

Food and Drink as a Curse

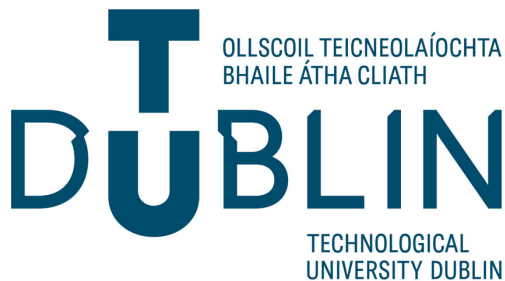
The 3rd International Interdisciplinary Conference

(online)

13th - 14th September, 2021

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

(in the order of the conference programme)



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When Eating Becomes Torturous: Understanding the Experiences of Individuals with Cancer and their Caregivers

Background: People undergoing cancer treatment (cancer survivors) often experience multiple side effects from treatments, such as chemo-therapies, and from cancer itself. Changes in taste and smell, and occurrence of other symptoms such as nausea, loss of appetite, and pain during eating, can profoundly impact survivors' nutritional status, delaying or cancelling treatment, declining health-related quality of life, and reducing the likelihood of healthy cancer survival. These side effects not only disrupt the survivors' relationship with food, but also their relationships with their partners and family who prepare food as a form of nourishment, connection and love.

Objective: We conducted a qualitative study, as part of a larger mixed-methods study, to explore cancer survivors' and their family caregivers' experiences with cancer treatment side effects, including how they manage those side effects and the resulting changes in food preferences and behaviors. Our goal was to gain further insight into possible strategies for tailoring supportive care interventions to help families mitigate treatment side effects and improve eating related distress, thereby elevating dietary quality, patient outcomes, caregiver burden, and quality of life.

Methods: Dyads of individuals undergoing cancer treatment (cancer survivors; n=20) and their caregivers (n=20) were recruited to participate in a semi-structured, in-depth interview. Interviews were conducted with survivors and caregivers separately, and focused on the presence and management of nutrition-related treatment side effects, such as altered taste, flavor, and appetite, and how those changes influenced food preferences and the extent to which they interfered with participant quality of life. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. Inductive coding was used to identify common themes.

Results: We identify six overarching qualitative themes: 1) Spiral of side effects; 2) Pain of eating; 3) Burden of eating; 4) Loss of taste/change in taste; 5) Symptom management; and 6) Solutions. We also identified three through-lines, which served as a second layer of themes that appeared throughout our participants' experiences: A) Caregiver empathy and sharing experience of treatment; B) Complementary and alternative medicine in conflict with traditional oncology protocols; and C) Be warned; but you're on your own to figure this out.

Discussion: Eating is among our most pleasurable, inter-connected experiences. But cancer, its treatment, and its side-effects quickly transform this positive and pleasurable experience

into a curse—an obligation that must be “managed” and “handled” for both patients and caregivers. The authors conclude with implications for food and nutrition practice—moving beyond traditional recommendations of what to eat or avoid—to consider the whole of patient and caregiver experience.

Dr. Brandy-Joe Milliron is an Associate Professor in the Department of Nutrition Sciences at Drexel University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, Dr. Milliron employs a formative approach to intervention development supported by identifying beliefs, behaviors, challenges and needs of the individuals and families. Her research has focused primarily on identifying nutrition-related beliefs and behaviors, and on factors that enable and challenge people with cancer and their caregivers in their attempts to consume a healthful diet; although, elements of her inquiry have extended to other populations as well. Her goal is to use these findings to design evidence-based interventions, develop programs and practices that enhance supportive care, and foster supportive communities. The core of my research portfolio lies in: (1) exploring nutrition-related beliefs, behaviors, and challenges, with an eye toward improving healthy cancer survivorship; (2) identifying the health- and nutrition-related needs of family caregivers of people with cancer, and (3) improving our understanding how people’s interactions with their environment(s) affect their nutritional choices. As a teacher, I’m passionate about training the next generation of nutrition scientists both through mentorship and the undergraduate and graduate-level courses in Community Nutrition and Global Nutrition I currently teach. Within the academy, my service focuses on community engagement and nutrition education. Outside the academy, I’m devoted to civic engagement, especially efforts that focus on improving the physical and emotional health of individuals by helping them increase their connection with nature.

Jonathan Deutsch, Ph.D., CHE, CRC is Professor in the Department of Food and Hospitality Management in the College of Nursing and Health Professions at Drexel University and Director of the Drexel Food Lab. He is the President of the Upcycled Food Foundation and previously was the inaugural James Beard Foundation Impact Fellow, leading a national curriculum effort on food waste reduction for chefs and culinary educators. He was named a Food Waste Warrior by Foodtank. Before moving to Drexel, Deutsch built the culinary arts program at Kingsborough Community College, City University of New York (CUNY) and the Ph.D. concentration in food studies at the CUNY Graduate Center and School of Public Health. At Drexel, he directs the Drexel Food Lab, a culinary innovation and food product research and development lab focused on solving real world food system problems in the areas of sustainability, health promotion, and inclusive dining. He is the author or editor of eight books including *Barbecue: A Global History* (with Megan Elias), *Culinary Improvisation*, and *Gastropolis: Food and Culture in New York City* (with Annie Hauck-Lawson) and numerous articles in journals of food studies, public health and hospitality education. He earned his Ph.D. in Food Studies and Food Management from New York University (2004), his culinary degree from the Culinary Institute of America (AOS, Culinary Arts, 1997), and is an alumnus of Drexel University (BS, Hospitality Management, 1999). A classically trained chef,

Deutsch worked in a variety of settings including product development, small luxury inns and restaurants. When not in the kitchen, he can be found behind his tuba.

