintessential spirit of the British Empire, the symbol of expansion and tradition. Charles drinks not only to separate himself from the other officers, and perhaps to remember one of Sebastian’s liquors of choice, but also in an affirmation of Empire and the wealth accumulated from the colonial expansion of Britain. Rather than the symbol of the colonial officer conquering new worlds and expanding the Empire, however, Charles’s moody, un-convivial drinking marginalises him as an outsider, like the colonial figure of the previous century who is attempting to settle his own country and bring civilisation to Britain. The panegyric nature of the text speaks to just this: Charles is an outsider figure who enters immediately pre-destruction—of Sebastian, of the country manor as an artist, or of England’s long history as Captain Charles—to observe and salvage some version the past for future generations, something which Waugh also attempted during the final years of the Second War but which Waugh, reflecting on the text in 1959, admits was ‘a panegyric preached over an empty coffin.’¹⁶

While Charles still identifies with the bourgeoisie and the upper classes of Oxford despite the grey austerity of the war, the prologue to *Brideshead Revisited* clearly indicates the sense in which the demands of war and uncouth youth such as platoon commander Hooper mute class distinctions. The diminishing status of the upper class is a preoccupation for Charles; part of his receding into the past of Oxford and Marchmain House is not only a sentimental journey into golden, life-

¹⁵ Jacobs Solmonson, pp. 60-1.

¹⁶ Waugh, p. x.

defining memories but a way of distancing himself from and critiquing the Hoopers to whom the post-war world will ostensibly be handed and for whom so much has already been threatened and sacrificed. As Bernard Bergonzi notes,

the aristocracy—particularly the Catholic aristocracy—were seen as the unique custodians of traditional values in a world increasingly threatened by barbarians, personified in the uncouth young officer, Hooper.¹⁷

Thus Charles's disparaging comparison between his and Hooper's education—'Hooper had wept often, but never for Henry's speech on St Crispin's day, nor for the epitaph at Thermopylae'¹⁸—or the conscripts' fish-and-chip shop snuffing and the streak of nostalgia for pre-war decadence that runs throughout the novel. The levelling effect of the war also serves to magnify class distinctions when articulation is made possible: the choice between gin and beer in the mess hall, for instance, marks the difference between the likes of Hooper and the likes of Charles and the visiting colonel. Hooper, then, becomes the symbol of the limp, rudderless and undistinguished youth who will inherit England from the aristocracy after the war and turn Charles's fading empire into one of fish and chip shops and Basic English. According to Waugh's configuration, the Axis forces are not the most significant threat to Britain; Hooper and the inhibitions indicative of wartime living arguably attack the articulation of British identity from within.

In sharp contrast to the war era articulations of the prologue, the pre-war culinary appreciation in the two books of *Brideshead Revisited* markedly

¹⁷ Bernard Bergonzi, 'Evelyn Waugh's Gentlemen', *Critical Quarterly*, 5.1 (1962), 23-36 (p. 23).

¹⁸ Waugh, p. 8.

demonstrates the high social, cultural, economic and symbolic capital of the characters, and as a result, complicates the hierarchies of food articulation within upper-class consumption habits. From Charles and Sebastian's first dinner of plovers' eggs, lobster Newburg and Cointreau to the Château Peyraguey and strawberries in June,¹⁹ the '[r]eal G-g-green Chartreuse' and Mavrodaphne trifle with Anthony Blanche and the melon and prosciutto of Venice²⁰ to the meringues at the Ritz Grill and the caviar on the ship to England,²¹ the exploration of culinary and palatal pleasures of Charles and his contemporaries emphasises their autonomy through their expression of social, cultural, and economic power. The centrepiece of cultural capital distinction is the meal shared by the Canadian Rex Mottram and Charles at the restaurant Paillard's, where Charles sensuously reveals and explores the menu in full as the dinner advances. As a delicious, almost poetic piece of prose, the dinner reveals upper-class inter-war pleasures and exposes Charles's marginalisation of Rex and Charles's own class prejudices. While both men possess ample economic capital, this is where Charles demonstrates—and ventriloquises—a sharp divide between himself and the brash, and neo-colonial arriviste sitting with him; at the opposite economic end to Hooper, Rex becomes a symbol for the threat to Britain's long history and traditional values from North American capitalism.

Rex may possess more economic capital than Charles, but Charles's demonstration of knowledge of fine dining, particularly French food, is one of the means by which he believes himself to demonstrate a cultural superiority to Rex. The identification of French food with quality or high cultural value may be

¹⁹ Waugh, pp. 33-6, 23.

²⁰ Waugh, p. 59, 117.

²¹ Waugh, pp. 265, 286.

traced to the aftermath of the French revolution when the chefs of the French aristocracy sought alternative sources of income in London restaurants,²² and to the nineteenth century rise of gastronomic literature that conceived of gastronomy as an art and the (male) gastronome-as-artist.²³ The first suggestion of Rex's lack of cultural capital in the dining sequence is his failure to recognise the name of the restaurant. "Never heard of it," he says, suggesting not that he is oblivious to high dining but that, in 'usually' dining at *Ciro's*,²⁴ he is more prone to eating at restaurants which are overtly for high society as a means of demonstrating his capital. In contrast, Charles describes *Paillard's* as 'sombre'; the only other diners when Rex enters are 'four senators with napkins tucked under their beards eating in absolute silence.'²⁵ *Paillard's* and *Ciro's* become ideological opposites reflecting Charles's and Rex's own eating habits as imagined by Charles: *Paillard's* is unassuming, but refined; like Charles, *Paillard's* quality comes from its ability to unostentatiously articulate culinary excellence as symbolic of cultural knowledge, whereas *Ciro's* was one of a chain of highly fashionable restaurants in the early years of the twentieth century and as such a place for the public performance of distinction.

This performance runs throughout Charles's antagonistic descriptions of Rex; Charles's relationship to food is constructed as more sympathetic despite his sentimental and judgemental unpleasantness; both use food as weapons on the culinary battlefield. Charles lays out the menu for the reader to articulate his own knowledge and experience with food:

²² Bob Ashley and others, 'The National Diet', in *Food and Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 77.

²³ McLean, p. 2.

²⁴ Waugh, p. 204.

²⁵ Waugh, p. 205.

[S]oup of oseille, a sole quite simply cooked in a white-wine sauce, a caneton à la presse, a lemon soufflé. At the last minute, fearing that the whole thing was too simple for Rex, I added caviar aux blinis. And for wine I let him give me a bottle of 1906 Montrachet, then at its prime, and, with the duck, a Clos de Bèze of 1904.²⁶

The dining begins with the *caviar aux blinis*, small pancakes spread with butter, topped with Beluga roe and a kiss of cream. ‘The cream and hot butter mingled and overflowed, separating each glaucous bead of caviar from its fellows, capping it in white and gold,’ Charles tells us.²⁷ Rex, however, prefers “‘a bit of chopped onion with mine. [...] Chap-who-knew told me it brought out the flavour,’” to which Charles suggests he try it without first.²⁸ The suggestion that Rex has less culturally refined and educated tastes is repeated with Charles’s comment that the ‘sole was so simple and unobtrusive that Rex failed to notice it,’²⁹ in Charles’s fear that the meal may have been ‘too simple for Rex,’³⁰ and in the differences in cognac choices at the end of the meal—Charles’s choice of a clear, pale spirit; Rex’s choice of a treacly concoction from a vast and mouldy bottle kept for ‘his sort.’³¹ This dichotomy of strength versus delicacy reflects Pierre Bourdieu’s observation that form ideologically opposes substance in eating, and that social form ‘puts the pursuit of strength and substance in the background and identifies true freedom with the elective asceticism of a self-imposed rule.’³²

²⁶ Waugh, p. 204.

²⁷ Waugh, p. 206.

²⁸ Waugh, p. 206.

²⁹ Waugh, p. 207.

³⁰ Waugh, p. 207.

³¹ Waugh, p. 211.

³² Bourdieu, p. 78.

Waugh constructs Rex as *nouveau riche*, a poorly-practiced member of the upper class; his consumption appears base next to Charles, who arguably exhibits culinary freedom because he enjoys his unobtrusive sole and his pale brandy. Conversely, by demanding strong foods, or performing ostentatious displays of consumption as Rex does with the Jeroboam of wine, Charles identifies Rex as one who does not possess culinary freedom; nor does he express the restraints and pauses endemic to the bourgeois and upper classes and therefore is a candidate as unsuitable to inherit the post-war Britain as the unrefined Hooper. At the end of the meal, in a subtle mirroring of the conscripts snuffing the chip shops, Rex's voice is 'unintelligible at a great distance, like a dog's barking miles away on a still night.'³³

Rex is the neo-colonial outsider and arriviste who insinuates himself into the British upper class with a display of wealth, eventually losing his Canadian accent and winning himself a place as a British politician; hoarse and loud, Rex becomes superficially indistinguishable from the other aging politicians, but a cultural imposter, a parasitic cuckoo bird in another's nest. Britain suffered from a dearth of economic power at the end of the war, while North America enjoyed relative prosperity, as Allison Carruth observes.³⁴ Charles regards Rex with suspicion because he represents the shift of global economic power across the Atlantic at the conclusion of the Second World War, one that exposes the damaging effect of the war on Britain's place as a colonial force and as a world power. For Charles, then, the levelling of austerity underwhelms the class systems entrenched in British society before the war, while the pyrrhic victory of the war

³³ Waugh, p. 211.

³⁴ Allison Carruth, 'War Rations and the Food Politics of Late Modernism', in *Modernism/modernity* 16.4 (2009), 767-95 (p. 772).

leaves an economic vacuum which Rex and the other uncouth *nouveau riche* capitalists quickly fill. An older Charles is caught, as he is each morning between dawn and reveille, fretful.

Consumption habits in *Brideshead Revisited* also reveal Bourdieu's prominent paradigm on gendered consumption. While demonstrations of cultural capital are used to wage conflict between characters, the performance of gender and heteronormativity also play a part; by defying the conventions of gender, Sebastian, Anthony Blanche and Charles, can also establish their autonomy. According to Bourdieu's observations, inscribed and re-inscribed from birth is

the principle of the division of foods between the sexes, a division which both sexes recognise in their practices and their languages. It behoves a man to drink and eat more, and to eat and drink stronger things.³⁵

Bourdieu goes on to outline a few choice examples of his gendered paradigm which he argues underline the 'strictly biological differences' manifest in the body and 'symbolically accentuated by differences in bearing, differences in gesture, posture and behaviour which express a whole relationship to the social world':³⁶ *charcuterie*, Ricard or Pernod, the second helping of meat for men; *crudités*, savoury biscuits, peanuts, salad for women and children.³⁷ In their physical and social dimensions, these consumption habits mark the 'sign-wearing body.'³⁸

³⁵ Bourdieu, p. 75.

³⁶ Bourdieu, p. 75.

³⁷ Bourdieu, p. 75.

³⁸ Bourdieu, p. 76.

The gendered paradigms of consumption are made clear throughout *Brideshead Revisited*, and a tool by which Charles subtly delineates approved and disapproved behaviours. Throughout the text, “masculine” consumption habits reflect the facile and unpleasant performance of masculinity. Rex’s consumption habits mark him as a “masculine” eater by his need for the pungency of onion in his caviar, his failure to notice the subtlety of the sole, or his demand for the thick and syrupy cognac ‘kept for people of Rex’s sort.’³⁹ As a hospitable host Rex offers a Jeroboam of champagne to which Julia peevishly remarks that he ‘always want[s] to have everything too big.’⁴⁰ Comfortably aligning with Bourdieu’s observations, Rex articulates his masculinity, and economic freedom, by consuming big and strong foods. Rex’s coarseness is coded as suspicious, however, not because he represents anti-egalitarian consumption habits, but because his vulgar demand for size and strength reflects a lack of cultural and economic refinement Charles configures as necessary for the upper classes to resist the base hunger of “necessity” of the lower class.

Similar manifestations of gendered eating appear during Charles’s first week at Oxford, cousin Jasper visits and eats a rich and ‘very heavy meal of honey-buns, anchovy toast, and Fuller’s walnut cake’ before lighting his pipe and laying down ‘rules of conduct.’⁴¹ While Charles’s consumption habits typically appear as the natural and relaxed demonstrations of his cultural capital, the overt displays of economic wealth by Rex and Jasper appear more contrived. Yet Charles has an ambivalent relationship to gender performance: throughout *Brideshead Revisited* “masculine” consumption in men indicates a facile

³⁹ Waugh, p. 211.

⁴⁰ Waugh, p. 131.

⁴¹ Waugh, p. 27.

performance of gender, but “feminine” consumption avoids such a harsh gaze. Julia enjoys Muscat grapes and cantaloupe (sweet, light, small)⁴² and champagne (expensive, light); the meal of strawberries and Château Peyraguey between Charles and Sebastian, as one example, represent the favouring of “feminine” consumption for men throughout the novel.

Conversely, women do not have the freedom to eat according to a “masculine” paradigm without scorn: Charles’s wife Celia is seen eating a beefsteak;⁴³ at different points Cordelia gorges on scrambled eggs,⁴⁴ and, having returned from nursing, Charles refers to her as ‘an ugly woman’ whose voice first sounds ‘like the grunt of an animal returning to its basket.’⁴⁵ The text uses “masculine” consumption habits as antagonistic to the refined ways of the bourgeoisie, but arguably the failure to conform to paradigms of consumption reflects a failure to cohere with the world Waugh constructs. It does not appear that Charles, or indeed Waugh, wishes to critique the concept of gendered consumption itself—as gender performance aligns approximately with the characters’ habits—but rather increasingly masculine eating challenges the notion of gender-valued capital. For Charles, cultural capital is of a greater value than economic or gendered capital and therefore held with a higher regard, hence the feeling, once again, that the aristocracy, with a high cultural capital, are ‘seen as the unique custodians of traditional values in a world increasingly threatened by barbarians.’⁴⁶ Further, Charles, Sebastian and the younger Oxford set express their autonomy through their freedom to perform whatever gendered consumption

⁴² Waugh, p. 299.

⁴³ Waugh, p. 312.

⁴⁴ Waugh, p. 198.

⁴⁵ Waugh, p. 359.

⁴⁶ Bergonzi, p. 23.

habits they wish; their class and their economic freedom afford them the ability to perform against gendered expectations. Charles and the Oxford set comfortably navigate through bourgeoisie—and indeed, feminine—eating, all form, ‘a matter of rhythm, which implies expectations, pauses, restraints’⁴⁷ rather than eating “masculine” simply because of their gender. Yet their resistance to the social codings of the era also points towards their respective failures to thrive in later life; just as they are *contra mundum*, so is the world not prepared to handle the liminal Oxford set. Rex and Brideshead, and to a certain extent Charles, enjoy relative successes in life; the adherence to socio-political and cultural structures according to gender and class, while both problematic and limiting, remain in place post-war. In *Brideshead Revisited*, those who reject the typical modes of behaviour are more colourful, but they fail to find a place in a world governed by order.

While Oxford is constructed as a homosocial space, especially in the first scene where a ‘rabble of womankind’ invades the cobbles,⁴⁸ it is not explicitly a masculine space. Jasper, a member of an older set, outlines his rules for conduct and consumes according to masculine paradigms, though his attention soon turns to directing Charles’s fashion choices.⁴⁹ Anthony Blanche, the subconscious antithesis to Charles and self-proclaimed “invert”, orders the effete Alexandra cocktail at their dinner.⁵⁰ Made with equal proportions of Tia Maria, cream, white rum and coconut cream, this sweet, feminine drink was invented on the occasion of the marriage of Princess Victoria Alexandra Alice Mary to Viscount Lascelles on 28 February, 1922, and thus immensely fashionable in Charles’s first year. It is

⁴⁷ Bourdieu, p. 77.

⁴⁸ Waugh, p. 21.

⁴⁹ Waugh, p. 27.

⁵⁰ Waugh, p. 53.

also fitting that *Alexandra* is an alternative name for Cassandra, the unheeded prophet of Greek myth: the talk Anthony gives on Sebastian is a warning and a prophecy that Charles does not heed, even down to Anthony's final instruction to 'sleep innocently.'⁵¹ Continuing the theme of homosocial but not strictly masculine consumption, Sebastian and Charles enjoy an untroubled summer afternoon Charles and Sebastian beneath the elms drinking golden Château Peyraguey and eating strawberries, lying on their backs while the sweet smoke of their fat Turkish cigarettes rises untroubled into the June air. Their "meal", if it can be called as much, maps onto Bourdieu's model of "feminine" eating: light, small, fragrant and mildly intoxicating. Charles's attention is on Sebastian; both men are caught in a moment of rapture, as if suspended 'a finger's breadth above the turf.'⁵² Sebastian is Charles's first feminine interest; Charles may be looking beyond gender with his love, but just as easily Sebastian marks the perfect balance of gender, the effete man who can transcend gender expectations and become the subject of Charles's homosocial affection. He is Saint Sebastian, the handsome, androgynous youth forever contorted in pain, but undone by liquor rather than arrows.

Sebastian's transcendence falls apart by the end of the novel in a slow attrition of Bourdieu's gender model and a demonstration that he and the world are in unfit for one another. Dimitra Gefou-Madianou argues in *Alcohol, Gender and Culture* that men in homosocial gatherings drink to achieve a kind of transcendence known as 'spiritual intoxication', or *methy* from the Greek *μέθη*,

⁵¹ Waugh, p. 64.

