

EATING OTHERWISE

This book explores the philosophical implications of the popular adage that "you are what you eat" through twentieth-century literature. It investigates the connections between the alimentary and the ontological: between what or how one eats and what one is. Concentrating on strange or unusual acts of eating, Maria Christou reads eating otherwise as a means to being otherwise. She focuses on two influential modernist figures, Georges Bataille and Samuel Beckett; and two influential postmodernist figures, Paul Auster and Margaret Atwood. By examining the work of these major twentieth-century authors, she theorizes the relationship between modernism and postmodernism from a specifically alimentary perspective. This powerful, innovative study takes literary food studies in a new direction.

MARIA CHRISTOU is an associate lecturer at the Department of English and Creative Writing at the University of Lancaster, where she completed a PhD funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council. She has published articles in *Angelaki: Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* and *Literature and Theology*, and she has a forthcoming chapter on genetically modified food in *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Food. Eating Otherwise: The Philosophy of Food in Twentieth-Century Literature* is her first book.



EATING OTHERWISE

The Philosophy of Food in Twentieth-Century Literature

MARIA CHRISTOU

Lancaster University





CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
79 Anson Road, #06–04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108416825
DOI: 10.1017/9781108242004

© Maria Christou 2017

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2017

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalog record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data NAMES: Christou, Maria, 1988— author.

TITLE: Eating otherwise: the philosophy of food in twentieth-century literature / Maria Christou.

Description: 1 [edition]. | New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017. |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

IDENTIFIERS: LCCN 2017016929 ISBN 9781108416825 (hardback : alk. paper)

DENTIFIERS: LCCN 2017016929| ISBN 9781108416825 (nardback : alk. paper)
ISBN 9781108404204 (pbk. : alk. paper)
SUBJECTS: LCSH: Food–Philosophy. | Food in literature.

CLASSIFICATION: LCC BIO5.F66 C47 2017 | DDC 809/.933564–DC23 LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017016929

ISBN 978-1-108-41682-5 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.



Contents

List of Illustrations Acknowledgments	<i>page</i> vi vii
Introduction: You Are What You Eat: Thinking Food Otherwise	I
1 Georges Bataille's Pornographic Food	29
2 Samuel Beckett's Alimentary <i>Cogito</i>	57
3 Food, the Fall, and the Detective: The Case of Paul Auster	91
4 Food in Margaret Atwood's Dystopias	120
Conclusion: Modernism, Postmodernism, and the Otherwise	
of Eating	147
Notes	160
Bibliography	186
Index	204



Illustrations

- I Johannes Janssonius, frontispiece of William Harvey's *Exercitationes de generatione animalium* (1651). Detail. The full image depicts Zeus holding the egg from which the living beings emerge. *Wellcome Images* (L0006635): http://wellcomeimages.org/ Creative Commons Attribution license CC BY 4.0: http://creative commons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
- 2 Edia Connole and Scott Wilson, *En soirée culinaire par Georges Bataille, pour* Radical Love II (undated). Layout/Design: Danielle O'Connell. *Mouth*: https://mmmouth.wordpress.com/en-soiree-culinaire-par-george-bataille/
- 3 A Latin schematic drawing of the Tree of Life showing the most common arrangement of the ten *sefirot* based on a 1625 version by Philippe d'Aquin. *Wikipedia Images:* https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/2/20/Kircher_Tree_of_Life.png/519px-Kircher_Tree_of_Life.png Creative Commons Attribution license CC BY 4.0: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/ 101



Acknowledgments

I am very grateful to all those who have made this book possible. Firstly, I want to thank Joel Evans, who has read each chapter more times than I can remember, always offering his encouragement, suggestions, and criticism; I really can't thank you enough, Joel. The same goes for John Schad – thank you, John, for your continued support. Thanks are also due to Steven Connor and Arthur Bradley, who have provided me with their fascinating observations and criticisms on the manuscript. I owe a debt of gratitude to Ray Ryan and to my two anonymous Readers too, for believing in the book and for their much-valued suggestions. Finally, I would like to acknowledge that I would not have been able to write this book without the funding I received from the Arts and Humanities Research Council.