Dan Dychtwald, PhD, MPH, MS is a research study coordinator and mixed methods investigator with Rutgers Institute for Health, Health Care Policy, and Aging Research. His research spans the life course from pregnancy and infancy to older adulthood and end of life decisions. Since 2016, his work has also included work in oncology focused on the role of nutrition support and physical activity for both patients and caregivers. Dr. Dychtwald's work in maternal child health has primarily focused on the role of the father, particularly in marginalized communities, and his role or lack thereof in pregnancy support and its effect on birthing outcomes. Recent work includes exploring the function of the WIC program in promoting and supporting the role of fathers with the intent to inform USDA policies regarding male inclusivity within all nutrition programming. In addition to his research, Dr. Dychtwald serves as the Public Policy Coordinator for the New Jersey Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and was recently appointed to the Board of Directors for Philadelphia-based Daddy University.

Ms. Cynthia Klobodu is a second-year doctoral student in the Department of Nutrition Sciences at Drexel University. She has worked extensively in maternal and child health as a physician in Ghana with a public health background before pursuing her PhD in Nutrition. Her research focuses on using qualitative and mixed methods research to address nutrition-related issues pertaining to maternal, female reproductive health, fertility and cancer survivorship.

Lora Packel is a physical therapist who specializes in oncology rehabilitation. Dr. Packel earned a bachelor's degree in Biology with a minor in medical humanities from the University of Delaware, a master's in physical therapy from Boston University, and a PhD in Health Services with a specialization in Community Health Promotion & Education from Walden University. Dr. Packel's research focus is the exploration and improvement of physical activity and cardiovascular risk in people with various health conditions to reduce risk of disease and improve overall health. Peer reviewed publications and presentations have ranged from the physical activity patterns in people with cancer, in primary cardiovascular disease, and cystic fibrosis.

Nina Augustynowicz

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Flavoured tears, Soy lent, and ecological commensality

In a world defined by the climate crisis and population growth, mounting concerns over food safety, security and sustainability may lead to seeing the future of food as cursed. "Food is failing us"

(Rockström et al. 2020, 3), some experts even claim. Using the framework of commensality, this paper aims to examine two seemingly unrelated food projects as instances of contemporary response to the anxiety over challenges facing our vulnerable food systems.

Commensality can be simply defined as “eating with other people” (Sobal and Nelson 2003, 181). This fundamental concept in food studies, an expression of the bond-forming potential of being at the table together, has recently been expanded to embrace a sense of holistic, inter-species connectedness with all organisms and forms of energy. According to David B. Goldstein (2018), such ecological commensality refers to a view of food in which it becomes “a metaphor for and momentary coagulation of coexistence” (54). This understanding destabilises the position of the human consumer supposedly at the top of the food chain and instead underlines the circular, changeable nature of the system we are a part of. However, the responsibility for securing a sustainable food system that this view necessitates does not preclude taking pleasure in eating. We can still derive enjoyment precisely from “accurate consciousness of the lives and the world from which food comes” (1990, 151) as Wendell Berry writes.

A project developed by The Center for Genomic Gastronomy named *To Flavour our Tears* (2016) is a radical instance of this pleasure in connectedness which augments it by providing recipes for better tasting human tears which are to be relished by moths. Together with other similar instructions, like that for a sky burial that allows birds to dine on our flesh, the project emphasises that the role people play in food systems should go well beyond consumer responsibility. Genomic Gastronomers seem to be saying that full participation in commensal circles, and thus complete awareness of our status in the flow of nutrients, increases our pleasure. Meal replacement solutions, such as the notorious Soylent, constitute the opposite end of this commensal spectrum. Despite being marketed as making “complete, sustainable nutrition accessible, appealing, and affordable to all” (Soylent, n.d.), such products are “punishingly boring, joyless” (Manjoo 2014) not only in the emotional or aesthetic sense. They are a denial of ecological commensality.

While *To Flavour our Tears* imagines an unorthodox scenario that gives prominence to people’s role as a meal for the other, products like Soylent replace the collective experience of eating with selfish and one-directional food intake. Although they are polar opposites, both projects constitute responses to a preoccupation with human consumption as a curse.

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Nina Augustynowicz, PhD, is Assistant Professor at the Institute of Literary Studies at the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland, where she has completed her PhD dissertation on the subject of conceptual metaphors of food in Victorian literature. Her current research continues to focus on the exploration of foodscapes, especially in terms of the processes of identity creation through alimentary practices. Her academic interests include critical food studies, feminism and the body, and Victorian conduct literature.

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Socio-Cultural Impacts And Solutions Of Food Waste Caused By Tourism Outlets And Tourists

Food is in the center of our lives, as we all depend on it to continue with our existence. Food is also in the center of almost all social activities including celebrations, gatherings, and meetings. Based on this we can concur that food, when available, is a blessing for many cultures.

On the other hand food, especially wasted food, can be a burden on the environment, society and economy. Almost one-third of all the food being produced is wasted each year, which results in billions of dollars wasted. This also puts a strain on the natural resources such as water and soil as well as contributing to generation of greenhouse gas emissions through food production and food waste ending in landfills.

Money loss and environmental strains can be considered as a curse that humankind has placed upon them; as the main contribution of food waste is created through human consumption practices. There are environmental, economic, and social implications of food waste that are still unknown to consumers, and being unaware of this burden they continue to recklessly waste perfectly edible food. Environmental agencies, NGOs, and consumers can put a stop to food waste if policies are put in place and correct measures are implemented.

In 2016, United Nations developed the sustainable development goals; 'sustainable consumption and production' and 'zero hunger' appeared as two of the goals related to food waste. One of the targets of the former goal was to halve the food waste by 2030. It is also estimated that only by reducing 25% of food waste, world hunger would end. Thus, if one goal can be achieved followed by the other, the food waste problem can be solved therefore lifting the burden it creates.

Food waste appears to be a major issue in the tourism industry as well. With many branches related to food, tourism establishments and tourist behaviors are contributing to food waste all over the world. The intention of this paper is to research how food is being wasted within different sectors of the tourism industry and analyze its socio-cultural impacts.