⁵² Waugh, p. 25.

intoxication or *drunkenness*,⁵³ a notion made lucid by Charles's remark that he gets himself drunk 'often, but through an excess of high spirits, in the love of the moment, and the wish to prolong and enhance it.'⁵⁴ Likewise, Sebastian's older brother Bridey regards wine drinking as forming "such a bond with other men".⁵⁵ According to Gefou-Madianou, male drinking is marked as 'unproductive', often associated with gambling, simply passing the time, or drinking for the sake of drinking⁵⁶ as it is to a certain degree at Brideshead during Charles and Sebastian's wine-drinking evening. (Women's drinking, conversely, tends to more "productivity-bound" and associated with the creation of strong bonds via conversation and household tasks.)⁵⁷ Male drinking is not always associated with drunkenness, though solitary drinking almost always is.⁵⁸

According to Bourdieu's gendered model of consumption the solitary male drinker—or drunk—represents a failure of masculinity by failing to cope with either the quantity or quality of drink. Yet by becoming unconvivial, Sebastian also fails to perform the social component of either masculine or feminine consumption; by drinking to the point of the loss of self-control, and by corollary, Gefou-Madianou argues, self-respect, Sebastian also rejects the productivity-bound drinking observed in women.⁵⁹ As Sebastian becomes more persistently drunk—more gin in the tooth glass, whisky among the port glasses—he becomes less productive, less convivial. His focus on drinking for the sake of drinking and anti-conviviality is as unfeminine as his anti-egalitarian failure to preserve control

⁵³ Dimitra Gefou-Madianou, 'Introduction', in *Alcohol, Gender and Culture*, ed. by Dimitra Gefou-Madianou (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 11.

⁵⁴ Waugh, p. 151.

⁵⁵ Waugh, p. 104.

⁵⁶ Gefou-Madianou, p. 15.

⁵⁷ Gefou-Madianou, p. 15.

⁵⁸ Gefou-Madianou, p. 14.

⁵⁹ Gefou-Madianou, p. 16.

with strength is un-masculine. Much like his father, Sebastian drank *contra mundum*; he ‘drank to escape,’⁶⁰ perhaps to the ‘crock of gold’ Sebastian wished to bury under the elm trees that June.⁶¹ Ultimately, however, it is an Oedipal journey, returning to the same unhappiness each time he attempts to escape. Solitary drink does not allow Sebastian to escape unhappiness any more than it allows Charles to escape in his early middle age. Charles’s drinking, therefore, is not just a demonstration of class and marginalisation, but like Sebastian, it is also an attempt to rekindle the *methexis* once felt with an old friend. But both Charles and Sebastian fail because, rather than re-engaging conviviality through drink, their consumption isolates them as the solitary drunks. Their isolation is their downfall. As the denouement to the novel makes clear, the flame of purpose can be found in the abstractions that last beyond the individual, but in the collective—in this case, Catholicism, harboured by the continuous aristocracy—waiting until the time is ripe and the journey complete.

Rather than coming from without, the threat to Britain in Waugh’s novel comes from within, the domination by those who fail to represent Britain’s best interests as determined by an upper-class, erudite few; *Brideshead Revisited* reflects a pessimistic view of the war’s likely conclusion but with an optimistic end, with truth and hope found in the far-reaching chain linking the individual to the religious past. George Orwell’s complex, savage satire of fascism and the horrors of totalitarianism critiques the destruction of the relationship to the past, echoing the need for a continuous relationship with the past in order to appreciate and understand the present. According to Bernard Crick, memory is a significant

⁶⁰ Waugh, p. 151.

⁶¹ Waugh, p. 25.

theme throughout *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.⁶² Indeed both *Brideshead Revisited* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* are engaged with a re-imagining or re-writing of the past: in Orwell's text, this is the preoccupation of the Ministry of Truth, for whom Winston Smith spends his days adjusting news articles of the past to better reflect the present; for Waugh's narrator Charles Ryder, it is the return to his young adulthood with golden melancholy. Private memory is used as a means of resistance against the rewriting of the past, hence Winston's diary-keeping compulsion, the appeal to lemon memories with Julia, the shame of the childhood chocolate theft, the wine toast 'to the past'.⁶³ In an extended internal monologue, Winston Smith, the protagonist, questions whether life in Airstrip One reflected

the natural order of things, if one's heart sickened at the discomfort and dirt and scarcity, the interminable winters, the stickiness of one's socks, the lifts that never worked, the cold water, the gritty soap, the cigarettes that came to pieces, the food with its strange evil tastes[...] Why should one feel it to be intolerable unless one had some kind of ancestral memory that things had once been different?⁶⁴

The world of Airstrip One reflects Michael Billig's concept of "banal nationalism" as constructed in his 1995 book of the same name.⁶⁵ In the pursuit of 'the first person plural,'⁶⁶ Billig argues that the 'idea of nationhood is regularly

⁶² Bernard Crick, 'Introduction', in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, ed. by Bernard Crick (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), p. 11.

⁶³ Orwell, p. 848.

⁶⁴ Orwell, p. 778.

⁶⁵ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (Sage: London, 1995).

⁶⁶ Billig, p. 70.

flagged' by the banal, but not necessarily benign, habits of everyday life.⁶⁷ Events on the global stage contribute to a nation's concept of inclusion and exclusion, but the shared, daily examples of nationhood foster a quotidian and daily nationalism. The shared notions of nation are upset by Winston's 'ancestral memory' which appeals to the way in which the present 'order of things' is 'NOT [...] natural.'⁶⁸ The filthy tastes, weak tea, awful "Victory Gin" and desiccated "Victory Cigarettes" all contribute to the concept and identity of Airstrip One but are recognised as being false or corrupt; like a palimpsest, their patriotic rhetoric barely covers the distorted ancestral memories beneath. For Winston, memory is necessary for the survival of individual identity in Airstrip One; the preservation of the past is necessary in order to prevent the earlier layers of the palimpsest from being completely erased.

In a satire of the fascism of Nazism, Stalinism and Orwell's own Britain,⁶⁹ the erasure of the past is one means by which the fascism of the nation-state of Airstrip One maintains its power. The supply of Victory Gin by the nation-state in Orwell's fiction satirises the hegemony of fascism that encourages an ongoing obliteration of the past as well as a sense of complacency with the present. While domination deals exclusively with power imposition, *cultural hegemony*, a theory developed by the Italian Marxist theoretician Antonio Gramsci, refers to a continually produced and reproduced structure of power that includes a subordinate class that subscribes to the moral and intellectual leadership of the dominating class,⁷⁰ and it is through the oblivion offered by Victory Gin that helps

⁶⁷ Billig, p. 6.

⁶⁸ Orwell, p. 778.

⁶⁹ Crick, p. 7.

⁷⁰ Bob Ashley and others, 'Food-culture studies — three paradigms', in *Food and Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 16.

sustain this. Not only does Winston drink alone, thereby violating the previously discussed social and gendered premises of alcohol, but by drinking he finds ‘the world began to look more cheerful.’⁷¹ As Gefou-Madianou notes, however, in ‘societies where alcohol [...] constitutes an inseparable part of everyday social life drunkenness is not necessarily considered a social or personal problem,’⁷² therefore neither public drinking nor drunkenness are condemned in *Airstrip One*. Despite this, Winston’s solitary drinking better reflects the meths-drinker than the state of *methexis* that might be achieved by oiling the ‘creaking camaraderie’ at the Community Centre.⁷³ Gin is pacification as much as patriotic austerity; it is the means by which the hegemon prevents the populace from self-realisation and uprising, and the way the subjugated can maintain the ‘expression of quiet optimism which it was advisable to wear when facing the telescreen.’⁷⁴ The irony should not go unnoticed: the tools prescribed as patriotic, the “Victory” gin, coffee, cigarettes, housing, are all used to preserve the structures which keep Oceania in a state of perpetual war and the dominant class in power.

Food appears as a form of resistance for Winston and Julia who, together, indulge in black market chocolate, ‘proper white bread’, jam and real sugar, coffee and tea in their rented room—all substances restricted during England’s rationing era. Food has been used as a paradigm instance of resistance strategies by the subordinated as noted by Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol

⁷¹ Orwell, p. 724.

⁷² Dimitra Gefou-Madianou, p. 22.

⁷³ Orwell, p 791.

⁷⁴ Orwell, 745.

in *The Practice of Everyday Life: living and cooking*.⁷⁵ Giard argues that the everyday acts of quotidian normalcy offer a refuge from cultural dominance, that

beneath the massive reality of powers and institutions [... are] microresistances, which in turn found micro-freedoms, mobilize unsuspected resources hidden among ordinary people, and in that way displace the veritable borders of the hold that social and political powers have over the anonymous crowd.⁷⁶

When Winston and Julia perform their domestic routine and eat and drink “real” food, rather than the corrupted forms more familiar to them, they ostensibly resist the dominance of the ruling class and claim identities, and are allowed to dip into memories of chocolate and lemons and resist the destruction of the psychic past. But this microcosm of resistance is merely the substitution of one structure for another; Julia’s purchase of black market products merely inserts her into the sphere of power which controls the black market, which may or may not be another arm of Big Brother designed to pacify the population with the appearance of resistance and the means by which they may identify those against the Inner Party. Thick walls border the Outer Party, engineered by the hegemon to prevent any real effort against transcending class.

Wearing scent and rouging her cheeks, Julia declares that, in their microcosm, she will “be a woman, not a Party comrade”,⁷⁷ further reflecting the flattening and uniform nature of Airstrip One and the microcosm of resistance Julia and Winston have constructed. Julia’s idea of femininity is built upon a

⁷⁵ Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

⁷⁶ de Certeau and others, p. xxi.

⁷⁷ Orwell, p. 807.

distinct appearance from other women, possibly constructed from films; in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, the flattening effect of rationing also results in an inability to articulate gender according to Bourdieu's observations of consumption habits. The canteen scenes suggest that all Outer Party members receive the same regulation lunch—a kind of Newspeak approach to the standardisation of food: 'a metal pannikin of pinkish-grey stew [or a thin stew of haricot beans], a hunk of bread, a cube of cheese, a mug of milkless Victory Coffee, and one saccharine tablet.'⁷⁸ Gin is readily available. With no apparent access to non-black market food, this restricted diet eliminates the autonomy of food choice as means of expressing gender preferences. The sign-wearing body becomes predominantly 'small, dark, and ill-favoured,' the men beetle-like, stunted, a bleak reflection of the body of austerity Britain.⁷⁹

In Bourdieu's paradigm, Winston's dream-memory of chocolate exhibits the hallmarks of masculine consumption: despite her protestations that Winston's sister was sick, at mealtimes Winston's mother 'was quite ready to give him more than his share. She took it for granted that he, 'the boy', should have the biggest portion.'⁸⁰ But this is one of the few obvious instances of gendered consumption by portion size. Rather more complex is the nature by which, by bringing food to their "private" space, Julia and Winston can perform a heteronormative relationship which resists the flattening of the enforced food. Through the black market chocolate and other tastes kept within their rented room, Julia becomes associated with the pleasures of taste, calories, nutrition and the symbols of empire. If women frequently provide rather than consume food, as Gefou-

⁷⁸ Orwell, p. 772.

⁷⁹ Orwell, p. 778.

⁸⁰ Orwell, p. 840.

Madianou suggests, and which she observes is frequently enacted in public houses, then this microcosm fulfils a gender dynamic otherwise unsustainable outside.⁸¹ Jack Goody takes this point further in ‘The High and the Low: Culinary Culture in Asia and Europe’ and argues that—in heteronormative sexual relationships—sex and food both involve

a division of labour on a male-female basis, the one physiologically, the other socially, both of which are effectively universal in human societies. Since both activities centre upon the domestic domain, the same individuals are frequently involved, and the cooking of the food by the woman is often seen as the reciprocal of the coital acts of the man.⁸²

Thus, in the microcosm of their shared room, Winston and Julia draw out their gender paradigms. It is only when Julia and Winston isolate themselves and can exist as gender binaries rather than disappearing into the masses that they become men and women and fulfil their heteronormative and gender paradigms. Once burdened with an impotency, through the food-sex relationship Winston regains something of his virility and a stronger drive to preserve autonomy through memory and acts of self-preservation. The inversion of relationship in the world of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is of prostitution, where the male figure provides a substance, in some cases gin, in exchange for sex acts by the women; the inversion of the heteronormative male-female relationship in the microcosm of the flat explains why Winston shudders at the memories of paying for sex. Sex,

⁸¹ Gefou-Madianou, p. 9.

⁸² Jack Goody, ‘The High and the Low: Culinary Culture in Asia and Europe’, in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. by Carolyn Korsmeyer (Oxford: Berg, 2005), p. 64.

however, is Julia's rebellion, not food, nor the Brotherhood; she falls asleep listening to Winston read Goldstein; and it cannot be said that Winston nor Julia truly love each other. For a brief time, however, they articulate what Crick identifies as the second major positive theme in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*: that of *mutual trust*.⁸³

In Book V of *Politics* Aristotle asserts that a tyrant must destroy mutual trust between its citizens in order to perpetuate his rule, and until the final torture, this remains key to Winston's autonomy. While *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is not explicitly a socialist novel, Orwell satirises intellectual hierarchies and power for power's sake.⁸⁴ 'In the rigid hierarchical structure of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*,' Crick notes,

it is authority and power-hunger that are carried too far. There is not a word about equality—except, significantly, in Goldstein's book; but equality and fraternity are surely the things most denied by such a hierarchy. [...] Orwell did not believe that poverty and class oppression (which he believed were real forces in the history of the West) had dehumanized people completely. Rather these forces had created genuine fellowship and fraternity in the common people that the middle classes, racked by competitive individualism, lacked.⁸⁵

Crick's comments illustrate the importance and hope Orwell and Winston place in the proles, whose camaraderie is made evident in the bar scene where Winston tries to prise information about pre-war England from the unnamed old man.

⁸³ Crick, pp. 11-3.

⁸⁴ Crick, p. 9.

⁸⁵ Crick, p. 10.

Through *methexis*, round-buying, and the obscuring of their dependence on women, men uses homosocial public spaces such as the tavern or coffeehouse to develop strong feelings of solidarity and assert their ‘real masculine identities,’ Gefou-Madianou observes.⁸⁶ While drinking permits camaraderie and the meeting of classes through a shared space and conviviality, it also re-inscribes those class boundaries; Winston’s exchange of half-litres for conversation marks only half of the contract; the other half is the failure of *methexis* owing to the imbalance of intoxication. Winston’s sobriety prevents the contiguous relationship between classes that might be achieved by the communal drinking environment. Much like the exchange of goods for sex, the exchange of half-litres of beer for information represents not only the cruel and fascist version of capitalism at play, but also the corruption and failure of ostensibly pleasurable goods.

Poison insinuates its way through the ostensible pleasures of *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Gin, a national drink of Britain, becomes a foul tool of oblivion and pacification; the ostensibly medicinal qualities of the original *genever* become the means by which the gin-drinking populace cure themselves of sobriety, coherency and consciousness. Like Charles in his three-gin haze, or Sebastian drunk on gin from a tooth glass, Winston too separates himself from the world with the spirit connoted with empire and “victory”. Wine, which Winston eagerly believes ‘belonged to the vanished, romantic past, the olden time as he liked to call it in his secret thoughts’ should have ‘an intensely sweet taste, like that of blackberry jam and an immediate intoxicating effect,’ but after years of gin-drinking he can barely taste it.⁸⁷ Later, the Winston’s capture and torture taint the black market

⁸⁶ Gefou-Madianou, p. 11.

⁸⁷ Orwell, p. 845.

goods. There is no food in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* not eventually corrupted by the imposition of fascist power.

Winston cannot change the world from within; Big Brother is too vast, and too amorphous, to be defeated by one man's habits. Orwell does not use *Nineteen Eighty-Four* as a morbid prophecy of England but, as he wrote to his publisher Roger Stenhouse, to consider 'the implications of dividing the world up into "Zones of Influence" [...] and in addition to indicate by parodying them the intellectual implications of totalitarianism.'⁸⁸ As Anthony Burgess once remarked, the 'term Orwellian is wrongly applied to the future. It was the miserable forties that were Orwellian.'⁸⁹ The final product of Orwell's opus is the satirisation and critique of not only the fascist forces working their way across Europe but the perceived fascism of rationing during the Second World War in Britain whose mentalities he reflected and magnified for his final novel. The austerity and cultural homogeneity of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* and, it is implied, the war-era passages of *Brideshead Revisited*, critique the imperialism or hegemony present under Second World War rationing; the dominant class imposes a food ideology, here based on the 'needs' of nutrition, on the people that subscribe according to moral imperatives of nationalism and patriotism, a subject explored in Chapter II. Likewise, Waugh's novel analyzes the claims of the aristocracy to the inheritance of Britain. Waugh approaches the idea of the aristocracy as custodians of the past with ambivalence: the capital of the middle and upper classes is constructed as favourable only when preserving cultural capital, hence the representation of Rex Mottram as an acquisitive and ostentatious threat to Charles's idea of Britain's

⁸⁸ Qtd in George Orwell, *George Orwell: A Life in Letters* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010), p. 427.

⁸⁹ Anthony Burgess, *Little Wilson and Big God: Being the First Part of the Confessions of Anthony Burgess* (London: Vintage, 2012), p. 335.

cultural history. Orwell's broadly socialist work uses food as the means of oppression and a symbol of corruption;⁹⁰ both Orwell and Waugh critique and satirize Britain's cultural imperialism by taking a step closer to their country to consider the hunger of a nation dealing with the belt-tightening of austerity and the problematic domination by the hegemony of austerity. In order to do this, the authors need to remind us that the new way of life is indeed 'not as it had been.'⁹¹

⁹⁰ Orwell explores these themes more thoroughly in *Burmese Days* (1934).

⁹¹ Waugh, p. 3

Chapter II: Absorption

The Moral Rhetoric of National Identity in Rationing and Cookery Texts

This is a food war. Every extra row of vegetables in allotments saves shipping. The battle on the kitchen front cannot be won without help from the kitchen garden. Isn't an hour in the garden better than an hour in the queue?¹

Lord Woolton, Minister of Food (1941)

But even if people could not very often make the dishes here described, it was stimulating to think about them; to escape from buying the weekly rations; to read about real food cooked with wine and olive oil, eggs and butter and cream, and dishes richly flavoured with onions, garlic, herbs, and brightly coloured Southern vegetables.²

Elizabeth David, 'Preface' (1955) to *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (1949)

For Britain, the Second World War was a defensive war, a protection of the borders and fluid, manifold and contiguous ideologies that compromised their concepts of nation and identity. More than the Great War for an earlier generation, the Second World War isolated the British Isles in the North Atlantic and demanded that Britain reduce its reliance on imported foods and become as self-

¹ Lord Woolton. Qtd in Annabelle K. Smith, 'A WWII Propaganda Campaign Popularized the Myth That Carrots Help You See in the Dark', *Smithsonian* <<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/a-wwii-propaganda-campaign-popularized-the-myth-that-carrots-help-you-see-in-the-dark-28812484/>> [accessed 22 March 2016].