This paper will start out by explaining food waste and its impacts. Tourism establishments such as restaurants, hotels, cruises, and airlines will be analyzed for food waste practices. Tourists will be analyzed next, first as consumers of the society and then as tourists in touristic establishments. Finally the solutions will be presented through circular economy, governance and practices that can be implemented by the tourism industry to reduce the food waste with the humble hopefulness of breaking this curse.

Banu Özden is a graduate of Business Administration from Clark University in Worcester, MA (2001). She started her career at Bertucci's Brick Oven Ristorante in Boston, as the kitchen manager. She returned to Turkey in 2007 and started working at Istanbul Culinary Institute as Director of Educational Programs. She continued her work at The Culinary Arts Center, where she worked on several projects promoting Turkish cuisine including a website, lectures and gastronomy trips. She has participated in several symposiums in New York, Oxford, Tours, Mexico City and Dublin where she talked about different aspects of Turkish cuisine. Currently she is an instructor at culinary arts departments of İstanbul Medipol University, teaching history of Turkish cuisine, and a student of Sustainable Tourism Management Master's program at the prestigious Bogazici University. She is also running her own little food tour company called Spoon in My Pocket where she designs and organizes walking food tours around İstanbul. She is a regular columnist for a bi-monthly local food magazine.

Nasim Abedi is from Tabriz, Iran. In 2011, she graduated from Tabriz University with a degree in Information Technology. Upon graduation, from 2011-15, she worked as a technical content producer in a tech company and then as the head of IT in an educational institution, which both were related to her field of study. Parallel to these, she has collaborated voluntarily with various NGOs. Since 2012, she is working as the deputy manager for one of the branches of Mahyaye Azar Tabriz, a national NGO that focuses on the protection and assistance of socially disadvantaged women and children especially those with HIV/AIDS, and the protection of disabled children. In 2015 she participated in the United Nations CSW as the representative of NGOs that are working on empowering the women of Iran. Additionally, since 2013, she has been a member of Roftegarane Tabiat, an environmental NGO where participated in its campaigns, courses, and meetings. Finally, with the personal background and interest she had in tourism, history, and culture as well as the experiences in the environmental and social organizations, she decided to apply for the Sustainable Tourism Management masters program at Boğaziçi University, Turkey and started her studies in this field in September 2020.

Aylin Öney Tan

Food columnist for *Hürriyet Daily News*

The Irresistible Rise of Ancient “Siyez” Wheat from Extinction to Stardom: A Blessing or a Curse?

Turkey is home to the earliest varieties of wheat, where some are still cultivated or grown wild in remote landscapes. Siyez (*Triticum monococcum*) is an ancient wheat variety that was little recognized until a few decades ago, almost on the verge of extinction. In Kastamonu province, it was mostly grown as fodder, with a certain portion of the crop kept aside for the own consumption of peasants, mainly consumed in the form of bulgur. It was not considered of commercial value as within the course of history other wheat varieties had taken over, dominating the market with their higher yield. Siyez had been a staple crop but not considered suitable for bread making as it was difficult to hull by traditional methods and it had very low gluten levels, not enough to facilitate a well-risen puffy loaf. Despite these factors it was ideal for making flatbreads and bulgur, which is parboiled and dried cracked wheat, a staple of Anatolian cuisine, consumed in the form of pilaf and also added to a variety of dishes from soups to stews.

In recent years siyez was miraculously rediscovered. The grain became almost a fad, and it is now the most sought-after grain product in the Turkish market. The main reason mostly was dietary concerns; it was the new miracle grain low in gluten and high in proteins. Almost instantly it was discovered by doctors, dieticians, phyto-therapists appearing in TV shows began bragging about the virtues of siyez. Chefs were not short of joining the siyez fad. All of a sudden it was in the menus of all high-end restaurants with fashionable newly invented hybrid dish names such as siyez risotto.

The rise of siyez from rags to riches seems to be like a success story that would secure its sustainability for the future, but the reality seems to be the reverse. It appears that most of the siyez products in the market are not actually made from the original variety of the ancient grain, but from other wheat varieties with a similar appearance that are grown elsewhere from their native land but marketed as siyez. Despite the rising interest for siyez products, not much has changed for the peasants who initially safeguarded its existence. Local farmers still suffer from getting a limited market share; they cannot get the profit they deserve. Moreover, the “real” siyez might still be under threat of extinction despite its recent listing in the national Geographical Indication List and International Slow Food Presidia recognition.

This paper intends to have a peek into the history of siyez, with a close inspection of its irresistible rise, will scrutinize its status today, and investigate whether this rising popularity from the point of disruption to a celebrity status secures its future. Are we destroying its existence while trying to safeguard it? Did fame bring happiness to siyez or did this long-awaited reputation prove to be a curse?

Aylin Öney Tan is an architect, conservator, food researcher & writer. She is the food columnist for *Hürriyet Daily News* (Fork & Cork), a leading Turkish national daily, holds a full-page column in

the weekend supplement of Milliyet, and a regular writer for Metro Gastro magazine. She also produces a daily radio broadcast about food history and culture on NTV Radio titled “Acı, Tatlı, Mayhoş” (Bitter, Sweet, Sour). She has been a regular participant of Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery since 2007, and has won the Sophie Coe Award for food history in 2008. She has done several in-depth research and studies on Turkish food history and culture, attending food focused symposiums and conferences worldwide. She has written the entry for Turkey in the Food Cultures of the World Encyclopedia; Street Foods of the World Encyclopedia and contributed to the Oxford Companions to Sugar & Sweets and Cheese. She is the leader of Slow Food Ankara Convivium and the author of ‘A Taste of Sun & Fire: Gaziantep Cookery’.

Andrea Maraschi

Independent researcher

Humans Eating Humans are Animals. Episodes of Cannibalism between Christians and Muslims between the Eleventh and the Thirteenth century

From a historico-anthropological perspective, the role that food has played in human societies has gone far beyond that of mere sustenance. According to Feuerbach’s equation *Der Mensch ist, was er isst*, eating affects being, and being affects eating. Since Herodotus, food has been an important marker of identity to define ideas such as “civilization”, “otherness”, and the likes. The notions of “unclean” and “taboo” foods, in particular, have served an important purpose within the context of such a rhetorical discourse. This paper aims at analysing episodes of cannibalism which are featured in medieval chronicles of military encounters between Christians and Muslims between the eleventh and the early thirteenth century. My intention is to show that the taboo of cannibalism had a twofold connotation. On the one hand, anthropophagy represented a savage act which – according to Western chroniclers - was practiced by Saracens for the mere sake of survival. In this sense, this made the latter look as “less-than-human”, “other”, “uncivilized”. On the other hand, anthropophagy was also associated with magical and medical practice, and primary sources suggest that both Christian and Muslims hoarded dead soldiers’ organs and body parts in order to obtain either moral (e.g., bravery) or physical (e.g., health, strength) benefits. Whether the latter case represents a noble form of anthropophagy, of which one even finds contemporary historical proofs (such as the magico-medical remedies in the famous Latin grimoire known as *Picatrix*, translated from the Arab at the court of Alfonso X the Wise), the first case corresponds to natural cannibalism, which had long been identified as a negative identity marker. The rhetorical strategy of linking the Saracens with the practice of natural cannibalism was meant to identify them as an inferior civilization, as had happened to other peoples in the past and would happen again in the future. Such a cultural and religious clash is also analyzed by referring to the contemporary Middle English romance *Richard Coer de Lyon*, where Muslims are identified as “animals” after Richard is given by his physicians a broth made with the body of a Saracen which cured his fever. Interestingly, here

the act of cannibalism which is performed by King Richard the Lionheart does not make the eater “a lesser human being”, for it was recommended by experts of medicine and had thus a learned rationale. On the contrary, the eater makes the eaten (i.e., the Saracen) resemble a common prey, a beast, which can therefore be useful from a dietary perspective.

Andrea Maraschi earned a PhD in Medieval History from the University of Bologna (2013), and his doctoral thesis on wedding banquets in the early Middle Ages was published in 2014 (*Un banchetto per sposarsi. Matrimonio e rituali alimentari nell’Occidente altomedievale*, Spoleto: Cisam). From 2014 to 2017 he was a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Iceland, where he studied connections between food, magic and the supernatural in Old Norse literature and medieval Icelandic culture. From 2018 to 2021 he has taught Medieval History at the University of Bari. His most recent book is *Similia similibus curantur. Cannibalismo, grafofagia, e “magia” simpatetica nel medioevo (500/1500)* (Spoleto: Cisam, 2020). He is currently working on the medico-magical uses of food in medieval times, and he is editing a book on women’s magical knowledge in medieval Europe. In recent years, he has published articles concerning magic, hagiography, famine, banqueting, astronomy and gender in medieval times.

Hannah Hostetter

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A drink as red as blood: A study of the intersection of food & witchcraft accusations in 17th century New England

In the colonial communities of 17th century New England, food and agricultural systems were both critical for survival and central touchstones for maintaining communities’ collective cultural identities. For people accused of witchcraft, however, food could quickly become a curse when it was used as key evidence brought against them in court. This paper summarizes the findings of a document analysis of legal proceedings and histories of the 17th century New England colonies and identifies two persistent food-centric themes that emerge in these colonies’ witchcraft cases. The first theme relates to the supposed power of witches to redistribute food resources from one person to another, in essence a form of food theft. In 17th century New England, anxiety over witches’ power over food redistribution manifested in a tendency for colonists to attribute the sudden, unexpected, unexplainable, and often violent deaths of livestock to the malevolent activities of witches. This appears to have been particularly the case in instances of the death of cattle, a farm species that particularly reaffirmed colonists’ English-identity. The second emergent food trend involves consumption narratives, or—more aptly— “disordered” consumption narratives concerning how much and what foods supposed witches were thought to consume and who they fed. Witches were thought to violate food norms by inverting them, for instance by inverting

religiously sanctioned feeding relationships by suckling familiars rather than feeding their own children, husband, or other members of the community. Familiars, or diabolical creatures given to witches by Satan, were believed to feed off witches' bodies directly via extra teats visible on their bodies. While accusations of suckling familiars persisted throughout the 17th century, during the infamous Salem witch panic of 1692-1693, community belief in witches' disordered consumption rapidly metastasized to create a dramatic rendition of the "witches sabbath." In line with the perception of witches' violating food norms by inverting them, instead of fasting like pious Christians, witches were renowned for their tendency to feast. The "witches sabbath" is the pinnacle of witches' assumed feasting activities. This study finds that though the food-oriented themes of witchcraft cases in colonial New England grew out of European beliefs in witches' supposed food perversion, they also highlight how colonists' beliefs surrounding the relationship between food and witches emerged in ways unique to New England's 17th century colonial context.

Hannah Hostetter holds a M.A. in Food Studies and a M.B.A from Chatham University. Hannah's research interests include regenerative agriculture, indigenous foodways, sustainable resource management, and witchcraft and agricultural history. Hannah lives in the western United States.

Nathan Brasfield

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"Who Will Feed Us Flesh?": Discovering the Cursed Craving of Meat in Numbers 11:4-35

In the Bible, food is overwhelmingly portrayed as a blessing. Aside from the familiar story of Adam and Eve eating from the forbidden tree in Genesis 2-3, there is only one notable instance of food as curse in the biblical text and it is found in Numbers 11:4-35. A much less recognizable story than the one in Genesis, this narrative portrays the people of Israel being led from Egypt to inhabit a land of their own after having been freed from Egyptian slavery. On the way, they express their dissatisfaction with the Israelite god's miraculous provision of the breadlike *manna* substance which has nourished them in the desert. Instead, they express a greedy, lustful craving (*hittavvu taavah*) for the various foods they ate while in slavery--especially meat. Responding angrily to their complaints, the Israelite god sends them an enormous amount of quail, having assured them that they will eat meat until it makes them sick and they come to despise it. Ultimately, upon their consumption of the quail meat (or upon their preparation to consume the meat, depending on how the text is interpreted), the Israelite god strikes the people with a plague, killing many of them. Those who are killed are buried in a place known as *Kibroth Hattaavah*, which the text notes is named after their craving (*hammitavvim*) for meat.