² Elizabeth David, 'Preface to the Second Edition (Revised)' (1955), in *A Book of Mediterranean Food and Other Writings* (London: The Folio Society, 2005), p. 9.

sufficient as possible. When Lord Woolton, the Minister of Food, declared to the British public that the Second World War was ‘a food war’, he in effect brought the front lines to the back gardens and kitchen tables of the British public, demanding an increase of self-sufficiency to limit the reliance on now-threatened import lines.

The culinary path through the Second World War is one through the bottleneck of Britain’s austerity years and the narrow band of immediate post-war restrictions to the expansion offered by mid-century, outward-looking approaches to food identities that channel an attitude to creolisation already present in British culinary culture. The literature of the social dimensions of British cuisine during the Second World War austerity years from the beginning of rationing in December of 1939 to the end of meat rationing in July of 1954, such as David Kynaston’s *Austerity Britain, 1945-51* (2007), tend to orbit two dominant subjects which encapsulate this path. The first is the facts of rationing itself: the nutritional qualities of the prescribed allowances of meat, eggs, milk, and so on, alongside the public’s endless talk of the abundance of starchy and leafy vegetables, the shortages and queues, the grey, coarse crumb of the vitamin-laced “National Loaf”,³ tough canned snoek (snake mackerel) from South Africa,⁴ and the increasingly severe restrictions in the immediate aftermath of the war resulting from especially harsh winters that damaged wheat and potato crops. Ministry of Food-issued cookery guides instructed housewives on how to make the most of cheap cuts of meat (meat was rationed by value, not weight), cook bulk meals with home-grown vegetables and how to construct “mock” dishes. The fact that

³ Christopher Driver, *The British at Table 1940-1980* (London: Chatton & Windus, 1983), p. 21.

⁴ Driver, pp. 40-1.

rationing assured adequate nutrition for all is rarely forgotten; neither, however, is the monotony, which was worn at times as a badge of honour or a signifier of adherence to the principles of wartime duty. While it is true that black markets operated and some goods became prohibitively expensive, overall the Second World War represents a culinary constriction in Britain, a forced reduction of the nation's long and complex culinary history to a few egalitarian necessities.

The second point of discussion within the literature of the period, particularly with respect to cookery, is invariably the works of Elizabeth David, especially *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (1950) which burst through the fog of British austerity to offer a glimpse of warm sunshine, rich calories and the fresh, exotic produce of a few lands loosely bordering the north of the Mediterranean Sea. After the restriction of the culinary sphere during rationing, Elizabeth David's work offered a view of culinary expansion and exploration that reimagines imperial attitudes towards food habits for a mid-century audience. *A Book of Mediterranean Food* defined a new aspirational culinary genre, blending the stories of the travelling élite with the instructional purposes of the cookery book, absorbing a genre traditionally for and by men into the field of literature for women by incorporating the knowledge of the diner and the cook. The popularity of David and her works, from the colourful visions of *A Book of Mediterranean Food* to the later austerity-era *French Country Cooking* (1951), *Italian Food* (1954), as well as her later books on French and English cooking, can be attributed not simply to the hallucinogenic escape from austerity, but to the ways in which David makes use of the principles of creolisation that underpin British culture and cuisine. Through the fantasy of escape to the Mediterranean's sun and satiation, David explores and re-inscribes the British habits of culinary

creolisation, effectively priming a mid-century, middle-class audience for the end of rationing and the new re-imagination of Britain's ongoing empire as a global power. Mediterranean food could be exciting and new, using the peasant and bourgeois cuisines of varying regions to construct a notion of consumption ideologically opposed to the ersatz and make-do of rationing cookery and the *haute cuisine* of England and France.

From the "Victory Garden" and "Dig for Victory" campaigns which encouraged domestic food production in back gardens and public spaces, to the culinary sleight of hand advertised by the Ministry of Food that turns grated carrot and apricot jam into "apricot tart", economy dominates the discourses of austerity cooking throughout the Second World War. The food prescriptions of rationing, however, extend beyond the local and nutritionally focused and appear, at first, to threaten national identity by limiting food choices and the ability to articulate pre-war banal nationalism. While the culinary variety within Britain had reduced, and prescriptive cookery guides that were designed to maximise rationing allocations resulted in a stunting of the filial transmission of knowledge and an alteration of culinary traditions,⁵ the focus on local consumption forced a reconsideration of the dishes that constituted the national identity.

In *Imagined Communities* Benedict Anderson draws on structuralist arguments to explore the concept of the "imagined community" and consider the ways in which groups define themselves according to a set of shared beliefs, practices, and a sense of belonging;⁶ a loose and shared cultural consciousness, he argues, works alongside nation-state institutions to construct the attachment

⁵ Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls, and Consumption, 1939–1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 102.

⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 2006).

people feel towards imagined, culturally constructed concepts.⁷ This might refer to proprietary claims to national landmarks and cultural artefacts, or a set of behaviours, rituals or routines familiar to regions but identified as part of a larger national habitus. Following Anderson, Michael Billig locates culinary habits within the notion of “banal nationalism” and the mundane, daily attachment to the gentle icons of national identity.⁸ In the case of the culinary history of Britain, this sense of nationhood emerges from the Roast Beef of Old England, English beer, wheat and suet-based puddings, regional cheeses, hearty pastries, butter-based cooking, and other foods that may not appear regularly on every dining plate but constitute a shared concept of Britishness and British food, the defence of which is just as vital as the physical borders of the nation. Rationing appears to challenge national identity by upsetting established food knowledge and access routes that allow citizens to articulate a quotidian nationalism through everyday culinary habits. As a result, a new everyday nationalism emerges from the levelling effect of rationing; briefly, the national identity across Britain as expressed through the culinary palate was more homogenous than ever before, hence the shared identity and pride felt by some through wilful adherence to rationing.

The serious threat posed by the Axis forces and the Second World War only reinforced the importance of “Empire” as a key concept for Britain’s national identity.⁹ While vegetables went largely unrationed,¹⁰ and citizens were encouraged to fill their diet with as much local produce as possible, some

⁷ Bob Ashley and others, ‘The National Diet’, in *Food and Cultural Studies*, (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 82.

⁸ Ashley and others, p. 82.

⁹ Allison Carruth, ‘War Rations and the Food Politics of Late Modernism’, in *Modernism/modernity* 16.4 (2009), 767-95 (p. 783).

¹⁰ Potatoes were rationed following the especially cold winter in 1946-1947 that destroyed most of the stored crops.

imported goods remained on rationing cards, an entitlement to all citizens that reconfigured Britain's imperial or colonial relationship with the world. Tealeaves, for instance, remained on rationing cards in a clear configuration of British identity through its colonial relationship to the tea-producing nations of India and China. In *Sweetness and Power*, Sydney Mintz argues that tobacco, sugar and tea 'were the first objects within capitalism that conveyed with their use the complex idea that one could become different by consuming differently,' in part because they contain little nutritional benefit but indicate class distinction according to consumption habits.¹¹ Tea represents a staple of British social consumption since the eighteenth century, symbolising the colonial reach of the British Empire. The presence of tea on rationing cards indicates the primacy of egalitarian access to the symbols of Empire and colonial relationships, without which the construction of British identity would suffer. Maintaining the supply of aromatic tea from India (until 1874 via the British East India Company) confirms Britain's ongoing power over and outreach to the territories of its empire, even during its imperial decline and as the discourse of colonialism shifted to the discourse of the Commonwealth.

The primary foods of rationing, then, represent two major threads of national identity: the first is that which represents the nationalism of the soil—local produce, grown by British hands from British soil and reiterating the familiar, nutritionally-focused foods of the British people, literally incorporating the national into oneself.¹² Few gestures encapsulate this combination of the familiar, the national, and the nutritionally-focused, which defined the rationing and grow-your-own, quite like the sacrifice of portions of Buckingham Palace's

¹¹ Sydney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: the place of sugar in modern history* (New York: Viking, 1985), p. 185.

¹² Jennifer Stead, 'Georgian Britain' in, *A Taste of History: 10,000 Years of Food in Britain* (London: British Museum Press, 1997), p. 227.

grounds to “Victory Gardens”.¹³ The second are foods that symbolise Britain’s continuing, albeit threatened, international reach—tea and sugar from the tropical and subtropical colonies, fresh butter and frozen meat from the farthest reaches of the Empire.

If rationing constricted the culinary sphere and reduced the ability to perform distinction, as measured in food strength, variety, origin and meal size, then expression in any of these dimensions clearly marked the cook’s cultural and/or economic capital. The challenge of variety was an ongoing one for the housewife, but not the primary focus of the recipes of era which often categorise foods as ‘body building’, ‘energy’ or ‘protective’.¹⁴ Under the heading “Menu-Building” in *Cooking with Elizabeth Craig* (1949), the Scottish author identifies ‘the different classes of food required to make a perfect menu’: the ‘Body Builders’, ‘Heat and Energy Suppliers’, ‘Body Cleansers’, ‘Liquid Providers’ and ‘Vitamins’ which ‘if absent from the diet, or given in wrong proportions, sometimes over-eating results, sometimes anaemia, or constipation, or malnutrition.’¹⁵ The pleasures of eating go unmentioned in the first twelve pages, and even then not until suggestion that the dessert course be ‘the delicate finish to a perfect meal,’ or the ways in which the ‘tempting baskets of fruit’ in France or the ‘baskets of mandarins with the delicate foliage clinging to the stalks’ in Northern Africa catch one’s attention.¹⁶ Craig’s text reads like an instruction manual for the first-time housewife-cook, detailing clear, introductory instructions

¹³ ‘Allotment’ <<http://www.royal.gov.uk/TheRoyalHousehold/TheRoyalHouseholdandtheEnvironment/Allotment.aspx>> [accessed 28 March 2016].

¹⁴ Elizabeth Craig, *Cooking with Elizabeth Craig*, New and Revised Edition, 1949 (Great Britain: Collins, 1949), p. 7.

¹⁵ Craig, p. 7.

¹⁶ Craig, p. 13.

on how to crack eggs and use a sieve. *Cooking with Elizabeth Craig* does not shy away from recipes for chocolate whipped cream or Roquefort cheese salad, but stresses the cheaper alternatives in any category such as recipes for leftover meat or the preparation of economical joints. Repeating the philosophy of the distribution behind the wheat-heavy, vitamin-laced “national loaf”, Craig insists the reader always ‘order [bread] so that you have loaves a day old, as new bread is extravagant and indigestible.’¹⁷ While Craig’s suggestion that new bread is an extravagance holds some merit in wartime (to curb consumption bakeries could only sell day-old bread made from national, vitamin-enriched flour), her suggestion that it is also ‘indigestible’ almost certainly comes from Ministry of Food-style domineering designed to displace the perceived blame for the rejection of fresh bread onto pseudoscientific ideas about health.

Craig’s text reflects the same anti-extravagance philosophies of the cookery texts distributed by the Ministry of Food such as *Carrots, Soups, Green Vegetables*, and *Puddings and Sweets* that emphasise nourishing, digestible and economical foods rather than the pursuit of pleasure. The leaflet on *Puddings and Sweets* reminds the reader that sweet dishes are ‘a delightful **addition** to a main meal but should only be regarded as such,’ to be eaten only after the meat and vegetable courses, and that the recipes may be possible should the cook ‘be able to spare sufficient [...] ingredients.’¹⁸ The cookery pamphlet configures sweets and puddings as made of and consumed as surplus to strength-making, nourishing meat, cheese, vegetables and bread; like new bread, the government-sanctioned cookery text associates the pleasures of consumption with surfeit and excess and

¹⁷ Craig, p. 20.

¹⁸ *Puddings and Sweets*, War Cookery Leaflet, 13 (London: Ministry of Food, 1941), n.p. Author’s emphasis in bold.

regards pleasure with suspicion. This is, in part, pragmatic: sugar supplies strained import channels, while local produce was relatively cheap. *Vegetables* extolls local produce as ‘invaluable [...and] one of [Britain’s] most important sources of health and strength;’¹⁹ regular consumption of vegetables, the pamphlet tells the reader, will result in the suffering only of the ‘vendors of patent medicines,’ and ‘the makers of too highly-seasoned sauces’ which have displaced the taste of well-cooked vegetables.²⁰ In Craig’s literature, and in the Ministry of Food’s *War Cookery Leaflet* series, health and nourishment dominate over taste in the discourse of food, indicating the foregrounding of duty and abstinence from what this literature codes as surplus or excessive.

The secular puritanism underpinning the philosophies of consumption habits shifts consumer attention from the pleasures of form by appealing to the moral obligations of pragmatism and egalitarianism as part of the war effort. An emphasis on producing nourishing meals from ersatz ingredients, bulking agents and cheap cuts runs throughout wartime cookery texts; carrot, cheap and plentiful, made its way into everything from “War-and-Peace Pudding”²¹ to “Carrot Marmalade”²² in an effort to provide the appearance of culinary normality and fulfil nutritional requirements. Foods were shaped to look like their pre-war counterparts invoking a sympathetic magic: the recipe for “mock duck” instructs the reader to take sausage meat, onion and apple and shape it into something resembling a duck. Although substitute ingredients were used to varying successes to approximate pre-war food and encourage controlled appetites, food

¹⁹ *Vegetables*, War Cookery Leaflet, 6 (London: Ministry of Food, 1941), n.p.

²⁰ *Vegetables*.

²¹ *Carrots*, War Cookery Leaflet, 4 (London: Ministry of Food, 1941), n.p.

²² ‘Carrot Marmalade’, *The Kitchen Front*, The Home Service, 3 March 1941, 8.15am.

cannot be so tasty as to encourage taking more than, nor feeling dissatisfied by, one's share: an abundance of pleasure might lead to overconsumption and an imbalance of distribution. Eaten a day old, the national loaf could satisfy without tempting the palate to greed.

This food puritanism parallels the so-called "nursery food" fed to the children of upper- and middle-class families from the late Victorian era to the Second World War, much lamented by gastronomic authors including Gerald Hamilton and Elizabeth David but which, during wartime, demonstrates a puritanical spirit of pleasure- and excess-rejection. In the Spring 1939 issue of *Wine and Food*, Hamilton recalled the 'criminal nonsense' of the nursery food of his Victorian upbringing: 'As a child I was constantly forced to eat food which I disliked, because it was supposed that what one didn't like was *ipso facto* good for one.'²³ Here food is tolerated, not enjoyed, a sentiment Elizabeth David would later echo in *French Provincial Cooking* (1960):

Probably some of everyone's most dismal nursery memories are connected with food. One might come to accept the stewed prunes, the hateful greens, even the tapioca pudding, as part of Nannie's mysterious lore as to what it was necessary to eat in order to survive the perils of childhood.²⁴

Aggressively bland and poorly textured nursery food, such as overdone greens, raggy vegetables and soggy puddings, were cooked under ostensible food safety

²³ *Food and Wine*, Spring 1939. Qtd in Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Illinois: University of Illinois, 1996), p. 297.

²⁴ Elizabeth David, *French Provincial Cooking* (London: Cox and Wyman, 1964), p. 328.

principles with little or no regard to flavour but a perception of puritanical “good”.²⁵

As Stephen Mennell writes in *All Manners of Food*, nursery foods exercised a form of culinary control designed to control the body by quashing desire.²⁶ At worst, Mennell writes,

making [children] eat food to which they actually felt an aversion was seen as a necessary part of breaking the child’s peevish will. [...] [I]t may have lead to the ‘anaesthetising’ of the capacity to enjoy eating [in adults].²⁷

The puritanical attitude towards nursery food in England parallels the inverse relationship between something’s taste and its “goodness”: that which is pleasurable is excessive, indulgent and a sinful submission to the desires of the body; that which is unpleasant or bland must, by corollary, be “good” (or even medicinal) for the consumer.²⁸ Pleasure implies a lack of restraint, hence the abundance of evidence that attaches guilt with pleasure and eating during the period between late Victorian and the Second World War.²⁹ It is no surprise that this period in England’s culinary history is marred by an ill-developed approach to food appreciation. Compared with France’s gastronomic history that saw the concurrent successes of César Ritz, Auguste Escoffier, and the culinary bible *Le Guide Culinaire* (1903), England in the latter half of the nineteenth century lagged behind France in the aestheticisation of the culinary arts. Eating through unsavoury food, however, becomes a sign of perseverance and the “Carry On”

²⁵ Mennell, pp. 291-316.

²⁶ Mennell, p. 296.

²⁷ Mennell, p. 296.

²⁸ The relationship between food, the body and morality is explored in detail in Chapter III.

²⁹ Mennell, p. 296.

spirit of wartime, a testament to resolve and the ability to rise above desires. Puritanism, or the rejection of taste, demonstrates an adherence to the limitations of rationing and, by corollary, support for the national agenda.

Each citizen on the home front becomes the target of propaganda that reimagines the morality of mock recipes and the culinary puritanism of anti-waste and anti-excess for the egalitarian structures of rationing. The wellbeing of the nation is bargained on the efforts of every Briton through propaganda, such as those that target excess: ‘A Clear Plate Means a Clear Conscience - Don’t Take More Than You Can Eat’ reads one,³⁰ or ‘Food Is a Muniton of War—Don’t Waste It’.³¹ The obligation to obey sumptuary laws and social codes becomes a matter of national duty. There is perhaps no war-era recipe more notorious than Lord Woolton Pie, a dish of stewed seasonal vegetables in a thin gravy and topped with either potato or wheatmeal pastry. The official recipe printed in London’s *The Times* on the 26th of April 1941 opens with a statement suggesting the dish’s wide appeal across social strata, its economic appeal and its nutritional virtue for all readers:

In hotels and restaurants, no less in communal canteens, many people have tasted Lord Woolton pie and pronounced it good. Like many another economical dish, it can be described as wholesome fare. It also meets the dietitian’s requirements in certain vitamins.

³⁰ ‘A Clear Plate Means a Clear Conscience - Don’t Take More Than You Can Eat’, *Imperial War Museums* <<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/9300>> [accessed 12 May 2016].

³¹ ‘Food Is a Muniton of War - Don’t Waste It’, *Imperial War Museums* <<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/36049>> [accessed 9 August 2016].

The ingredients can be varied according to the vegetables in season.³²

That this pie should be ‘pronounced [...] good’ identifies the dish as not only *desirable* but also *ethically virtuous* links the egalitarian, make-do food practices that sustained the home front with Britain’s moral right to defend itself. During national conflict, where morality is used as a weapon alongside morale, the symbolic associations of foodstuffs and consumption habits are heightened for purposes of defence or offence; any matter that may be conscripted or recruited for the cause will be. Like fasting, the willing rejection of some or all food suggests a triumph of the moral and spiritual over the physical body. In willingly eating the often puritanical foods of rationing, the British citizen shows not only their triumph over their body for the sake of the nation-as-body, but their moral fortitude for their cause.

The rationing recipe and its counterpart, the rationing-era cookery book, with an overwhelming focus on instructing on the nutritional function of food and coded with the moral obligations of restraint, sit in ideological opposition to gastronomic literature which revels in the pleasures of eating, dining and sensory exploration. Gastronomic literature emerged as a genre in France in the early nineteenth century, as an expansion on the eighteenth century discourse on aesthetic taste. In France, the literature of Alexandre Balthazar Laurent Grimod de La Reynière (including *Almanach des gourmands* (1803-1812)³³ and the development of the Jury des Dégustateurs), and Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin’s seminal essay *Physiologie du Goût*, served as the templates for the articulation of

³² ‘Lord Woolton Pie: The official recipe’, *The Times*, London, 26 April 1941, p. 2.

³³ The *Almanach des gourmands* was published annually from 1803 to 1812, excluding 1908 and 1811. Mennell, pp. 266-90.

witty, urbane masculinity which emerged as a cultural resistance by the élite to the rise of bourgeois domestication.³⁴ From Grimod de La Reynière and Brillat-Savarin, and their successors from the early nineteenth century to the present day in France, England and America, gastronomes share a set of common characteristics: as Stephen Mennell articulates, the gastronome is

a person who not only cultivates his own ‘refined taste for the pleasure of the table’ but also, by *writing* about it, helps to cultivate other people’s too. The Gastronomer is more than a gourmet—he is also a theorist and a propagandist about culinary taste.³⁵

The genre of gastronomic literature, Mennell observes, frequently shares characteristic themes such as ‘the disquisition on what constitutes “correct” practice’ according to the grammar of meals and service, disquisition on dietetics according to the prevailing knowledge of the era, a blending of myth and history including frequently spurious claims to the origins of dishes, and the ‘nostalgic evocation of memorable meals.’³⁶ The gastronomic text primarily reflects the public tastes of upper class men, reinforcing the notion of consumption, particularly the indulgence of appetite, as a masculine endeavour.³⁷ By corollary, the domestic cookbook constructs a private, female appetite and role, designed to instruct but not necessarily enlighten or entertain.³⁸ Though ideologically opposed, both rationing and gastronomy use food to dictate “correct” consumption habits according to either the principles of egalitarianism and the nation’s needs, or the individual’s satisfaction of appetite and taste, hence the lack

³⁴ McLean, p. 5.

³⁵ Mennell, p. 267. Author’s emphasis.

³⁶ Mennell, pp. 270-1.

³⁷ Andrea Adolph, *Food and Femininity in Twentieth-Century British Women's Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 95.

³⁸ McLean, p. 6.

of gastronomic texts during the early rationing years which may have been perceived as against the national interests.

If a continuum exists, stretching from the pleasures and explorations of gastronomic literature to the functions and instructions of the baldly practical nutritional guide, then somewhere in between lies the cookery book or magazine column that blends cooking with the social aspects of dining and sharing food. This continuum mirrors the rising socioeconomic class of their respective target audiences according to the tastes of freedom. Further, while the nutritional guide and cookery book are also largely written by and for female housewives-as-cooks, until the twentieth century gastronomic literature was almost exclusively by and for men. This corresponds to a domestic production and consumption dichotomy between men and women that appears throughout the nineteenth century and into the first half of the twentieth century: women cook and men eat.³⁹ Rationing literature reinforces this problematic coding: the War Cookery Leaflet *Cheaper Cuts of Meat* offers the housewife advice on how to make ‘dishes so appetising and flavoursome that even the most critical husband will ask for more,’ typically by slow cooking to infuse flavour into bulking agents such as vegetables or starchy carbohydrates.⁴⁰ Further, as Dimitra Gefou-Madianou observes, while women are often present in homosocial, anti-domestic locations such as the coffeehouse or at the family-oriented ritual-cum-celebration, they are in many cases providers or producers but not necessarily consumers.⁴¹ Cooking therefore figures as a masculine endeavour in the public, cultivated setting of the restaurant

³⁹ McLean, p. 2.

⁴⁰ *Cheaper Cuts of Meat*, War Cookery Leaflet, 2 (London: Ministry of Food, 1941), n.p.

⁴¹ Dimitra Gefou-Madianou, ‘Introduction’ in *Alcohol, Gender and Culture*, ed. by Dimitra Gefou-Madianou (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 8.

or the estate, where the cooking of distinction is performed by a male chef and often served or presented by the female subordinated figure. Just as *chef* derives from *chief*, itself from the Late Latin *caput* (“head”), the role of chef assumes male authority in a nineteenth- and early twentieth-century context. Conversely, *cook* as a noun merely comes from the verb without clear gender or role associations. In a domestic setting, the housewife-as-cook, not housewife-as-chef, prepares and presents to the masculine figure and/or child.

The recipes and guides distributed by the Ministry of Food assume that cookery was performed by women, for men and children, but also assume little to no knowledge as to the methods of maximising limited resources. Given the apparent “levelling-up” of national nutrition, cookery leaflets target housewives and cooks who have been denied the familial transmission of knowledge because of austerity restrictions and must learn a new type of cookery from a new palette. ‘Many young housewives tell us that they find shopping at the butcher’s difficult,’ as the *Cheaper Cuts of Meat* pamphlet tells the reader.⁴² Or, as the pamphlet on carrots advises: ‘As many a wise mother knows, the child who eats raw carrots freely is most unlikely to have a craving for sweets.’⁴³ Not only do the recipes assume that a young housewife would be incapable of preparing a satisfactory meal without the help of the Ministry, but the focus on disciplined preparation and appeasement as home front duty not only parallels masculine military duty but suggests a problematic paradigm of women subordinating themselves to the sustaining of men in a mid-century domestic environment. If the importance placed on food and cookery to pave the way to victory is placed on the woman’s

⁴² *Cheaper Cuts of Meat*, War Cookery Leaflet, 2 (London: Ministry of Food, 1941), n.p.

⁴³ *Carrots*, War Cookery Leaflet, 4 (London: Ministry of Food, 1941), n.p.

shoulders, then the propaganda of the home front places the morale and morality of a fighting Britain in the women's domestic domain. Mirroring the industrial propaganda that shows women in munitions factories, women on the kitchen and garden fronts become active participants in the war effort.

The defence of the British table can be found in meals made of more than Victory Garden potatoes and a gesture of rationed British butter. Exogenous goods represent the power and reach of the British Empire's strength and contiguous relationships with other nation-states across the globe. As the Second World War concluded in 1945 and Britain entered seven leaner years of continued rationing, so continued the nationalism and sense of colonial relationships at the dinner plate. In the lead-up to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II on 2 June 1953, and supported by the temporary loosening of egg rationing, by holding Victoria sponge-making competitions housewives and members of Women's Institutes demonstrated their baking skills, patriotism, and prowess at securing ingredients of distinction including jam and cream. That *Victoria* should derive from *victory* and symbolise the long and prosperous reign of Queen Victoria of the previous century cannot go unnoticed: housewives symbolically baked their way to victory, celebrating the defeat of the Axis forces almost a decade earlier, the recent, temporary relaxation of rationing, and the increased imports of sugar and other exogenous goods.

As observed earlier, the symbolic threat of import restrictions and rationing to British nationalism (as identified through imperial possession and colonial relations) reflects the way in which the Second World War was coded as a defensive war for Britain. Austerity measures were slowly lifted through the late 1940s and early 1950s, but fifteen years of rationing left a culinary vacuum in

Britain. This is not to deny the rich regional variations and traditions that George Orwell defended as one of the ‘main stays of civilisation’ in his essay ‘In Defence of English Cooking’,⁴⁴ but rather that these had been hindered by rationing and displaced in public restaurants by the perception that international cookery, particularly French, was superior to English cookery. Britain could not return to its pre-war ways; as imports channels opened in the 1950s, Britain was forced to renegotiate its cultural relationships with the post-war world according to discourse centred on commonwealth ideologies and international trade rather than the colonial relationships of the previous century. “Empire” could no longer remain a key concept in British identity; neither, then could the symbols of empire define cookery in Britain.

The mid-1950s environment of renegotiation and international discourse, rather than domination, provided a backdrop for the coronation dinner of Elizabeth II as devised by Constance Spry with Rosemary Hume. Coronation Chicken, or *Poulet Reign Elizabeth* as it would appear on the menus for the coronation dinner, marked the pan-national and Commonwealth dish *par excellence*, symbolising an outward-reaching gesture for a *new* Britain. Devised by Spry with Hume for the coronation luncheon in 1953, the cold preparation of shredded chicken in a complex and spiced mayonnaise-based sauce symbolically captures the eclectic voices of the people and the diets of the British Isles and Commonwealth. Each ingredient in the creole dish of Coronation Chicken subtly gestures towards Empire and nation: cream and chicken symbolise the produce of

⁴⁴ George Orwell, ‘In Defence of English Cooking’, in *The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, ed. by Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus, 4 volumes (London: Secker & Warburg, 1968), III, p. 38. The essay originally appeared in the *Evening Standard*, London, 15 December 1945.

British soil; tomato (puree) and bay leaf demonstrate, in part, the capacity of British soil to take (some of) the fruits of exploration; the common onion, red wine, mayonnaise and tomato puree, alongside the coronation title *Poulet Reign Elizabeth*, gesture towards the élite cuisine of France; lemon, rare during rationing, and typically from countries with which Britain was historically often at war,⁴⁵ marks the outreach and power of Empire; likewise apricot (puree), nods to the cultivars of the nations of Persia and Egypt that Britain once occupied; curry-powder, a spice blend of Western, late-eighteenth century invention, gestures warmly to the recently independent Republic of India; the blend of fruit, spice and meat invigorates the popular late-medieval combinations such as the roast mutton with orange and cinnamon sauce recorded in *Elinor Fettiplace's Receipt Book* (1986 [1604]);⁴⁶ and finally, the dish breathes life into Jubilee Chicken, a dish with a curry and mayonnaise sauce first devised to celebrate the silver jubilee of Elizabeth's grandfather King George V in 1935. Coronation Chicken is a rich and complex dish. It is an optimistic dish, too; *Poulet Reign Elizabeth* encompasses more than half a millennium of history to mark the occasion of a new monarch, celebrating British history and Empire and locating the future of the Empire in a creole of global flavours.

Part of the appeal of the international flavours used by Spry and Hume in Coronation Chicken lies in the relative exoticism of the ingredients, particularly following the restrictions of rationing. As observed earlier, public attitudes towards food and pleasure were undermined by a wave of anti-aestheticism in the nineteenth century, two world wars and an economic depression from which

⁴⁵ Lesley Jacobs Solmonson, *Gin: A Global History* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), pp. 60-1.

⁴⁶ Elinor Fettiplace, *Elinor Fettiplace's Receipt Book: Elizabethan Country House Cooking*, ed. by Hilary Spurling (London: Penguin, 1987), pp. 41-2.

Britain never fully recovered. The Second World War concluded and the world anxiously opened up once more, yet the persistence of rationing resulted in a frustrated feeling of impotence, heightened by the harsh winter of 1946-7. Upon returning to England from America for the first time since the outbreak of the Second World War, Christopher Isherwood recalled that the adrenaline of war

was no longer being pumped into our veins. [...]Were there to be no fruits of victory? The rationing cards and coupons that still had to be presented for almost everything from eggs to minute pieces of scraggy Argentine meat, from petrol to bed-linen and ‘economy’ suits, seemed far more squalid and unjust than during the war...⁴⁷

The sense of pyrrhic victory quickly turned to resentment directed at what was perceived as mean-spirited puritanism.⁴⁸ ‘Too many [Labour MPs] seemed to think there was a virtue in austerity and shabbiness, in controls and restriction,’ wrote Isherwood.⁴⁹ Cookery books remained bleak, reflecting the nutritionally-focused guide of the Ministry of Food pamphlet, emphasising nourishment and instruction in the first half of the twentieth century. The food of other countries remained the aspirational dream of the middle class, who had limited access to upwardly-mobile food displays (often coded as French). As the result of austerity and a progressive displacement by French cooking, Britain’s thousand-year history of food constricted to starchy produce, tinned meat and vegetables, and dried local fruit. As A.A. Gill would remark in his polemic essay ‘Elizabeth David’, Britain’s culinary landscape never recovered fully from the Second World War: the ‘gastronomic birthright’ of Britain, and its 600-year relationship to slow-

⁴⁷ Christopher Isherwood. Qtd in David Kynaston, *Austerity Britain, 1945-51* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), p. 192.

⁴⁸ Kynaston, pp. 185-206.

⁴⁹ Isherwood. Qtd in Kynaston, p. 192.

cooked and spiced meats, dried fruit in savoury dishes, and wheat-based puddings, disappeared almost overnight with the outbreak of the war.⁵⁰

It was to this bleak England that Elizabeth David returned from a six-year sojourn to the Mediterranean. David soon felt a homesickness for the warmth and abundance of the south and the unrationed but by no means easy life in Alexandria where she worked in the cipher office, or France, Italy, Greece, and other Mediterranean countries that would later appear in culinary form in 1950 in *A Book of Mediterranean Food*. Frustrated with the grey, formulaic privations of rationing, she began

to work out an agonized craving for the sun and a furious revolt against that terrible, cheerless, heartless food by writing down descriptions of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cooking. Even to write words like apricot, olives and butter, rice and lemons, oil and almonds, produced assuagement.⁵¹

It was from this yearning, and the recipes she had cultivated over ten years, that *A Book of Mediterranean Food* was born. In those bleak days, David's attempts to satisfy her need for culinary escape by articulating and recording her memories channels a sympathetic magic that uses words in the place of food. As Maud Ellmann notes in *The Hunger Artists*, the concept of words replacing food appears as far back as the Old Testament, such as in Deuteronomy 8:3: 'you will have the

⁵⁰ A.A. Gill, 'Elizabeth David' in *Table Talk: Sweet and Sour, Salt and Bitter* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2007), p. 194.

⁵¹ As quoted in Artemis Cooper, *Writing at the Kitchen Table: The Authorized Biography of Elizabeth David* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011), pp. 131-2.

life of grace and never die of hunger, for the Word has himself become your food.’⁵² In the context of the dieter, Ellmann notes that writing

preserve[s] their food for future delectation, deep-frozen or freeze-dried upon the page. In this way each forbidden meal can be engorged again, re-eaten every time it is reread; and the vulgar pleasures of gustation are relinquished for the sweet deserts of writing.⁵³

Not only does writing evoke memory for David, it also allows to the repeated fulfilment of desire; the fantasy of escape as constructed through the repetition of a preserved memory fills the mind, and by corollary, assuages the belly. The appearance of words in the form of Mediterranean meals echoes the sympathetic magic of the shaping of sausage meat into “duck”, one that can be consumed repeatedly. A similar hunger produced Evelyn Waugh’s *Brideshead Revisited*, but when Waugh returned to his text ‘with a full stomach,’ he found the gluttony distasteful.⁵⁴ The assuagement of hunger in the texts attempts to satisfy the hunger of the artist-reader, filling the gap left empty by the absence of food.

A Book of Mediterranean Food’s popularity as a cookery book goes beyond mere kitchen-work. That David’s recipes are impractical in austerity Britain, or sometimes poor by twenty-first century standards, is beside the point; the success of David’s 1950 work for readers worn down by rationing is the sustained fantasy of Mediterranean sun, fat-marbled meat and bright, glistening market produce. Like the pan-national ingredients of Coronation Chicken,

⁵² Maud Ellmann, *The Hunger Artists: Starving, Writing and Imprisonment* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), p. 22.

⁵³ Ellmann, p. 23.

⁵⁴ Evelyn Waugh, ‘Preface’, in *Brideshead Revisited* (London: Penguin, 2011), p. x.

David's exportable version of Mediterranean bourgeois and peasant food brought to the bookshelves and kitchens of middle-class households a subtle transcription of Empire in its then-fantastical, sun-soaked pages. As a culinary memoir or memorial, David's work is a panegyric for the Mediterranean, mourning the relaxed abundance of food so distant to privation-wracked Britain; it is a product of the war and the return to privation she experienced, rather than the exploration of the Mediterranean that inspired it.⁵⁵

A Book of Mediterranean Food was a vast success from the moment of its publication, despite, or perhaps because, its readers would have been unable to complete many of the recipes. The recipe for *Cassoulet Toulousain*, for instance, winds through three pages of sensory richness distant to Britain in 1950, stimulating a sense of daily, rustic abundance in France. For David, the authentic cassoulet is

the genuine, abundant, earthy, richly flavoured and patiently simmered dish of the ideal farmhouse kitchen. Hidden beneath a layer of creamy, golden-crustured haricot beans in a deep, wide earthen pot, the cassoulet contains garlicky pork sausages, smoked bacon, salt pork, a wing or leg of preserved goose, perhaps a piece of mutton, or a couple of pig's feet, or half a duck, and some chunks of pork rind. The beans are tender, juicy, moist but not mushy, aromatic smells of garlic and herbs escape from the pot as the cassoulet is brought smoking hot from the oven to the table.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Carruth, p. 785.