Despite a few particular interpretive puzzles which this paper considers, it remains clear that this story about a cursed meal of quail condemns and critiques an unrestrained, unprincipled

craving of meat. This condemnation is further illuminated by situating this story within the context of meat-eating in the Bible, which is marked by restraint and a view of sanctity and respect for animal life. In light of the degree to which meat-eating in our day has become ecologically destructive and morally problematic for yet other reasons, it is all the more important that this little-known biblical story undergo further discovery and to join Genesis 2-3 in our examinations of how food may be cursed and why.

Nathan Brasfield earned a B.A. in biblical studies from Crichton College and an M.A. in biblical studies from Asbury Theological Seminary and is now working on a D.Min. in Land, Food, and Faith Formation at Memphis Theological Seminary.

Noel Buttigieg

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Ensorcelled Food: Social power and control in early modern Malta

If conviviality carries inherent meanings of power and control, then food activates those emotions that generate a reciprocal understanding between members of a family, a neighbourhood, and even an entire community. Consequently, food empowers individuals with the possibility of either exerting influence on, or resistance to, adverse situations.

This study will provide an analysis of criminal proceedings of the tribunal of the Holy Office in early modern Malta. Since food is an important means of communicating basic social values, it generates a symbolic language of responsibilities. This binds men and women to interact when exercising different forms of power and control over different aspects of daily life. When reflecting on the internalization of 'magic food', Ruth Behar ascribes ensorcelled consumption as the '*most effective way of passing on the polluting substances of witchcraft; in eating, the pollution was introduced directly and effectively into the body.*' Thus, magical practices involving the consumption of ensorcelled food shed interesting light on particular social interactions, such as gender identity, and how these were mitigated within the claustrophobic urban spaces of the small Mediterranean island of Malta.

Criminal proceedings involving love magic will form an integral part of this exploratory research. Wives ensorcelled food in the hope of reversing the coercion imposed on them by their husbands. Husbands had to be 'tamed', rendering them sexually impotent during those moments when sharing a bed with other women. Prostitutes resorted to love magic to control their lovers. In a male-dominated society, socio-cultural norms and behaviours expected males to defend their honour against any perceived enemy. The court proceedings also shed light on how some men portrayed themselves as victims of witchcraft. The reaction to ensorcelled food by those believing to have been *fatturati* [lit. bewitched] indicates how cursed food formed an integral part of the early modern mindset.

Dr Noel Buttigieg is a lecturer at the Institute for Tourism, Travel & Culture of the University of Malta. He published several articles about food culture and heritage. He co-authored the book *L-Istorja tal-Kultura tal-Ikel f'Malta* in 2004, *Tisjir mill-Qalb* (2016 and 2017) and is the co-editor of *The Struggle for Supremacy: The Mediterranean World in 1453 and Beyond* (2018). He is currently a committee member of the Malta Historical Society and a member of the Sacra Militia Committee.

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Eating Lamprey. A treat or a curse? The Case of King Henry I of England

Lampreys were considered a huge delicacy among most royal families and the nobility in medieval and early modern Britain. The tradition was for the people to present the monarch with a lamprey pie once a year. Baked lampreys were cooked in a syrup inside the pie. The City of Gloucester, in token of their loyalty to the royal family, presented a lamprey pie to the sovereign at Christmas, the season at which lampreys were very rare. No wonder this must have been a costly gift. The holiday treat was prepared by Gloucester for the reigning English kings and queens till 1836. At that time, the species had almost vanished from Britain's rivers, most likely due to pollution. However, to please Elizabeth II, Gloucester resumed its role, delivering lamprey pie for her 1953 coronation, as well as the 25th and 50th years of her reign. The popularity of fish, and lampreys especially, is reflected in numerous recipes of dishes prepared to be served during feasts and dinners at royal as well as noble courts.

King Henry I (1068-1135) of England was known for his lust of eating the lamprey and is reported to have died from a "surfeit of lampreys," as the chronicles said. The information concerning this event is scarce, confined to only two sources, the chronicle of Henry of Huntingdon and the history of Roger of Wendover. Both write about Henry's death caused by consuming lampreys, however, provide no details. It remains a mystery then whether the king died from gluttony, poisoning or other reason.

The author describes the circumstances of Henry's death and presents the arguments to justify a probable cause of it. Medieval dietetics has been used as a springboard to writing about the importance of fish in diet despite its unfavourable opinion in light of the theory of humours. The humoral physiologists were prejudiced against all watery foods, namely fruits, vegetables and specifically fish. The alleged qualities of fish were much like the element in which they live. Fish then were believed to predominate in cold and moist humours, which, in terms of humoral theory, is particularly dangerous for phlegmatic complexion. Excessive consumption of fish led to humoral imbalance and in consequence to rheum, catarrh and paralysis.

Rare and exotic seafood was often associated with luxury and gluttony. Ancient sources describe men destroyed by gluttony, drunkenness and luxury, as was the case of the banquets of the Asiots, Milesians, Sybarites, and also of Claudius, Vitellius, Heliogabalus and Galienus.¹ Such stories often serve as an argument that fish-eating is a sign of luxury and weakness and lead ultimately to the downfall of empires.² The communication here is that courtiers who subvert their digestive systems with lampreys are contributing to the decline of their own civilization.