⁵⁶ *Mediterranean*, pp. 111-2.

This is perhaps the most indulgent of all the recipes in *A Book of Mediterranean Food*, and symptomatic of the erotic engagement David establishes as part of rustic Mediterranean food. The cassoulet is hearty, aromatic, abundant; the casual tone of ‘perhaps’ builds an image of richness and relaxation, a sense of farmhouse plenty at a time when bacon rations in Britain were allocated between three and four ounces (85 and 115 grams) per week. Yet the hunger of the age made reading David’s book a temporary nourishment and escape from privation, rather than a dispiriting look across the Channel. The *Observer* declared that it ‘deserves to become the familiar companion of all who seek uninhibited excitement in the kitchen.’⁵⁷

David’s work, however, is clearly to be read more as a piece of literature than a cookery book, belonging equally in the library or kitchen. Indeed, its tentative title of *The Blue Train Cookery Book* would have suggested to readers an older era of society life and luxury travel on *Le Train Bleu* that effectively ended with the outbreak of the Second World War, as well as a text that would serve as a cookery text rather than a piece of gastronomic literature rich in sensual imagery and nourishing language. With its stimulation of appetite through memory, emphasis on social dining, and eclectic range of literary influences, *A Book of Mediterranean Food* has more in common with gastronomic literature than practical cookery, as Stephen Mennell points out.⁵⁸ David cultivates a pleasure for the table,⁵⁹ it is true, but she also borrows from memoir, essay and fiction to illustrate stories of *Gazpacho*, snails, hare and rabbit; she reprints passages of Compton MacKenzie’s ache for Athenian ices and D.H. Lawrence at the

⁵⁷ *The Observer*. Qtd in Kynaston, p. 512.

⁵⁸ Mennell, p. 271.

⁵⁹ Mennell, p. 267.

vegetable market at Palermo to offer an erudite and undomestic approach to food.⁶⁰

David's gastronomy was by no means new; she occupies a place in the continuum of gastronomes from Grimod de La Reynière and Brillat-Savarin, to early Modernist writers such as Katherine Mansfield (including her 1918 short 'Prelude', which maps onto Virginia Woolf's 1941 *Between the Acts*) and Virginia Woolf, and onwards to present-day food writers, with an unapologetic reverence for pleasure, a genre-spanning, adult style and a confidence with the matters of kitchenware and preparation. Though the first gestures towards de-rationalising in the late 1940s saw a small wave of gastronomic texts in England,⁶¹ these were largely male-authored owing to the post-war push to return women to pre-war domestic roles. David's works form a centre of micro-resistance against this post-war patriarchal movement that places men's intellect and sensuality above women's. As McLean writes,

David replaced the emphasis on duty and practicality of the domestic cookbook with the emphasis on intellectual stimulation, poetic self-expression, and aesthetic reflection characteristic of gastronomic literature. By creating a body of writing that articulates a sensual engagement with foreign food-ways and showcases the intellectual pleasures of gastronomy, David helped to aestheticize the English women's food writing tradition, replacing its domestic ideology with

⁶⁰ McLean, pp. 4-5.

⁶¹ John Burnett, *England Eats Out: A Social History of Eating out in England from 1830 to the Present* (London: Pearson Longman, 2004), p. 258.

a reverence for sensual pleasure and for the embodied knowledge it nourishes.⁶²

As McLean explains, before David, the inter-war period saw a ‘relaxation in the strict alignment of women with domesticity’ and a parallel loosening of constraints on female-authored cookbooks,⁶³ the result of which was a small wave of female-authored gastronomic literature including the works of Hilda Leyer, Countess Morphy, Agnes Jekyll, and Dorothy Allhusen who found limited agency through the culinary arts.⁶⁴ While there are some claims from these authors to inventiveness and pleasure, McLean argues, they stop short of depicting women capable of hosting dinner parties alone or ordering from menus without a man’s accompaniment.⁶⁵ The period of privation in the lead-up to the publication of *A Book of Mediterranean Food* resulted in a displacement of gastronomic texts on egalitarian grounds and the aforementioned perception that it was Britain’s proud civic duty to endure rationing, as well as a gender imbalance according to domestic function. Yet the sense of pyrrhic victory and the culinary impotence produced by “unjust” post-war rationing produced precisely the climate for the publication of a text which stood in ideological opposition to austerity and male-centric gastronomy, and the ideal contrast against which *A Book of Mediterranean Food* might offer the fantasy of escape.

The secular puritanism of rationing propaganda that coded privation as a moral requirement of the home front by corollary also codes indulgence as a moral failure. Allison James identifies this “naughty but nice” attitude to food as

⁶² McLean, p. 12.

⁶³ McLean, p. 11.

⁶⁴ McLean, pp. 121-2.

⁶⁵ McLean, p. 123.

particularly British. (Conversely, she argues, in ‘France, no food is sinful.’⁶⁶) This makes clear the sense David felt after writing down words such as *lemon*, *butter* and *olives* that ‘in the England of 1947, those were dirty words that I was putting down,’⁶⁷ as if these words sinfully indulged that which was denied her. Yet gastronomic literature, including David’s own works, revel in their sensual descriptions and detailed prescriptions of food. For David to write of foods alien to or indulgent in wartime Britain may appear a breach of rationing’s moral propriety, but escaping from austerity may be said to be her goal and part of the reason for her book’s success. Yet ‘dirty’ also carries sexual connotations, a tone reflected in the *Observer*’s choice of ‘uninhibited excitement’ in their review.⁶⁸ As observed above, consumption and therefore sexuality are coded as masculine endeavours, and according to Andrea Adolph, both are historically regarded with suspicion in women.⁶⁹ Sensual writing then may appear to be a failure of morality with respect to austerity measures and female sexuality, but, as her authorised biography *Writing at the Kitchen Table* makes clear, a forthright sensuality remained a distinct part of David’s character throughout her life.⁷⁰ The sensual engagement of David’s writing, however, stakes a claim at the rewards of a genre dominated by male authors, rather than shying away from an erotic culinary discourse. In her column in *The Spectator* in July of 1962, David recalls her exasperation in receiving half-filled bottles of wine (“Ladies’ halves”) and the

⁶⁶ Allison James, ‘How British Is British Food’, in *Food, Health and Identity* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 82.

⁶⁷ Elizabeth David. Qtd in Artemis Cooper, *Writing at the Kitchen Table: The Authorized Biography of Elizabeth David* (London: Faber & Faber, 2011), pp. 131-2.

⁶⁸ *The Observer*. Qtd in Kynaston, p. 512.

⁶⁹ *Food and Femininity*, pp. 94-5.

⁷⁰ As Cooper elucidates, David enjoyed a privileged lifestyle of freedom and travel; she drank heavily throughout her life, had a number of affairs, and largely resisted the domesticity expected of a woman in a post-war Britain.

patronising steward who once yelled “‘A *whole* bottle? Do you know how large a whole bottle is?’”, or frustration at the restaurant manager curtly refused to elucidate the origin of a carafe wine, before making clear to her readers her expansive knowledge of regional wines.⁷¹ Paradoxically, the performance in a traditionally masculine domain also allows David to preserve her femininity: Karin van Nieuwkerk observes that, in the context of Egyptian performers and Islamic laws, women who smoke and drink (behaviours considered highly improper) may present themselves as men among men and therefore protect their reputations as respectable women, though this depends on the motivation behind consumption.⁷²

David demonstrates an acute awareness for the redolence of gastronomic literature and uses the morality of austerity against itself to re-evaluate the “goodness” of pleasurable eating. David’s preface to the second edition of *A Book of Mediterranean Food* makes this especially clear: David writes about how when

[t]his book first appeared in 1950, [...] almost every essential ingredient of good cooking was either rationed or unobtainable. To produce the simplest meal consisting of even two or three genuine dishes required the utmost ingenuity and devotion.⁷³

Declaring that ‘good’ and ‘genuine’ cooking ingredients were in short supply locates virtue and quality offshore, and poor cooking within the frustrating limitations of rationing—limitations by which the Mediterranean is constructed as unaffected. Rather than reconfiguring *British* food (as she would later with *Spices*,

⁷¹ Elizabeth David, ‘Ladies’ Halves’ in *The Spectator*, 12 July 1962, p. 26.

⁷² Karin van Nieuwkerk, ‘Female Entertainers in Egypt’, in *Alcohol, Gender and Culture*, ed. by Dimitra Gefou-Madianou (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 35-47.

⁷³ *Mediterranean*, p. 9

Salt and Aromatics in the English Kitchen (1970) and *English Bread and Yeast Cookery* (1977)), David uses the moral underpinnings of wartime rhetoric to shift the fantasy of pleasure—that is, “sinful”, sensual pleasure in food, as well as the “goodness” of “genuine” food—beyond the borders of Britain. The dichotomy of Britain as bleak versus a vision of continental plenty, rich in garlic, butter and olive oil bolsters the fantasy of Mediterranean escape.⁷⁴

After ten years of rationing, the sensuality of David’s prose rolled across the imaginative palate as *melokia*, *aioli*, *pimento*, exotic ingredients or unexpected preparations (*baked bananas*, for instance). The recipes and ingredients of the Mediterranean displace the mundanity of British cookery, yet the daily indulgence is far more accessible to the bourgeois English reader than the *haute cuisine* of the Parisian restaurant or grand hotel, thanks in part to David’s inclusion of London retailers’ addresses in her 1950 cookbook where readers could find rarer ingredients, such as fresh squid, or utensils, such as the forks for extracting snails from their shells. *The Book of Mediterranean Food* and *French Country Cooking* (1951) sustain the illusion of rustic indulgence in the Mediterranean; David constructs *French Country Cooking* narrative around ‘the most interesting food’ to be found in France, in

the provinces, at the riverside inns, in unknown cafés along the banks of the Burgundy canal, patronized by the men who sail the great petrol and timber barges to and from Marseille, great eaters and drinkers most of them, in the hospitable farmhouses of the Loire and the Dordogne, of Normandy and the Auvergne, in sea-port

⁷⁴ In the second revised edition of *A Book of Mediterranean Food*, *garlic* appears some 179 times, *butter* 140 times, and *olive oil*, often a half or full wineglass at a time, 103 times.

bistros frequented by fishermen, sailors, ship-chandlers and port officials; and nowadays also in *café routiers*, the lorry drivers' restaurants.⁷⁵

By constructing provincial France, as is the case in *French Provincial Cooking* and to a lesser extent in *A Book of Mediterranean Food*, as prosperous and thrifty, and the people nourished by the fat of the land, David constructs a humble vision of Britain's nearest neighbour in as warm, hospitable, abundant; *real* food belongs to the rustic characters in portside taverns that the reader might find if they possess the luxury of freedom, intellectual curiosity and capital means to explore those less-travelled parts of Europe. Having sampled the Mediterranean, David shifts her attention to provincial French Euro-centrism, shifting attention away from *haute cuisine* and establishing the provincial as a source of rustic culinary culture opposed to the cities in which her books were sold. An accessible version of bourgeois and peasant cooking packaged for a middle-class British audience to imagine lay between those hard blue covers.

David's mid-century exploration of the Mediterranean widens the net to imagine the culinary outreach of the British Empire looking forward following the Second World War. Rather than focussing solely on French peasant food, Allison Carruth argues, David destabilises the French Euro-centrism of desirable cuisine to offer Greek, Italian, Moroccan, Spanish and Turkish food.⁷⁶ Carruth uses Fredric Jameson's 1988 essay "Modernism and Imperialism" to argue that from 'the vantage point of postwar London', David's *A Book of Mediterranean Food* constructs a culinary map of the Mediterranean that ultimately stands in for the

⁷⁵ Elizabeth David, *French Country Cooking* (London: Grub Street, 2011), p. 7.

⁷⁶ Carruth, p. 785.

discontinuous borders of an imperial map Britain cannot create;⁷⁷ by sampling the Mediterranean and packaging it for an aspirational British audience, David reimagines the creolisation endemic to British imperialist history in a twentieth century culinary form. Carruth writes that with this ‘fuzzy picture of Britain’s imperial interests in the war’ David not only distracts the reader from their present austerity and the reasons for it, but also performs a kind of ‘culinary nostalgia’ by reimagining the exploration and conquest by the Empire.⁷⁸

Yet “empire” points backwards to a nineteenth-century approach to exploration; by the mid-twentieth century, the concept of “empire” had wavered, but the relationships with those symbols of banal nationalism built of imperial relationships remained. *A Book of Mediterranean Food* shifts the celebration of British imperial power away from colonisation and towards a forward-looking celebration of international relationships by channelling a tempered version of exploration. With an empire at its most fragile, David’s writing invokes strength from the image of the border-transgressing explorer. Just as the second half of the second millennium saw Britain’s aggressive and sustained expansion into the New World and the importation of countless goods and culinary habits, so the new United Kingdom of the twentieth century saw Britain reach out and connect with other nation-states with whom colonial links had otherwise only been tenuously made.

Rationing is inherently coded as a conservative method of sacrificing some behaviours for the sake of preserving others. In the case of the Second World War, the preservation of Empire rested on the sustaining of key aspects of national identity, balanced with the pragmatism of self-sufficiency; while endogenous

⁷⁷ Carruth, pp. 785-6.

⁷⁸ Carruth, pp. 785-6.

vegetables allow the public to incorporate the nation into themselves in this contracted culinary sphere, exogenous tea leaves and sugar reinforce the colonial relationships between Britain and the world. The ideologies of banal nationalism as constructed through rationing require a moral underpinning, hence the emphasis with which this propaganda—including the rationing recipe—approached egalitarian, nationalistic puritanism that put the well-being of the nation-state above that of the individual. Yet when the war concluded, the sense of “unjust” rationing and pyrrhic victory led to a climate which allowed Elizabeth David to publish a text which both indulged a sensory experience of eating and allowed for a sense of escapism from bleak rationing.

Following Britain’s trailing of France in the aestheticisation of food in the last half of the nineteenth century, coupled with the puritanical approach to food during the Second World War, it is not surprising that while the writing of ‘dirty’ or exotic, hungry words may breach the propriety of rationing, David uses it to establish differences between England and the Mediterranean as ideologically opposed in their approaches to food. Elizabeth David’s writing treats food as a sensory pleasure, not just a moral or bodily need, nor eating as a purely masculine endeavour. *A Book of Mediterranean Food*’s success is the illusion of the satiation of hunger and the recognition of a hunger beyond the mundane through the fantasy of recreation and abundance it stimulates by recreating the familial transmission of culinary knowledge that the British public craved following ten lean years of austerity. *A Book of Mediterranean Food* taps into a British sense of creolisation to encourage a culinary exploration in print and in the kitchen. Just as Constance Spry’s Coronation Chicken reaches to the past and present of Britain’s culinary history, David maps a new territory of culinary exploration onto the

Mediterranean, re-inscribing nationalism through the symbols of culinary absorption. While rationing texts looked back to sustain the nation, David and Spry offered a taste of a forward-looking present. A taste was all Britain ever needed.

Chapter III: Appetites

The problematizing of gender in Virginia Woolf's Between the Acts and Barbara Pym's Jane and Prudence

“Next to the kitchen, the library’s always the nicest room in the house.”¹

Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts* (1941)

“Oh, a man needs eggs!” said Mrs. Crampton, also looking pleased. This insistence on a man’s needs amused Jane. Men needed meat and eggs—well, yes, that might be allowed; but surely not more than women did?²

Barbara Pym, *Jane and Prudence* (1953)

For the British housewife, the Kitchen Front became the epicentre of public duty during the Second World War. While women were encouraged to serve within some public wartime roles (such as the Auxiliary Territorial Service or the “Land Girls” of the Woman’s Land Army), the rhetoric that merged private and public spheres emphasised women’s domestic roles as the most effective contribution to the war effort. Rationing, and the propaganda that surrounded consumption controls, were designed to aid the housewife’s ability ‘to cope with wartime problems more confidently than would otherwise have been the case,’³ and

¹ Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts* (1941) (Toronto: Penguin Random House, 2015), p. 27, Apple iBook.

² Barbara Pym, *Jane and Prudence* (1953) (London: Jonathan Cape, 1979), p. 51.

³ [Ministry of Food], *How Britain Was Fed in War Time: Food Control, 1939-1945* ([London]: HMSO, 1946), p. 50.

cooking well—that is, producing wholesome, filling meals, often from ersatz ingredients—was configured as her duty to sustaining family and nation.

The quotes from Virginia Woolf and Barbara Pym—the authors whose works *Between the Acts* (1941) and *Jane and Prudence* (1953) are at the centre of this chapter—articulate the authors’ anxieties around food and the division of gender during the Second World War austerity years, in particular the targeting of women as those from whom a domestic contribution was expected as part of the war effort and the imbalanced division of food according to gender. As explored in Chapter II, austerity domesticity was constructed as a woman’s duty; according to Alice B. McLean, rationing literature codified culinary behaviours and expectations, ‘eschew[ing] pleasure and defin[ing] the proper housewife as dutifully bound to the home and economically minded.’⁴ The pleasures of gastronomy and, as a corollary, the anti-egalitarian pursuits of aestheticism and poetic self-expression ideologically oppose the domesticity expected of the housewife. It is no coincidence that this duty-versus-aestheticism also maps over the mind-body dichotomy, where the needs of the body are reflected in rationing’s nutritionally-focused recipes, while pleasures, or the fulfilment of the mind or palate, are coded excessive or indulgent. In particular, austerity domesticity configures intellectualism, and gastronomy and its sensual rewards, as forbidden to or undesirable in women. By problematizing the trappings of domestic ideologies, gendered food distribution, and the assumption that women’s roles are anti-intellectual, Woolf and Pym open a dialogue about mid-century gender identity and the limitations that conservative, patriarchal thinking structures

⁴ Alice B. McLean, *Aesthetic Pleasure in Twentieth-Century Women’s Food Writing: The Innovative Appetites of M.F.K. Fisher, Alice B. Toklas, and Elizabeth David* (New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 1-2.

placed on women through the austerity era. For the sake of the kitchen, the library does not have to go to waste.

Woolf's posthumously-published novel *Between the Acts* explores the peculiar gap between the fragmented and isolated internal realm of the mind and the intimate external realm of the body, flitting through allusion and a stream-of-consciousness narrative to offer a day in the lives of the people celebrating a pageant at Pointz Hall somewhere in rural England. Woven throughout the text is a sense in which divisions infinitely demarcate and divide the people at Pointz Hall on that June day; from Isabella Oliver's fragmented thoughts, to the separation of the audience and performers of Miss La Trobe's pageant, to Mrs Manresa's corporeality and the irreconcilability of class differences as constructed by Woolf.

The opposition of between Mrs Manresa and Isa Oliver in *Between the Acts* highlights the apparently irreconcilable embodiments of the mind-body division within Woolf's text, which requires some theoretical grounding. While philosophically naïve, mind-body dualism remains a persistent trope in Western thinking and serves as a valuable tool for delineating personhood in literature. Throughout the Western canon of thought, the mind-body dualism favours the intangibility and supposed immortality of knowledge and the mind, argued to be superior to the decaying, demanding body. In addition, the body is said to be the external articulation of internal processes and the expression of one's culinary habits in a relationship of connections that Paul Schilbert calls a "gestalt"⁵ and

⁵ An English term borrowed from German, meaning *shape, form, person (or their image)*. Paul Schilder, *The Image and Appearance of the Human Body* (London: Routledge, 1950), pp. 13-4.

what Pierre Bourdieu terms the “habitus”.⁶ In a low fat era of belt-tightening “make-do”, the corpulent body indicates both an abundance of food kept from the egalitarian guidelines of rationing, and what Bourdieu calls *laissez-aller*, a lack of restraint (or unconstrained freedom) and a ‘culpable surrender to facility.’⁷ Conversely, the body without excess is one that expresses control, restraint and a prioritisation of need over want. The “good” eater is the one who takes exactly their share and no more: ‘A clear plate means a clear conscience’ reads one British propaganda poster; ‘Don’t take more than you can eat.’⁸

In *Understanding Eating Disorders* Simone Giordano argues that throughout Western thought the mind is placed above the body in a ‘pursuit of lightness’ that values the intangible, via connotations of spirit, the measure of weight and the sensory qualities of sight.⁹ Thus anorexia and bulimia nervosa, in her thesis, are not results of dysfunctional logic, but the result of taking moral judgements about the mind and body to their logical conclusion.¹⁰ If the body is used to advertise one’s access to food capital, and those who “go without” for the

⁶ Bourdieu defines *habitus* as ‘systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them.’ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, [trans. Richard Nice] (California: Stanford University Press, 1990), p. 53.

⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, ‘Taste of Luxury, Taste of Necessity’, in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. by Carolyn Korsmeyer (Oxford: Berg, 2005), p. 76.

⁸ ‘A Clear Plate Means a Clear Conscience—Don’t Take More Than You Can Eat’, *Imperial War Museums* <<http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/9300>> [accessed 12 May 2016].

⁹ Simone Giordano, *Understanding Eating Disorders: Conceptual and Ethical Issues in the Treatment of Anorexia and Bulimia Nervosa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), p. 94.

¹⁰ Giordano, p. 4.

sake of the nation are valued highly and those who indulge demonstrate antithetical greed, then by corollary the value of success and moral uprightness is also that of lightness.¹¹ Conversely, “fat” is seen as ugly by what it problematically connotes: laziness, self-disrespect, lack of control.¹²

Gendered eating takes this moral coding and lays it over the differences of the sexes. Although ideologically opposed, because the nineteenth-century gastronomic text and domestic cookbook both code eating as a masculine endeavour, as McLean observes,¹³ the male appetite is not seen as a failure of spirit but a primary characteristic of masculinity. Bourdieu’s cultural analysis supports this: he observes that women ‘don’t have a taste for men’s food, which is reputed to be harmful when eaten to excess.’¹⁴ The problematic conclusion is that the woman who eats heartily or to excess fails to perform an expectation of womanhood and therefore fails to perform as a moral, “light” being, and ‘may even arouse a sort of disgust’ as Bourdieu suggests.¹⁵ It is a logic that troublingly places men’s needs over women’s: ‘Aesthetic judgements [...] are thus value judgements,’¹⁶ writes Giordano, and therefore a tool by which the reader might assign value judgements to figures according to assumptions about their mutually significant moral or bodily dimensions.

The inverse relationship between food and knowledge, and the value of “real” (cultural) and economic capital (possession and consumption of goods),

¹¹ Giordano articulates the perceived equivalence between moral strength and lightness with respect to the logic behind eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa. Giordano, pp. 103-4.

¹² Giordano, p. 105.

¹³ McLean, p. 2.

¹⁴ Bourdieu, p. 75.

¹⁵ Bourdieu, p. 75.

¹⁶ Giordano, p. 105.

hinges on the pursuit of lightness and the value placed on the psychic over the physical. Isa Oliver's bodily form is described early in the text as 'like a bolster in its faded dressing-gown', '[t]hick of waist, large of limb', but as Andrea Adolph observes, the body image of Isa soon fades, replaced with an abstract image constructed for the reader from Isa's poetic quips and psychic connections with the world.¹⁷ Isa is metaphorically disembodied by her failure to connect with the material world that reflects a negative relationship towards consumption; she fails to buy the clothes she admires, nor does she approach a culinary appetite with any gusto. Indeed, food is coded as a distraction and a nuisance: on the morning of the pageant, Isa calls for an order of sole, "'though whether it'll be fresh or not I can't promise. But veal is dear, and everybody in the house is sick of beef and mutton".¹⁸ While freshness, cost and variety were preoccupations of the housewife on the kitchen front, Isa frames each as a matter of despair rather than duty or challenge, a distraction from the internal processes which go to defining her character as language-bound. Conversely, when words fail as they do in the pageant in an 'indescribable horror', Isa uses drink to free herself and her husband Giles from circumstance by 'abruptly, half purposely, knock[ing] over a coffee cup.'¹⁹ Isa is occupied instead with "abortive" poetic musings that issue forth from her mind and occasionally her lips that indicate a reverse relationship to eating and food; 'book-shy,' yet clearly educated, she finds sustenance in the production of language rather than the consumption of food. Isa's relationship to

¹⁷ Andrea Adolph, 'Luncheon at "The Leaning Tower": Consumption and Class in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*', *Women's Studies*, 34 (2005), p. 449, <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00497870500277849>>.

¹⁸ *Acts*, p. 30.

¹⁹ *Acts*, p. 87.

food indicates a favouring of cultural, rather than economic capital, yet one that also configures an appetite for language as one that sustains her.

Isa's poor relationship to food is made clearest when contrasted against her photonegative, Mrs Manresa, paradigmatically opposed according to what Andrea Adolph observes are the values of what she calls "real" (economic) and cultural capital assigned to Mrs Manresa and Isa respectively.²⁰ Adolph argues, via Bourdieu's assertion that cultural capital is associated with aesthetic consumption and excess consumption with vulgarity, and through Mrs Manresa's excessive consumption and Isa's delicate, contemplative manner and literary allusion, that cultural capital is ultimately the more desirable form.²¹ While Isa exists in a psychic space, the narrative links 'vulgar' Mrs Manresa, whose 'flesh poured over her,'²² and the external articulations of her inner habits. Mrs Manresa's arrival in the narrative has her immediately linked with food, hoping to enjoy her champagne lunch at the Oliver's residence before the pageant. The image of Mrs Manresa, drinking champagne and ogling the others at luncheon, and counting the stones of her cherry tart to confirm that 'she was a wild child of nature,'²³ sets the foundation for her character's appetite—an appetite for pleasure that eschews a domestic aesthetic and betrays her status as a new member of the middle class.

It is evident that pleasure and sensation are prime for Mrs Manresa, whose newfound possession of economic capital has afforded her the performance of the luxuries of taste and freedom. While this display contradicts Bourdieu's

²⁰ Andrea Adolph, *Food and Femininity in Twentieth-Century British Women's Fiction* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p. 30.

²¹ *Food and Femininity*, p. 30.

²² *Acts*, p. 295.

²³ *Acts*, p. 73.

observation that class preferences tend to persist with changes of economic circumstances,²⁴ it illustrates Mrs Manresa's enthusiasm to be a society player and incorporate herself into the community through pleasures she assumes are consistent with her understanding of the class. She exhibits something akin to the pauses, but not the restraint Bourdieu says are characteristic of the middle class.²⁵ Nothing should get in the way of pleasure, as her coffee drinking makes clear:

She looked before she drank. Looking was part of drinking. Why waste sensation, she seemed to ask, why waste a single drop that can be pressed out of this ripe, this melting, this adorable world? Then she drank. And the air round her became threaded with sensation.²⁶

The wholly sensuous experience of drinking a cup of coffee connects her with the world, with the invisible threads that link her with the grass and autumn breezes, and Giles Oliver with whom she flirts; like the five outward wits (and, as Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin adds, 'physical love'²⁷), the cup of coffee is a means by which one places oneself in relation to the world beyond the physical habitus. While Isa Oliver's relationship to the world is abstract, through poetic quips and literary musings, Mrs Manresa's freedom of consumption connects her body to the world through sensual pleasures.

As briefly explored in Chapter II, women's sensuality has been historically treated with suspicion owing to the associations between appetite, consumption

²⁴ Bourdieu, p. 74.

²⁵ Bourdieu, p. 77.

²⁶ *Acts*, p. 82.

²⁷ Jean-Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, 'On Taste', in *Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. by Carolyn Korsmeyer (Oxford: Berg, 2005), p. 15.

and sexuality, in part due to the notion that eating—and therefore sexuality—is coded as a masculine endeavour, and that

[a]s masculine domains, consumption and sexuality are strictly forbidden to women, and, because one signifies the other, [a woman's] forays into excess with regard to food consumption imply that [a woman's] sexuality should also be inspected for breaches of propriety, just as with the dirty home or the unhygienic body that is inspected for signs of sin.²⁸

As noted earlier, in England food habits are generally conservative and as a result associate excess and indulgence with impropriety and “sin”,²⁹ as British food attitudes code extravagant eating as a palpable surrender to the body's urges. In the case of Mrs Manresa, the associations between consumption and the body through sensuality as foregrounded earlier in her coffee serve and which define her relationship between consumption and pleasure reveal her sensuality:

She took the little silver cream jug and let the smooth fluid curl luxuriously into her coffee, to which she added a shovel full of brown sugar candy. Sensuously, rhythmically, she stirred the mixture round and round.³⁰

Woolf constructs Manresa's act of serving herself as eroticised through the tongue-rolling L-sounds and adverbs, and the delicate repetition that takes sensual pleasure in the act of food preparation. Mrs Manresa's generous self-administered

²⁸ *Food and Femininity*, p. 95.

²⁹ Allison James, ‘How British is British Food’, p. 82.

See also Allison James, ‘The good, the bad, and the delicious: the role of confectionary in British society’, in *Sociological Review* 39, 1990, pp. 666-88.

³⁰ *Acts*, p. 81.

serve indicates a lack of self-conscious restraint; she is not afraid of consumption, and by association “sins” of the flesh.

Isa, whose character represents the mental domain and a sensuality-free middle-class life, however, craves water but little else: she observes Giles and Lucy nibbling; twitches, jealous, as Manresa melts into her coffee; but for Isa bodily pleasures—and the intrusion of Mrs Manresa into her home—are abstract and distracting. Bodily Manresa fits poorly among the Olivers, who silently regard her decorum-breaching speech and manners as a kind of break from social conventions that serve to separate her further: ‘But what a desirable, at least valuable, quality it was—for everybody felt, directly she spoke, “She’s said it, she’s done it, not I”.’³¹ As a new member of the middle class, Mrs Manresa’s behaviour reflects a poorly calculated attempt at performing middle class dress and food consumption; she *performs* middle-class pleasures, assuming and encouraging the same for the women of the town: ‘Pleasure’s what they want’ Isa recalls Mrs Manresa saying at one point, drawing attention to Mrs Manresa’s tendency to indulge her free time teaching the women ‘*not* how to pickle and preserve; but how to weave frivolous baskets out of coloured straw.’³²

Discussing sensuality and sexuality in relation to *Between the Acts*, Andrea Adolph remarks that part of the reason for the anxiety surrounding Mrs Manresa is in part due to the character’s transgressive sexuality;³³ the name “Manresa” puns “man-raiser”, as well as ‘the Manresa’ (man razer) as Isa calls

³¹ *Acts*, p. 61.

³² *Acts*, p. 63. Author’s emphasis.

³³ Adolph, ‘Luncheon’, p. 445.

her.³⁴ Expanding on this sensuality argument, Adolph notes the cultural anxieties are also felt because the

fear of the oversexed, consuming woman is also intimately connected with middle-class fears of being displaced from the socio-economic order through the class mobility that occurred between the world wars.³⁵

This is, in part, according to Rita Felski's observation, that for the trope of the consuming woman, satisfaction is 'impossible because there is no objective need that is being addressed.'³⁶ Because there is no end goal in this hungry version of capitalism, there is no finite end to the ways in which Mrs Manresa may encroach on the middle-class lifestyle of the Olivers and their associates. Articulated through her appetite, Mrs Manresa's embodiment and her class work in tandem, each defining the other and in turn defining her character. Hers is a mixture of middle class wealth and working class manners and as a result, she is out of place in the village; when she arrives at Pointz Hall she says in working class slang "'We have our grub. We have our glasses. We ask nothing but—",' to which the narrative voice adds 'society apparently, to be with her kind.'³⁷ What 'her kind' is exactly the narrator fails to elucidate, but this passage suggests it is neither working nor middle class, but something on the border: common people with new wealth and a similar approach to economic capital who would be equally marginal on their own but whom would surely conglomerate together and possibly displace the middle class at Pointz Hall.

³⁴ *Acts*, p. 156.

³⁵ Adolph, 'Luncheon', p. 445.

³⁶ Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 78.

³⁷ *Acts*, p. 57.

By transgressing class and cultural borders, Mrs Manresa figures as a relatively progressive figure, one who cannot be defined by existing class and gender paradigms which in turn reflect Woolf's feminist critique of the fascism of modernism, and which further upsets the notion of a simple mind-body division. Colonial, border- and class-crossing, ambiguously faith-coded, an object of amusement and sexual frustration, Mrs Manresa cannot be comfortably categorised, something that makes her both problematic and refreshing, which explains some of the text's ambivalence towards her. Liminality and the broaching of borders recur throughout *Between the Acts*, in the repeated references to the doorways at which people linger, the interruptions of poetry by the physical world for Isa (and vice versa), or the music of the gramophone and the sound of military aircraft into the pseudo-reality of the pageant; the title alone hints at the uncertain identity of the "in-between" of the Modernist period between the two World Wars. Mrs Manresa's intrusion at luncheon and her own ability to perform middle-class consumption habits yet considering herself "on a level with ... the servants"³⁸ speaks to a failure of either the working or middle classes to contain her consuming character. The devaluation of Mrs Manresa's femininity according to the consuming-masculine paradigm, however, ultimately draws attention to anxieties surrounding the anti-domestic woman and the transgression of patriarchal orders which, as discussed earlier, served to push women into limited domestic roles during the Second World War that focussed on duty to the body. Yet equally poorly suited to the kitchen, Isa also fails in the domestic domain. While Woolf rejects the domestic agenda for women, she ultimately favours the psychic realm as more desirable over the physical. Just as

³⁸ *Acts*, p. 66.

Isa is liberated from her physical form by Woolf's emphasis on language-based representation, by giving up 'dealing with her figure' Mrs Manresa too 'thus gain[s] freedom' from bodily duty and domesticity.³⁹

The failure of categorisation speaks to the fractured nature of identity within the text as well as the unstable nature of society and the individual. Across her corpus, and woven particularly clearly in *A Room of One's Own* (1929), Woolf spoke freely about the disparity between the opportunities available to men and women,⁴⁰ including the fact she was denied the opportunity to attend university on the basis of her gender.⁴¹ In *A Room of One's Own* Woolf compares a luncheon at the male-centric "Oxbridge" (drawn from Oxford and Cambridge colleges) of sole in cream sauce, partridge with salad, potatoes, and a sugar confection for dessert, with a humble dinner at female-centric "Fernham" (from Newnham College) of gravy soup, beef with greens and potatoes, and prunes in custard. After comparing the meals, questions swarm Woolf: 'Why was one sex so prosperous and the other so poor? What effect has poverty on fiction? What conditions are necessary for the creation of works of art?'⁴² If, as Woolf says, the 'lamp in the spine does not light on beef and prunes,'⁴³ then the disparity between the treatment of the sexes ultimately signals a fascist patriarchy that makes women's creative and intellectual processes secondary to men's, a disparity with which Woolf struggled. In the space between the acts, the failure to bridge the gap between genders echoes the failure to synthesise successfully mind and body and

³⁹ *Acts*, p. 63.

⁴⁰ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (Glasgow: Collins, 1985).

⁴¹ 'Virginia Woolf - Modernism Lab Essays'

<https://modernism.research.yale.edu/wiki/index.php/Virginia_Woolf>
[accessed 10 June 2016].

⁴² *Room*, p. 28.

⁴³ *Room*, p. 19.

the failure of communication as thematic elements throughout the text. The gulf between Isa and her husband Giles widens throughout the text as a result of their inability to articulate their internal processes and communicate with one another; Isa's murmured lines of poetry are not worth recording; the artistic vision of Miss La Trobe—failed tea shop keeper, failed actress—fails because the world of the play cannot reach the world of the audience as intended; all is 'orts, scraps and fragments,'⁴⁴ reflected piecemeal to the audience at the end of the play.