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Claire Stewart

The New York City College of Technology
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Minding Your Manners in the Gilded Age

The late 1800s were a time of incredible change in the United States. This “gilded age” ushered in a flood of immigrants who were eager to assimilate and pursue prosperity. Many found this new country to have fluid social mores, allowing new arrivals to mingle in social classes that would have been inaccessible to them in their homeland. So too did this post- Civil War era escort in a glut of newly minted millionaires; entrepreneurs who became wealthy without the benefit of family connection or inheritance.

¹ Dick Humelbergins Secundus, *Apician Anecdotes or Tales of the Table, Kitchen, and Larder*. New York: J.D. Strong, 1936, pp. 24-25

² Joseph Duschesne [Quercetanus], *Le pourtraict de la santé [Diaeteticon Polyhistoricon]*. Paris: Claude Morel, 1606, pp. 245–251.

The elite strived to maintain their social order, one in which a finite number of established families reigned supreme; a system in which marriages and business negotiations were conducted with only those known to be “respectable.” The “new rich,” not tutored in the manners of high society, were cursed with negotiating a complicated and unwelcoming structure of etiquette meant to place them as outsiders.

The dinner table was a place where the minutiae of dining etiquette could publicly test the mettle of newcomers. Choice of silver, deciphering menus written in French, and complicated rules for conversation were treacherous for those not born into the system. Expensive homes, clothes, and jewelry could be bought. The intricate and unsaid rules of eating and socializing at a formal dinner party, however, could quickly “betray” one's true ancestry.

Improved printing technology, paired with newly built railroads (which allowed products to move across the country), led to a flurry of book publishing. A torrent of etiquette manuals soon came on the market. These manuals instructed the uninformed how to behave, showed the masses how the elite lived, and offered lessons in “deportment.” The popularity of these manuals testifies to the volume of individuals seeking reinvention.

Etiquette manuals especially warned of the “dangers of the table,” signaling the perils of dining decorum that could act as a “tell” as to someone’s social position or lineage. New arrivals, anxious to be upwardly mobile, would indeed be cursed unless able to penetrate and mimic the convoluted dining rituals of those born to wealth. Navigating a disconcerting array of utensils and glassware, coupled with ambitious and unfamiliar menu items, could serve as the public undoing of one bent on social elevation. Dining then was a vehicle for exposing “imposters,” outing them as unaccustomed to the exaggerated gentility of the era.

This paper explores etiquette guides and uses them as an avenue in which to investigate the trepidation associated with dining, illustrating that food indeed could act as a curse to the unversed; a tool used to sort the classes in attempts to maintain a stratified social order threatened by an increasingly egalitarian society.

Claire Stewart is an Associate Professor at the New York City College of Technology, City University of New York, where she teaches hospitality management. She is a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and worked as a professional chef for over thirty years. She is the author of *As Long as we Both Shall Eat: A History of Wedding Food and Feasts*.

Sonakshi Srivastava

Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University
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Dripping Curse: The Spurious Case of Saliva and the Indian Imagination

Mary Douglas in “Deciphering a Meal” writes, “a code affords a general set of possibilities for sending particular messages. If food is treated as a code, the message it encodes will be found in the patterns of social relations being expressed. The message is about different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries and transactions across the boundaries. Like sex, talking of food has a social as well as a biological component.”

Each society’s culture is therefore transmitted to children through eating with the family, setting in which “individual personalities develop, kinship obligations emerge, and the customs of the group are reinforced.”

This social enmeshing of food allows us to also reflect on the most important agent in the gastronomic transaction – saliva. At once intimate, and also universal, saliva facilitates the breaking down of food for its better digestion in the body.

However, saliva too is coded in a web of contested messages especially in the case of Indian imagination. From time immemorial, saliva, more specifically in the form of spit, has been believed to ward off evil spirits. In the gastronomic function, however, mixing of spit with food and drinks is a taboo.

This paper is an attempt to trace the cursedness of “spit” by tracing its gastronomic genealogy through the native sumptuary laws, and popular literature (I have “Jhoothan” in mind). Moreover, the recent instance of Tablighi Jamaat’s meet that was highlighted as a “covid spreader” by popular media in India will function as a suitable case study. The navigation through this cursed genealogy will help us to also identify the underpinning “abject” nature of saliva, and how and why it aids in creating categorical divides by the way of race, caste, and class in the Indian imagination. To seek further clarity, I will saliva’s gastronomic genealogy in conversation with the theories of Julia Kristeva and Gopal Guru to further facilitate my argument.

Sonakshi Srivastava graduated from the University of Delhi, in 2020, and is now a pre-doctoral candidate at Indraprastha University, Delhi, where she researches on Modernity, Memory, and Anthropocene Fictions. Currently, she is an Oceanvale Scholar for the Spring-Autumn session at Kirori Mal College, University of Delhi, where she is researching on the aesthetics of subjectivity in Kobo Abe’s novels. Her works have previously been published in the eSharp Journal, and as chapters in two edited volumes, and a recent piece for the TMR.

Her areas of interests include aesthetics and critical theory, memory and trauma studies, animal studies and ethics, food studies, and Indian Writing in English among others.

Joanna Łapińska

Independent Researcher

Fear Thy Fodder! On Food-Related Anxieties in “Black Mirror”

In the 21st century, both food and science fiction are the subjects of great interest to cultural studies researchers. They equally share the potential to comment on the (dis)orders of our reality: social, national and global structures and hierarchies. Specifically, both food and science fiction demonstrate the relationship existing between humans and external/internal powers affecting them through depictions of body and/or technology. Food, always subjected to various technological processes, literally connects the inside of the body with the outside world. Revealing people's fears and anxieties, it also goes hand in hand with the science fiction discourse.