The interruptions and fractures, rather than simply reflecting the irreconcilability of the psychic fault lines and the gulf between people, speaks to the absurdity of fragmentation and the creation that emerges from it. The passage at the conclusion of *Between the Acts* speaks to a Hegelian attempt at synthesis:

[T]hey must fight; after they had fought, they would embrace. From that embrace another life might be born. But first they must fight, as the dog fox fights with the vixen, in the heart of darkness, in the fields of night.⁴⁵

The possibility of synthesis is a 'maybe' only; the failure of synthesis on other levels throughout the text, including class and gender, somewhat undermine Woolf's feminist agenda. The image of the toad and the snake imagines a negative solution in Woolf's narrative, however. Giles comes across the snake choking on the toad: 'The snake was unable to swallow, the toad was unable to die. A spasm made the ribs contract; blood oozed.'⁴⁶ The struggle results in death, bloodshed, a 'monstrous inversion' of birth.⁴⁷ Giles's solution is violence, action: 'raising his

⁴⁴ *Acts*, p. 268.

⁴⁵ *Acts*, p. 310.

⁴⁶ *Acts*, p. 140.

⁴⁷ *Acts*, p. 140.

foot, he stamped on them,⁴⁸ a solution to the struggle, but a bloody and permanent one. If the fractures may be successfully synthesised then it cannot be through a violent, masculine agenda, but a contemplative feminine one that channels Woolf's own pacifist and anti-fascist agendas made evident in *Three Guineas* (1938). Here Woolf acknowledges the limited position 'daughters of educated men' may take between the immorality and servility of the public house and the pugnacity and greed of the public world, calling into question the fascism of patriarchal domesticity.⁴⁹ Ultimately, the way in which Woolf self-consciously resists domesticity and draws attention to the failures of representation and the fractures of the psyche serve to question the ongoing struggle with patriarchal ways of being.

Female figures that upset the notion of a quantity theory of the self—of a finite "self" to be distributed unevenly between the mind and body, but with the pursuit of balance—allow authors to offer an idea of feminine identity independent of early twentieth-century paradigms of female domesticity, duty and subservience to men. Written between 1950 and 1952, Barbara Pym's *Jane and Prudence* uses the titular figures to destabilise post-war expectations for women and problematize binary characterisation and the motif of the consuming woman as feminine and sexual. Pym's text consciously reflects the notions of gendered appetites Bourdieu claims are inscribed and re-inscribed from birth, and uses them to draw attention to the ways in which the distribution of goods according to gender presents issues for the post-war woman.

⁴⁸ *Acts*, p. 140.

⁴⁹ Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1952).

Meat, scarce during the war and scarcer after, is used to illustrate the inequalities of distribution between men and women throughout *Jane and Prudence*. Annette Weld notes in *Barbara Pym and the Novel of Manners* that ‘Pym recognised that food could be an indicator of social status, with women usually short-changed, as a diary entry from this period notes: “Lunch with Barbara Evean at Simpsons—gorgeous roast beef. Men eating meat—and never is a woman given as much as a man”.’⁵⁰ Meat becomes a refrain throughout the Pym’s novel, with ‘a man must have meat’ or some variation thereof used to signal the imbalance of distribution of goods according to status, and the quote from *Jane and Prudence* that opens this chapter evidently draws on Pym’s real-life experience. A once-scholarly vicar’s wife and failing housewife, utterly incapable in the kitchen beyond tin-opening, Jane lunches with her husband Nicholas at a local teashop. After some to-and-fro, the hostess-cook Mrs Crampton emerges from behind a velvet curtain and places

in front of Jane a plate containing an egg, a rasher of bacon and some fried potatoes cut in fancy shapes, and in front of Nicholas a plate with two eggs and rather more potatoes.⁵¹

The imbalance does not go unnoticed by Jane, nor by her husband who accepts his more generous helping ‘and the implication that his needs were more important than his wife’s with a certain amount of complacency.’⁵² Jane imagines this is, in part, due to his status as a clergyman; however, young Mr Oliver soon enters the teashop and receives ‘a plate laden with roast chicken and all the proper

⁵⁰ As quoted in Annette Weld, *Barbara Pym and the Novel of Manners* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992), p. 100.

⁵¹ Pym, p. 51.

⁵² Pym, p. 51.

accompaniments' which he accepts with similar complacency as Nicholas.⁵³ A plate of roast chicken with accompaniments may appear odd during rationing; the meals in *Jane and Prudence* are far from dissatisfying or plagued by post-war shortages. Rather than focussing on the post-war austerity, Pym's food images highlight gendered discrepancies and the problematic distribution of food within a constructed fantasy of relative plenty. The emphasis on meat for men follows Bourdieu's argument that meat, 'strong and strong-making, giving vigour, blood, and health, is the dish for the men, who take a second helping, whereas the women are satisfied with a small portion.'⁵⁴ The implicit support of meat distribution according to Bourdieu's paradigm by Mrs Crampton, Nicholas and Mr Oliver reflects ingrained attitudes toward the expectations of masculine consumption according to quantity and quality, and Jane's—and therefore Pym's—ironic awareness of this brings this inequality to the fore.

As rationing slowly relaxed its grip on distribution in the 1950s, public serving habits such as those outlined above betrayed British attitudes towards egalitarianism and pushed women into pre-war paradigms of femininity according to assumed appetites. It is precisely this paradigm of gendered appetites that amuses and bemuses Jane, who agrees that men need 'meat and eggs — well, yes, that might be allowed; but surely not more than women did?'⁵⁵ It is a short-lived musing, however; Jane soon concludes that the expectation remains that 'Man needs bird [...]. Just the very best, that is what man needs.'⁵⁶ The imbalance of meat serves as a marker of distinction whereby men are placed on a higher plane according to his "needs"; according to Bourdieu's paradigm, masculine

⁵³ Pym, pp. 51-2.

⁵⁴ Bourdieu, p. 75.

⁵⁵ Pym, p. 51.

⁵⁶ Pym, p. 52.

consumption habits may be ‘harmful’ to women, and a betrayal of prescribed gendered appetites.⁵⁷ While rationing entitled all adults to equal portions of meat,⁵⁸ the idea that men required more meat than women would lead to the short-changing of women Pym records in her diary and in *Jane and Prudence*. “Bird” also invokes the sense of “young woman”,⁵⁹ linking the culinary appetite with the sexual one, both of which are codified as masculine traits and ones by which women are devalued according to the patriarchal ideas of consumption.

Pym challenges prescriptivism by drawing attention to the post-war concepts of gendered appetites and distribution and allows the reader to acknowledge the trappings of cultural ideas and ideals of a woman for whom consuming harms her femininity. This is particularly pertinent to the post-war environment; while the Second World War encouraged conservative domesticity for the sake of the nation, Pym observes that, as Britain recovered from the war, it began to fall into the patriarchal structures observed before wartime egalitarianism by offering men the greater servings of food to which they were apparently entitled by their gender.

This relationship between meat and men recurs by way of drawing attention to food status imbalances, linking the realms of gender and morality. Throughout the book the quip ‘meat offered to idols’ transposes food into a spiritual realm, first appearing when Jane and the Clevelands move to their new parish and are presented with a blood-stained bundle of liver from the house carer Mrs Glaze. Jane is keen to eat her liver supper before Father Lomax arrives for

⁵⁷ Bourdieu, p. 75.

⁵⁸ Distributed according to cost, not weight.

⁵⁹ ‘Bird, n.’, *OED Online* (Oxford University Press)
<<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/view/Entry/19327>> [accessed 21 June 2016].

tea, for fear the Clevelands will be found indulging in sacrosanct meat. Mrs Glaze assures Jane that “Father Lomax will have had his liver last time [...]. And he will have it *next* time.”⁶⁰ While the gesture of meat to the newest vicar and his family is undoubtedly a generous one, it indicates the way in which a time of scarcity in the country raises the status of meat, including offal. At the same time, however, meat is readily available in the city, particularly for men. Pym uses the city space to articulate the overt imbalance of food distribution according to Bourdieu’s gendered consumption paradigm; in the country space, closer to the soil and the means of production, the relative rarity of meat raises its significance on the dinner table. Jane remarks that the assurance of the next supply of meat

“won’t be much consolation to him now, [...] so he had better not see us eating it. Like meat offered to idols,” she went on. “You will remember that St. Paul had no objection to the faithful eating it, but pointed out that it might prove a stumbling block to the weaker brethren — not that Father Lomax would be that, of course.”⁶¹

Here the morality arguments that configure consumption as antithetical to the pursuits of the spirit or soul are reconfigured; consumption, particularly of meat, is permitted if one has the spiritual strength to transcend the trappings of the body. If the *truly* faithful are allowed to consume meat, and post-war distribution of meat favoured men according to Bourdieu’s consumption models, then this problematically implies men are the *spiritually* stronger of the sexes; for a woman to eat meat before clergyman is to upset the hierarchies that undergird these distinctions. It is no surprise Pym draws attention to the return of pre-war assumptions regarding meat distribution according to sex, for they conform to

⁶⁰ Pym, p. 21. Author’s emphasis.

⁶¹ Pym, p. 21.

patriarchal models which place men's needs as physically, morally and spiritually more valid than those of women. Ironically, Lomax absently dismisses the plate of biscuits offered over coffee; a display of his devotion to matters of spirit over body as might be deemed fitting for a representative of faith, and a dismissal of the delicate, feminine biscuit.

Jane's domestic failures and abandonment of academia allow her to conform superficially to a mind-versus-body paradigm without overtly challenging or drawing attention to the problems of gendered appetites. Domestically, the other characters regard Jane with suspicion. The kitchen is 'a part of the house in which [Jane] took little interest,' and she suggests to Mrs Glaze that in London she purchased her vegetables rather than growing them in the small London garden she recently possessed.⁶² Like Isa in *Between the Acts*, Jane's passive temperament means she admires food, 'but in the abstract, as it were,'⁶³ signalling an indifference towards matters of the body and preoccupation with mind supported by her early, but now stillborn academic work. For Jane, the pleasure of food is a hypothetical concept of which she is aware but incapable of achieving, though there are signs of the development of domestic performance in her noble attempts to bottle plums and begin engaging with the domestic rituals of country life.⁶⁴ Andrea Adolph argues that her ability to be Prudence's friend, a vicar's wife, her daughter Flora's mother, and, it may be added, domestic housewife, 'are compromised by her intellectual attributes, though that intellectualism was long ago thwarted by expectations for feminine conformity.'⁶⁵

⁶² Pym, p. 18.

⁶³ Pym, p. 73.

⁶⁴ Pym, p. 182.

⁶⁵ *Food and Femininity*, p. 103.

Jane is then Isa's mirror double: a liminal figure of the abstract rather than the corporeal. But to compartmentalise Jane as purely aligning to dimensions of the mind would do her and Pym disservice and fail to fully appreciate the text: Adolph argues that, for Jane, a lavish attitude to food or her household would defy propriety, so Jane's poor relationships with food are 'precisely those required of a vicar's wife.'⁶⁶ Further, because she fails to participate in the schemes that encourage domestic duty over intellectual pursuits and continually doubts and questions the systems in place such as those that entitle men to more meat, Jane fails to conform—or resists conforming to—a domestic identity favourable in war and post-war models of femininity.⁶⁷

While Jane represents a canned domesticity and a resistance to the pursuits of the bodily dimension, her friend and former student, the twenty-nine-year-old clerk Prudence Bates, stands in apparent antithesis in her connection to pleasure and appetite without straying as far into the corporeal as Mrs Manresa. Prudence is far more preoccupied with the sensuality of life than Jane, though they are both aware of the contemporary disjuncture between gender and consumption entitlement. It is Prudence's connection to sensuality, however, which marks her as far more threatening to domesticity and patriarchy. Attuned to the most recent fashions as they appear in *Vogue* and adventurous in the kitchen, Jane represents a more progressive model of femininity that defies the mind-body duality. At one point, she prepares a respectable meal that undoubtedly draws on the imagery of Elizabeth David and *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (1950), published a few short years before *Jane and Prudence*:

⁶⁶ *Food and Femininity*, p. 102.

⁶⁷ *Food and Femininity*, pp. 103-4.

There was a little garlic in the oily salad and the cheese was nicely ripe. The table was laid with all the proper accompaniments and the coffee which followed the meal was not made out of a tin or bottle.⁶⁸

During rationing, olive oil (used primarily for industrial purposes until the eve of the Second World War),⁶⁹ garlic, and imported cheeses were exceedingly rare, erotically exotic and expensive (see below), so Prudence's solitary dinner represents a pointed rejection of austerity conventions and demonstrates her freedom from gendered and societal trappings which restrict sensual pleasures and appetites to the male domain.

Prudence's culinary freedom and the sumptuousness of her private dining are at odds, however, with the general economy of rationing and inconsistent with public dining expectations. Andrea Adolph helpfully elucidates that the price of smoked salmon and brie—two foods about which Prudence often thinks: during November of 1949, one pound of smoked salmon cost £16/0 sliced, and £11/3 unsliced (in British pounds and New Zealand dollars approximately £500/\$900 and £355/\$640 in 2016);⁷⁰ imported cheeses, when available, were sold for around 4/0 per pound (£125/\$225).⁷¹ By contrast, smoked bacon cost 2/4 per pound

⁶⁸ Pym, p. 47.

⁶⁹ Ramon Ramon-Muñoz, 'Specialization in the International Market for Olive Oil before World War II', in *The Mediterranean Response to Globalization Before 1950*, ed. by Sevket Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 159-98.

⁷⁰ Figures represent best approximate conversions between predecimalised British pounds/shillings/pence, the 2016 British pound sterling and the 2016 New Zealand dollar. At time of writing, 500 grams of smoked salmon can be purchased for approximately £32.50 (\$58 NZD) from chain supermarkets in Britain, or \$40 in New Zealand.

⁷¹ *Food and Femininity*, pp. 95-6.

(£70/\$130).⁷² It is difficult to see how Prudence's clerical work could sustain her solitary accommodation filled with Regency furniture, a forward fashion sense and costly food choices. However, just as Elizabeth David's mid-century gastronomic literature reclaims sensual consumption from a historically male authored and male-targeted sphere, Prudence's private eating, as incredible as it may seem, rejects conventions of ahedonistic, conservative female appetites to dismantle the notion of women's duty-bound eating through the fantasy of the exotic and the plentiful. The illusion of private unfettered access to food without limitations of economy or assumptions of gender is what makes her lifestyle a desirable fiction. Although Jane and Prudence superficially appear to satisfy a mind-body paradigm that conforms to domestic rhetoric of the era, their full characters are anything but; their private resistances draw attention to the unfairness of gendered consumption and the assumptions made according the domestic contribution expected of articulate, intelligent women.

While Jane is aware of the division of the sexes according to meat distribution, Prudence sees the division also according to sensory experience. On the way to lunch, she imagines her employer Arthur Grampian in his men's club, where 'undistinguished-looking but probably famous men could be seen hurrying.'⁷³ In part, public restaurant dining privileges a wealthy audience and encourages the display of wealthy individuals eating, but ultimately this is one favouring men in positions of power and economic capital. Prudence compares these men

⁷² It was likely that smoked salmon would have been more expensive when removed from price controls in April of 1950, around the time when Pym was drafting *Jane and Prudence. Food and Femininity*, pp. 95-6.

⁷³ Pym, p. 41.

alone, eating in a rather grand club with noble portals—and women alone, eating in a small, rather grimy restaurant which did a lunch for three and sixpence, including coffee. While Arthur Grampian was shaking the red pepper on to his smoked salmon, Prudence was having to choose between the shepherd's pie and the stuffed marrow.⁷⁴

Prudence lights on the dichotomy of public consumption, where male eating is configured as a public display of appetite and power according to demonstrations of meat-eating and access to a fuller spectrum of palatal pleasures; female eating suggests an inability to exhibit control over the bodily domain and a failure of the spirit, something to be kept private, limited and unstimulated. Pym's scene mirrors the previously described passage from Woolf in *A Room of One's Own*, where Woolf took umbrage with the fact "Oxbridge" men ate sole and partridge with a spectrum of wines, while the women of "Fernham" endured inferior beef and plain vegetables.⁷⁵ The disparity evident here and again reinforced by Bourdieu is that meat eating is for men, who need to be shown displaying virility and masculinity to other men and to the general public, while vegetarian choices emasculate the eater, hence the indulgence of men's appetites and the denial of women's appetites in both Pym's and Woolf's works. Like Jane's wish to eat liver without the audience of Father Lomax, public appetites in women are regarded with suspicion, as if threatening boundaries of expected, conservative, feminine behaviour.

⁷⁴ Pym, p. 41.

⁷⁵ Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (Glasgow: Collins, 1985), pp. 12-9.

Excessive male eating, however, is still regarded with discomfort, as Prudence reveals in the vegetarian restaurant. While walking to the cash desk, she spies her colleague Mr Manifold

eating—perhaps ‘tucking into’ would describe it better—the steamed pudding which Prudence had avoided as being too fattening. She had never seen him eating before and now she averted her eyes quickly, for there was something indecent about it, as if a mantle had fallen and revealed more of him than she ought to see.⁷⁶

In comparing the observation of Manifold’s voracious eating with an indecent exposure, Prudence’s metaphor draws together the inter-signified acts of consumption and sex. Coded along similar terms—in shared language, with their own grammatical rules and as bodily acts of pleasure and incorporation—the acts of sex and eating follow parallel lines. As a demonstration of strength and virility, gender conventions permit the public act of male eating and pleasure, whereas female eating that indulges excess or sensuality, and therefore sexuality, is subject to critical inspection. Although Manifold’s eating conforms to a masculine agenda, the impropriety of his hurried consumption exposes vulgar bodily urges and a lack of control, antithetical to Prudence’s restrained eating while reading Coventry Patmore and toying with her food.⁷⁷ Not only is the exposure undesirable, just as Prudence feels ‘disturbed and irritated’ at the thought of being

⁷⁶ Pym, p. 43.