Unsurprisingly, in the cinematic dystopian worlds, food frequently turns out to be a curse. It contributes to advancing social inequality, stigmatizing otherness and creating divisions. Therefore, in the presentation, I will discuss some depictions of foodways offered by *Black Mirror* (2011–), a British dystopian science fiction anthology television series, uncovering humans' food-related anxieties. The examples will include the scenes featuring food preparation, the heroes' food and drink choices and the consumption situations. As we will observe, the foodways in *Black Mirror* often disclose characters' views, prejudices and personalities. In addition, they sometimes carry the metaphorical meaning associated with the most common fears related to both the deficiency of "good", "natural", "healthy" food and the excess of processed, "bad", "unnatural", "harmful" food in the future. In other cases, the use of food in *Black Mirror* helps in worldbuilding of the futuristic milieu or comments on the oppressiveness of the consumer society.

The dystopian images of foodways do not leave any hope for a better tomorrow. Perhaps only the food from the past – a reminiscence of a "better world" that has disappeared forever – may provide some comfort. However, not for long, as in the world of *Black Mirror* "fake fodder is all we know".

Joanna Łapińska, PhD in the field of Humanities in the discipline of Cultural Studies, MA in Film Studies. The author of many articles in the collective monographs and journals, as well as the monograph entitled *To kocha! Związki miłosne ludzi i maszyn w filmie science fiction* (2020) about the love relationships of humans and machines in science fiction film. Her interests include the phenomena of contemporary cinema, the theories and practices of posthumanism and the new practices of intimacy.

Kamila Kalista

The University of Czestochowa
Poland

The curse of Savoir-faire without Savoir-flair

Chocolate chip cookies are democratic – available for anyone, more American than a hamburger or Coca-Cola. Truffles are noble and French, available primarily for the rich and sophisticated. Thanks to the cookie business, the Winklers – the protagonists of Woody Allen's film *Small Time Crooks*

(2000), move from a lower class, hand-to-mouth existence, to a more affluent, lavish lifestyle. They become wealthy overnight and can afford to employ a French chef. By way of developing a more refined taste, Frenchy (Tracey Ullman) wants to show off her *savoir-faire*. Unlike her husband Ray (Woody Allen), who accepts his background, Frenchy becomes extremely ambitious, aspiring to be an American upper class lady. She asks an art dealer named David (Hugh Grant) to train her and her husband so they can fit in with the elegant social scene. She wants to become a patron of the arts and consume truffles, pheasants, and wine. Ray misses simple food: pizza, meatballs in tomato sauce, hamburgers, and beer. He stays committed to his lower-class taste; although he is wealthy enough to develop ‘luxurious taste’, he decides to adhere to taste generated by necessity.

The new-found cultural enlightenment and the diet change seems to cause confusion, suffering and results in a curse. The aristocracy have a vested interest in upholding the social divisions that exist and the etiquette that goes with it; the Winklers can only infer what these unavailable customs might be. The ostentatious pursuit of having good taste by Frenchy, and Ray’s unwillingness to side with her, are the beginning of their marital conflict and separation.

Kamila Kalista:

- Finalising PhD at SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Warsaw: the dissertation ‘Food and Death Motives in Woody Allen films’ will be defended (the final exam) in June 2021.
- At the moment working at the University of Czestochowa – teaching courses like English for Biomedical Science
- The author of texts related to food and drink as symbol in historical perspectives, food and death in cultures, food and gender, food film
- Interests: culture studies, psychology, music

Marzena Keating

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Convenience Food in Ireland: A Blessing or a Curse?

In August 1970 the author of the feature “Shoestring Chef: Foods for Carefree Cooking” from *Woman’s Choice* praised convenience foods claiming that “the modern housewife, no less than the business girl in her bedsitter, appreciates convenience foods, those wonderful solutions to so many problems about how to feed oneself or the family in the minimum time and with the minimum inconvenience” (11 August 1970, 22). On the contrary, in January 1988 Carla Blake, a well known food writer, journalist, and a founding member of the Irish Food Writers’ Guild, in the culinary

column entitled “Kitchen Resolutions” in *The Irish Press* stated that “convenience foods in general are a waste of money for those of us who are not pressed for time, particularly as the food value and taste of even quite ordinary home-cooked items; are far superior, and, of course, there are no additives” (5 January, 1988, 9). While many authors of culinary texts proclaimed the wonders of convenience foods, even suggesting their superiority over their made-from-scratch equivalents, others questioned their appropriateness, framing them as inferior foods associated with unhealthy lifestyle, the alleged decline of cooking skills and even bad parenting. Thus, it seems quite apparent that convenience foods can be regarded both as a blessing and a curse. This paper aims at disclosing ambivalent attitudes to convenience foods in Ireland as represented in various culinary texts, including advertisements, advertorials, cookbooks, and culinary features from newspapers and women’s magazines published since the 1960s. A particular focus will be placed on the period ranging from the 1960s to the 1990s but some references will also be made to earlier and later decades.

Marzena Keating, PhD in the field of Humanities in the discipline of Culture and Religion Studies, MA in English Studies. The author of several texts centred on Irish history and culture. She works at the Pedagogical University of Cracow in the Institute of English Studies, where she teaches courses in British culture. Her primary interests lie in the fields of Irish History, Cultural Studies, Postcolonial Theory and Food Studies.

Rareş Augustin Crăiuţ

Babes Bolyai University

Romania

Doing something about it. Cursing and hexing in food performance art

Food sustains life. Across cultures food is seen as a cure and we share it in positive, and sometimes celebratory, gestures. And just like food, art is also very often seen as a positive and life affirming practice, especially in its utilitarian perception, where art must be beautiful, educational, and pleasant. But what happens when food turns bad in art? The history of art abounds with examples of corrupt food and dangerous eating practices. Some are showed, like the “Saturn devouring his son” motif in oil painting, some are written about, like the monstrous consumptions in medieval and Renaissance European children’s literature, and some “bad” food is also artistically performed.

Food performances are performance art pieces where food is the medium, the theme or both (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1999; Rios, 2006). Food performances and performance art in general have always been the link between religious ritual and artistic practice (Durkheim, 1912/1995; Turner, 1966; Schechner, 1974, 1985). In this paper I explore the topic of food art performances that are cursing and hexing. Taboo, and misunderstood, these are artistic practices that perform the sourcing,

cooking, or eating of food with the intent to curse bad situations, cross enemies, renew faith, or break bad habits.