⁷⁷ Pym, p. 41.

observed in the restaurant by Manifold,⁷⁸ but it also demonstrates Prudence and Manifold's supposedly antithetical statuses to one another.

Because Prudence's appetite displays an attunement to the pleasures of sensual exploration, her femininity and sexuality transgress the expected models of sexless femininity of the era. Yet Jane refers to Prudence more than once as a "spinster", a pejorative term for an older unmarried woman.⁷⁹ While Prudence is at 'an age that is often rather desperate for a woman who has not yet married,'⁸⁰ and acutely aware of this at lunch,⁸¹ her unmarried status comes from her fantasy's failure to correspond to reality rather than a lack of eligible men. While other unmarried Old Students have Ministry work and dogs, "Prudence has her love affairs," Jane suggests and not without affection.⁸² As Andrea Adolph points out, though Prudence has love affairs, her 'actual sexual behaviour is indeterminate: she neither confirms nor denies that her affair with Driver is a sexual one' and that, like garlic, Driver's good looks make him an object, 'just another example of Prudence's exotic desires.'⁸³

Privately, Prudence is more than willing to indulge in the culinary sensuality of Brie and garlic, and perhaps indulge her sexuality too with Fabian Driver; publicly and alone, however, her consumption shifts to more normative or expected eating and behavioural practices, more "spinster", dining on chicken and vegetables rather than smoked salmon to 'avoid suggestions of impropriety,' as

⁷⁸ Pym, p. 43.

⁷⁹ 'Spinster, n.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press)
<<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/view/Entry/186771>> [accessed 21 June 2016].

⁸⁰ Pym, p. 7.

⁸¹ Pym, p. 41.

⁸² Pym, p. 10.

⁸³ *Food and Femininity*, p. 98.

Adolph points out.⁸⁴ Public, solitary eating is coded as an exposed affair, a metaphor emphasised by the implications of impropriety at seeing Manifold eating, and a reason to retreat to convention for fear of exposure as woman with an appetite and the moral implications loaded onto such behaviour. Unwillingly Prudence offers a convincing public display of an educated woman who eats according to feminine, patriarchal expectation—slowly, privately, avoiding indulgence and excess—but privately allows herself the tastes of freedom from gender limitations. Further, by remaining unmarried Prudence maintains a relative independence from a societal convention that expects her to relinquish her autonomy for marriage. Adolph concludes that what defines Prudence as sexually—and, one could logically add, gastronomically—transgressive is ‘her inability to fit into the narrowly defined definition of femininity she is asked to perform as a woman of her time.’⁸⁵

By failing to conform to expected paradigms, Jane and Prudence tentatively threaten the patriarchal ideals that sought to push women further into domestic roles following the Second World War. Jane’s defiance of the paradigmatically domestic role and the cultural codes that foreground homemaking subtly refuses the pre- and post-war rhetoric of the one-dimensional woman; having been forced to almost fully abandon academia, she occupies a space poorly defined by the mind-body paradigm, one far from the caretaker role expected of women yet equally far from Prudence’s sensory disposition. Like Isa in *Between the Acts*, Jane and Prudence’s anxieties articulate the awareness of the gulf between men and women—in food distribution, communication, gender expectations—and the difficulties in closing an ever-widening gap. Prudence is a

⁸⁴ *Food and Femininity*, p. 95.

⁸⁵ *Food and Femininity*, p. 99.

consuming woman—of trans-national food, transatlantic fashion and the affection of others; she is a figure connected to private sensory experience she upsets the notion that sensuality should be denied to women on the ultimately moral grounds that permit greater freedom to men. While Prudence's private confidence should be lauded, her public confidence with regards to sensuality confine her to the patriarchal expectations of women to deny sensuality and which measures participation by a cultural norm built upon distance from physical expression. Like Mrs Manresa, Prudence is the consuming woman who threatens the boundaries between existing gender behaviours. Rather than occupying a less sympathetic space, however, Prudence begins to marry the pursuit of the physical and ephemeral. To a certain extent she achieves, though Jane's daughter Flora—adept in the kitchen, intelligent, studying at Oxford and with a new boyfriend by the end of the text—represents perhaps the most progressive figure in the text, a woman who rejects pure domesticity or academia and denies the quantity theory of the self. Those figures that upset the notion of “masculine” consumption and the associated sexual and moral consumption challenge masculinity from outside the conventions of the gender and destabilise the notion that a woman's contribution must be to the home, or that that contribution must be nutritionally focused.

Woolf and Pym demonstrate the mind-body paradigm's insufficiency in describing the gestalt of human experience. Both texts end with the promise of synthesis at some time yet to come: Giles and Isa must fight before they sleep; Prudence and Arthur will dine together some future evening. Yet Woolf understands that categorisation is a failure to appreciate the synthesis of being: an indeterminate one underpinned by the “us-and-them” rhetoric of war propaganda

and the demand for fixed, certain borders during a time of cultural anxiety. There is a promise of synthesis, but it cannot come from widening the gulf between genders, nor by stomping on the toad and the snake, by allowing the violence of the patriarchy to dominate the cultural landscape. At the other side of the war, Prudence claims some autonomy by choosing to date Arthur on her own terms. Those women in fiction who approach a successful, autonomous blend of mind and body offer a model for a mid-century woman that goes beyond domestic cookery books and homemaking guides, and ultimately, a threat to a limiting patriarchal order.

Conclusion: Grace, Revisited

The Legacy of Austerity

Much of [*Brideshead Revisited*] therefore is a panegyric preached over an empty coffin.¹

Evelyn Waugh, 'Preface' (1959) to *Brideshead Revisited* (1949)

Food looks like an object, but it is actually a relationship, and the same is true of literary works.²

Terry Eagleton, 'Edible écriture', 1998

This thesis began with the true but incomplete statement, undeniably inflected by Evelyn Waugh's attitude to soya beans and basic English, that food in Britain became vulgar with the outbreak of the Second World War. The commonality or mundanity of food across social strata in Britain came as a result of the bottleneck prescriptions of rationing that treated food as fuel necessary to sustain the nation. As Philippa Pullar remarks,

when the terror, the flames and the bomb smoke had cleared, when the lights had gone up on London and the food controls were lifted early in the 1950s, a strange phenomenon was to be seen. Under the

¹ Evelyn Waugh, 'Preface' (1959), in *Brideshead Revisited* (1949) (London: Penguin, 2011), pp. ix-x.

² Terry Eagleton, 'Edible écriture', in *Consuming Passions: Food in the Age of Anxiety*, ed. by Sian Griffiths and Jennifer Wallace (Manchester: Mandolin, 1998), pp. 204-5.

cover of the black-out, science had reached in and made off with the seasons.³

The canned, dehydrated and frozen goods on shelves apparently displaced the rich natural variety of Britain's culinary past for the sake of preserving the uncertain present. Yet food in Britain bloomed with the post-war Mediterranean movement, in part inspired by Elizabeth David's Mediterranean works; the lifting of agricultural controls in the 1950s resulted in an overabundance of eggs, bread and dairy, and, as a result, the proliferation of advertising schemes designed to encourage domestic consumption, ultimately leading to a rise in obesity in the 1960s.⁴ Personality chefs could be seen weekly on the television. Cosmopolitan dining drew from "fusion" cooking and Asian influences. Organic foods, molecular gastronomy and the slow food movement, to name a few, took turns as the fashionable foods of the bourgeoisie. The last decades of the twentieth century saw the cult of heritage emerge (exemplified in the National Heritage Act of 1980), conflating "local" and "traditional" with "quality", an ideology that underpins *Stilton* cheese, *Cornish* pasties, *Norfolk* turkeys, *Plymouth* gin, and so on.⁵ In the early years of the twenty-first century, *The Great British Bake Off* (2010) capitalised on patriotic pride in Britain's long and complex culinary history,⁶ while television chef Jamie Oliver offered austerity tourism in *Save with*

³ Philippa Pullar, *Consuming Passions: A History of English Food and Appetite*, (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1971), p. 216.

⁴ Pullar, pp. 221-2.

⁵ John Corner and Sylvia Harvey, 'Mediating Tradition and Modernity: The Heritage/enterprise Couplet', in *Enterprise and Heritage: Crosscurrents of National Culture*, ed. by John Corner and Sylvia Harvey (London: Routledge, 1991); Raphael Samuel, 'Exciting to Be English', in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity Volume III* (London: Routledge, 1989); Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1985).

⁶ *The Great British Bake Off*, BBC2 (London, 2010).

Jamie (2013) and a series of associated television broadcasts.⁷ The legacy of Britain's rationing years extends far beyond the artefacts of the war; rather, this period forms a point of resistance which shapes British resilience and identity.

As the food writer A.A. Gill suggests, with characteristic polemic flair, Britain's culinary landscape never recovered from the Second World War: the 'gastronomic birthright' of Britain—its 600-year relationship to slow-cooked and spiced meats, dried fruit in savoury dishes, and puddings, for example—was sold for the poor and indiscriminate dried-herb-and-imported-cheese imitations of the rustic cuisines of other countries.⁸ Gill is quick to blame Elizabeth David as someone whose devastating effect on British cuisine 'may have been avoided if it had not been for Hitler.'⁹ 'Her vision of oily, garlicky and languid lunches on the terrace under a fig tree has led us directly to the horrible Euro-chameleon food we have today.'¹⁰ Julian Barnes speaks more kindly of David in his 1998 preface to *A Book of Mediterranean Food*, suggesting that she 'believed that everyone had the right to good food, but that good food was not, as the British had been brought up to believe, related to either class or money,'¹¹ hence the focus on pseudo-rustic cuisines throughout her works. Not only did David offer a fantasy of escape from the unhappiness of war-grey Britain, but by the mid 1950s the concept of "British" food had been replaced by the freeze-dried and vegetable starches of make-do domesticity to which people had grown so tired; the rejection of "British

⁷ Jamie Oliver, *Save with Jamie* (London: Michael Joseph Ltd, 2013).

⁸ A.A. Gill, 'Elizabeth David', in *Table Talk: Sweet and Sour, Salt and Bitter* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 2007), p. 194.

⁹ Gill, p. 189.

¹⁰ Gill, p. 192.

¹¹ Julian Barnes, 'Preface' (1998), in *A Book of Mediterranean Food and Other Writings* (London: The Folio Society, 2005), pp. xi-ii.

food”, then, becomes a reaction to the claustrophobia of wartime rationing rather than (of the history) of British food.

The rhetoric of rationing and austerity codes the Second World War as a defensive war for Britain, but the sense of defending the nation conflicts with the sense of national identity as found in quotidian food habits. The “banal nationalism” of everyday dining in Britain, though differing wildly between classes before the levelling of rationing during the austerity years, is both complicated by the upset to daily habits caused by rationing books and make-do recipes, but also paradoxically simplified by pushing the nation’s eating habits towards an average less affected by extremes of consumption. As a result, the shared cultural consciousness of food was never as close as it was during the war, with national identity shaped by the social imperatives and shared experiences of wartime duty. Everyone knew someone’s son or husband sent to the front line, someone’s niece or daughter a nurse; everyone shared, to a greater or lesser extent, a feeling of community. As a result, the “imagined community” constructed from the banal nationalism of the common allocations of tea and sugar magnifies the sense of pride in adherence to the strictures of rationing for the sake of the national ideal.

The defence of nation-as-empire, particularly one that held its greatest power over the political map during the early inter-war years, undergirds the sense of a national ideal. As Allison Carruth observes, for Britain,

rationing signified a sacrifice made not only to win the war but also to maintain the empire, and the pride that many citizens expressed about wartime austerity measures—or rather, that the Ministries of Food and Finance expressed on their behalf—reveals how essential

not only German defeat but also imperial possession were to British national identity.¹²

Subscription to austerity measures realises itself as a patriotic gesture; as much as the fighting front comes to represent British patriotism, so does the everyday life of the home front. War permeates through everyday life and establishes itself as a new norm, re-inscribing the collective identity of a nation. Wartime Britain therefore perpetuates the fascism of exclusion that configures the demand for imperial possession and colonial relationships with the world. Inherently exploitative, the United Kingdom enacted its own structuralism of fascism by using other countries as objects of exploration and exploitation, such as the sampling of Elizabeth David in her Mediterranean books, or Evelyn Waugh in Charles's European tourism in the pursuit of enlightenment in *Brideshead Revisited* (1949).

Beneath the sense of pride in the sacrifices codified as necessary for the defence of the nation lies the moral obligation of rationing, one which bargains the future of the nation on the actions of the peoples—particularly women—that constitute the nation. While rationing cookery propaganda targets women as domestic providers, they also make clear the sense in which the war and post-war psychologies favour culinary subservience to men and masculinity, later critiqued by Virginia Woolf and Barbara Pym, among others. The domestic cookbook rejects conspicuous consumption and constructs a private, female appetite and role as necessary for the war effort. Appetites—sexual or culinary—are seen in

¹² Allison Carruth, 'War Rations and the Food Politics of Late Modernism', in *Modernism/modernity* 16.4 (2009), 767-95 (p. 783). See also Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls and Consumption, 1935-1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 62-64.

women as failures of the mind to overcome the demands of the body. Unsurprisingly, however, appetites are afforded to men, who, according to Pierre Bourdieu's observations, have social licence to consume and be seen consuming as it reflects their greater physical status.¹³ The consuming woman is then regarded with suspicion because war rhetoric and cultural paradigms surrounded licence to consume code her appetite as a breach of propriety and, equally, behaviour that betrays the moral obligation for women to "go without" during the austerity years. As Woolf explores, the dichotomies of men and women, with or without, body and mind, fail because the fractures reinforce the means by which patriarchal domesticity maintains power.

With the defeat of Hitler, however, the compulsion to defend the borders waned, as did the justifications behind the nationalistic rhetoric against the consuming woman. Women were pushed into increasingly domestic roles in order to "re-build" the old nation, but the devastating effect of the war on Britain's resources and the slow independences of those nation-states once within the British Empire resulted in a dismantling from below of the pre-war and wartime sense of nationalism. Elizabeth David emerged to counter the domestic, ahedonistic approach to food, and particularly women's cooking literature, during the increasingly austere post-war rationing years by producing a piece of escapist literature that claim the sensual pleasures of food and gastronomy for a hungry mid-century audience. The cumulative effect of the uncertainty in nationhood coupled with a re-imagining of exploratory creolisation and a mutualist relationship with Europe resulted, for better or worse, in a re-orientation of Britain

¹³ Pierre Bourdieu, 'Taste of Luxury, Taste of Necessity', in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*, ed. by Carolyn Korsmeyer (Oxford: Berg, 2005), p. 75.

and its cuisine around its relationships with Europe and the rest of the world. At its heart, however, British identity has historically centred on creolisation and an implied relationship to other countries: The Anglo-Saxons kept or hunted *cow*, *sheep*, *swine* and *deer*, while a chef presented *boeuf*, *mouton*, *pork* and *venison*; the Age of Discovery would import into England *vainilla* from Spain, *cinnamon* from Southern India and Sri Lanka, *nutmeg* and *mace* from the East Indies. These foods symbolise international relationships through empire as much as they constitute national identity. The works of Elizabeth David, Constance Spry and other Euro-fusion cooks and chefs offer not just a view to a new form of empire, but instead a very old one that locates Britain's cultural importance in looking backward to a history of adaptation and amalgamation as much as forward to resources of the Mediterranean previously untapped by a British culinary empire.

By its nature, the attitude toward food expounded by gastronomic cooks from the nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries targets bourgeois or upper class readers who have the economic freedom to explore the tastes of luxury, rather than being fixed to the tastes of necessity. Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* occupies itself with the tastes of freedom afforded to the Oxford set, marking both their class distinction as well confronting the limitations of Bourdieusian gender-based consumption observations in an effort to draw attention to the threats that the war posed to the distinctions that constitute the perceived staples of British identity. Owing to the oppressive forces of fascism and the levelling of austerity which, in *Airstrip One*, prevents any and all social change, Winston Smith in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* loses himself among the hordes of beetle-like men. Both Waugh and Orwell critique the cultural hegemony that reproduces the power dichotomy of austerity by using the moral obligations to the nation and the

sense of empire in Britain to maintain a system by which an austerity-based class control over the masses is preserved, effectively perpetuating the public's obligation to the defence of the nation. In this sense Waugh also channels the anxieties around the sense of empire and identity as articulated through the expression of class distinctions; surrounded by wartime's grey mist of uncertainty and the undistinguished ranks of Hoopers, the struggle of Charles Ryder symbolises the struggle of the upper class to retain relevancy as the supposed bastions of British cultural distinction are undermined from above and below. Waugh's narrative, then, suggests its own form of fascism through its culinary elitism, one which devalues the plebeian cultures of the Hoopers of his fiction and exalts the *haute cuisine* of France. Waugh is unique in this thesis in that he relocates cultural capital away from Britain, particularly to the bourgeois of France; the work of Elizabeth David, who also explores Europe, reconfigures Britain's colonial relationships to the Mediterranean.

The texts in this thesis each articulate the anxieties felt by the generations who endured the war and the psychic fractures that disrupted a sense of national identity and continuous relationship with the past. Equally, they perform their own theories and propagate ideas about culinary taste and the disquisition of "correct" practices in an attempt to delineate a grey present from a colourful hypothetical of another country or an equally foreign past. After almost a thousand years of relative peace, the threat to Britain's borders became a daily preoccupation and the mid-twentieth-century consciousness felt a restless uncertainty as to the future of Britain. As a result, authors either turned to symbols of nationhood in order to preserve some version of British identity before it was lost to aerial bombs and ration cards, or strove to critique precisely this attempt at

preservation for its fascism and prescriptive approach to how the past, present and future “ought” to be. Britain’s austerity years exposed, rather than masked, the prejudices and distinctions already present. Food, then, uses the palate to link the mundane and extraordinary symbols of British identity; it is never just food, but a way in which authors map the culinary over the geo-political to perform distinction and attempt to understand the terrain of uncertainty. Food is the means by which plenty is associated with the Great Britain of the past, the shortages and inequality with the present, and an ever-widening view with Britain’s expanding future.

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