Martha Rosler's satirical "Semiotics of the kitchen", Paul McCarthy's revolting "Bossy Burger", Ana Mendieta's ritualistic "Chicken piece", Cocco Fusco's vengeful "Stuff", or the collective goring "Nestle death curse", are all food performances, charged with a sense of right and wrong, good and bad. Set against patriarchy, consumerism, tourism, or a particular company, their authors operate in a moral space, in which intended outcomes are the primary objective. The authors are all bold artists who felt that they need to do something about their feelings of anger and helplessness in different cases and contexts. As expected, the art works elicit sometimes a visceral, involuntary reaction on the side of the audience, who are left excited, healed, confused, or revolted, and who could use a good hex themselves to be able to look at food the same way as before.

Rareș Augustin Crăiut (1980) is a performance artist, chef, and academic researcher. He graduated as a theatre critic in 2004 at the Babeș-Bolyai University (Cluj-Napoca, Romania). In 2009 he graduated as a chef at THR CG Bucharest, one of the top providers of professional training for tourism and the HoReCa industry in Romania, and in 2011 he obtained his baker qualification at Rompan, The Romanian Employers' League of the Milling, Bakery and Flour Based Products Industry. In 2006 he began organising the itinerant food and culture festival Transilvania Fest, as well as other community development events in the Transylvania region. He has collaboratively worked on the topic of conviviality, and on developing artistic events that are about the positive valorisation of individual and community experiences, assets and practices (Art neighbour-youth, Leuven University, Belgium, 2015; Eating as a form of resistance, La Pas Festival, Timisoara, Romania, 2019). Since 2014 Rareș has been carrying out practice-as-research projects (Performing food) supported by the a.pass research environment in Brussels, Belgium. The main themes of his artistic research practice are centred around the agency of food and eating. He is particularly interested in the use of food as an artistic medium to create meaning and affect (Bain-Marie Brunch food performance re-enactment cycle, various locations, ongoing; or Anximentara, Ecole de Recherche Graphique, Brussels, 2018), and using food to create artistic and convivial collaborations (Comfort food continuum 2016, Baia-Mare, Romania; or The Terni – Paradisi-Neighborhood-Cookbook, Centro per le Arti Opificio Siri, Terni, 2017). Bread is a particular medium of interest in his artistic practice, for its sentimental and versatile stimulating qualities, with now several performance art pieces dedicated to bread (The Transitions, Banis Connective, Brussels, 2017, or Anatomic bread bodies Matera European Capital of culture, Italy, 2019). Since 2018 he is conducting formal academic research, as part of the PhD research programme hosted by the Faculty of Theatre and Film from Cluj- Napoca, Romania, with a thesis on food as a medium in performance art. He has actively participated in international scientific meetings, such as the IEHCA Summer University, Tours, France, 2019; or the International Conference of Doctoral Studies in Theatre Practice and Theory, Brno, Czech Republic, 2019.

Susana Barata Gomes

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“Are State banquets cursed”?

Throughout history, State banquets have been privileged moments for observing the existing relations between food and politics. The food that is used, the ways in which it is cooked and served, have social, economic, cultural, religious, political, and ideological implications. At State banquets, food and commensality interrelate in a setting marked by social differentiation, etiquette, and protocol. Diplomacy and gastronomy are deeply intertwined in these tables where conviviality and sharing are formally regulated, but where fraternization and communion provide for the overcoming of differences. As for Flandrin & Montanari (2001), the different norms of behaviour existing in each society, whatever they may be, always refer to a commensality, thus invested as a founding element of human civilization”. Paul Ariès has an identical formulation and says that “humanity has become human across the table” (2015: 5) by interposing a whole series of choices, between themselves and what, how and with whom they eat and drink.

Food culture is constantly evolving, manifesting itself in the various domains of expression of individuals. Food is omnipresent in our lives: it has never been talked about, heard, written, and visualized as much as it does now, about what to eat, how to eat and, above all, what not to eat; however, the choice has never been so difficult for the eater. Restrictions, interdictions, are multiplying. They are the 21st century food taboos. Environmental concerns related to food are the order of the day, reinforcing uncertainties and multiplying risks for the consumer / eater. Food is medicalized, and at the same time, and somewhat paradoxically, disturbances in eating behaviour grow exponentially.

This was part of the introduction I wrote for the research I was conducting about state banquets, using menus as the main sources of information, when the covid 19 epidemic broke out; some of the questions in my research focused on taboo foods, foods that are politically and religiously inconvenient or even cursed and never to be served on these banquets. I also aimed to identify issues related to health and food, namely in terms of dietary restrictions and dietary concerns, in an evolutionary perspective over the 20th century. By studying and questioning the evolution of State banquets and establishing the Susana Barata Gomes Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Coimbra / FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia - Portugal main milestones of its course, I thought it would be possible to better assess the present and even problematize and point out some predictable trends for the future of sociability networks established within the scope of State banquets.

I still have results regarding State banquets “forbidden” foods and the growing dietary restrictions or even some food related diplomatic incidents that I would like to share with you, but, after this last almost two pandemic years, I believe the main question for discussion will have to be “Are State banquets cursed”?

Susana Barata Gomes (Lisboa, Portugal) is a sociologist, lecturer, researcher, and project coordinator, with a Masters in American Studies, and currently doctorate candidate (4th year) in Food Heritage, Culture, and Identities at Universidade de Coimbra with PhD scholarship from FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology. Collaborator of the CHSC, Centre for the History of Society and Culture at the University of Coimbra and of DIAITA - Food Heritage of Lusophony. Published the books Transport and Risk Communication Belgium: Portugal and the Netherlands, 1997, and Identity Meetings: The Body. Art in the laboratory, science in the atelier. 2018, Psicólogos Associados.
