(In)digestion in Literature and Film

(In)digestion in Literature and Film: A Transcultural Approach is a collection of chapters spanning diverse geographic areas such as Brazil, Eastern Europe, France, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, South Korea, Taiwan, and the United States. Despite this geographic variance, they all question disordered eating practices represented in literary and filmic works. The collection ultimately redefines disorder, removing the pathology and stigma assigned to acts of non-normative eating. In so doing, the chapters deem taboo practices of food consumption, rejection, and avoidance as expressions of resistance and defiance in the face of restrictive sociocultural, political, and economic normativities. As a result, disorder no longer equates to “out of order,” implying a sense of brokenness, but is instead envisioned as an act against the dominant order of operations. The collection therefore shifts critical focus from the eater as the embodiment of disorder to the problematic norms that defines behaviors as such.

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(In)digestion in Literature and Film
A Transcultural Approach
Edited by Niki Kiviat and Serena J. Rivera

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(In)digestion in Literature and Film
A Transcultural Approach

Edited by
Niki Kiviat and
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Niki Kiviat is a PhD candidate in Italian Studies at Columbia University, where her research interests include food studies; Italy’s food and material culture as manifest in films of the Economic Miracle; star studies; and the legacy of neorealist film, which was the subject of her Master’s thesis, also from Columbia. Her chapter, “From Pizzaiola to Phenom: Viewing Sophia Loren Through Food,” will be published in the edited volume Eve’s Sinful Bite: Foodscapes in Italian Women’s Writing, Culture, and Society (forthcoming, Bloomsbury).

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Our deepest gratitude to our contributors, without which the food-centered vision of the editors would never have come to fruition. Their contributions prompted us to think deeply on the topics of food consumption; (in)digestion; excretion; and what such literary and filmic metaphors are trying to tell us about societal structures and, ultimately, ourselves. We would also like to thank colleagues Rhian Atkin and Eleanor K. Jones for their valuable advice and feedback throughout the process. The many outstanding scholars who have presented on our panels and roundtables at the Northeast Modern Language Association conventions throughout the years are also owed a debt of gratitude, both those included in the following chapters and those with whom we have lost touch. The ideas exchanged and the discussions conjured from our mutual passions for all things food are what ultimately inspired this compilation. Lastly, a special thanks to all of our colleagues and supporters who cheered us on throughout the entire editorial process.

We hereby dedicate this volume to our parents, in this world and beyond.
Food has played an important role in our lives, not just as scholars but also as individuals living, studying, and working in some of the world’s most interesting food landscapes. For several years, we brought our love for all things food into our academic lives through the organization of panels and roundtables dedicated to the cross-cultural studies of literary and filmic food and eating metaphors, an activity we look forward to yearly. We would hear the various ways in which scholars, not just in the Northeast of the United States but also around the world, approached and problematized the presence of food in cultural production and what, ultimately, these metaphors attempted to convey with regard to ever-evolving social milieu. In March 2017, at the annual Northeast Modern Language Association conference in Baltimore, Maryland, we chaired a panel on the dynamics of food and power as manifest in literature and film across cultures titled, “The Power of Sustenance and the Sustenance of Power.” The presentations on this panel considered post-Franco Spain, the impacts of the Marshall Plan on Italy’s social landscape, and, in a friendly yet deeply telling return to our childhood, the work of Roald Dahl. After touching upon the headmistress’s disturbing punishment in Matilda (1988), forcing Bruce to eat an entire chocolate cake on stage, the group then recalled The BFG (1982) and the whimsical world of frobscottle and whizzpoppers.

In The BFG, thirsty Sophie is introduced to frobscottle, a fantastic green drink within which the bubbles, resisting the laws of physics, float downward. However, the digestive gases released from the consumers of the drink force the body, generally rooted to the ground by gravity, zooming through the air. In this defiance of the natural order of physics, flatulence – onomatopoetically named “whizzpoppers” – sheds its connotation as taboo, as it has been marked in Western societies for generations, and is, instead, envisioned as a moment of euphoric release. Revisiting this childhood tale, and reflecting on its imaginative scenes through theoretical lenses, illuminated the potentiality of what is often brushed off as theatrically whimsy, childhood fantasy, and, plainly, silly. In that moment, some of our childhood favorites took on new meanings – several years into our panel-organizing tradition – that the idea sparked
in our minds to collect some of these diverse food- and eating-centered analyses of literary and filmic works into an edited volume. What if, we thought, instead of giggling nervously at this literary depiction of farts, we, so to speak, unclouded the latent meanings behind this natural bodily relief? Why is it that Dahl – and calling upon *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (1964) and *Fantastic Mr. Fox* (1970) as well – riddled his tales with fizzy drinks that resulted in belches and farts, voracious eating, and gluttonous children literally transforming into the off-limits items they were told most specifically not to consume? When we look at the seemingly mundane social taboos concerning eating, (in)digestion, and expulsion, what might literary (and filmic) representations of these semiotically charged processes ultimately tell us about ourselves and about the social paradigms in which we inhabit and through which we navigate daily?

In a review of Taro Gomi’s international bestseller, *Everyone Poops* (1977), *Publishers Weekly* begins, “Okay, so everyone does it – does everyone have to talk about it? True, kids at a certain stage of development may find the subject riveting – but their parents may well not want them to read about it.” What ultimately connects the chapters that follow is the underlying idea that these are the topics we, in fact, *should* talk about. That which provokes discomfort, and from which people normally shy away, are replete with meanings worth revealing. This book therefore seeks to negotiate the scandal of natural processes, examining the reasons *why* a focus on literary and filmic tropes of excretion, for example, is particularly telling. In so doing, the contributions underscore a set of macrocosmic, global repercussions extending far beyond the individual body. As Kyla Tompkins writes in *Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century* (2012), analyses centered on the “political and cultural meaning of eating culture... open up a multitude of questions central to critical reflection about the production of asymmetrical social relations, both historical and contemporary” (185). Through tropes of disordered eating, the compiled chapters demonstrate the ways in which authors, filmmakers, and even bloggers critically reflect on “production[s] of asymmetrical social relations” in their respective contexts. Food and the socially “odd” ways in which it is consumed and expelled are not interpreted solely as part of the biological survival and processes of individuals, but rather as part and parcel of their identity stylization as they navigate racial, (post)colonial, gendered, war-ridden, and generally oppressive environments-in-flux. The chapters highlight how acts of disordered eating imbue individuals with, in Tompkins’s words, “the burdens of difference and materiality,” positing them as “closely aligned with what we might think of as the bottom of the food chain,” (8) as a result of their atypical food-centered actions. Since eating, according to Tompkins, is an act that is “symbolic of access to the sphere of public politics and citizenship and thus metonymic of the struggle for political agency,”
the acts of disordered eating explored throughout this volume unveil the struggle to access the privileged spaces of their respective societies in question, and also to speak within them.

With this in mind, this volume addresses the particularly multifaceted ways in which authors and filmmakers across cultures employ tropes of food and eating as a means of deconstructing borders and opening pathways for the discussion of social (in)digestion. According to James Fernandez in *Persuasions and Performances: The Play of Tropes in Culture* (1986), the metaphors/tropes of a culture, such as those associated with eating, are capable of influencing behavior. A taboo concerning specific foodstuffs, for example, would play a role in the construction of one’s individual identity and societal positionality. Cultural tropes aid the individual in escaping the “privacy of [their] experience,” transitioning from inchoateness (the realm of the individual) to predication (the realm of the collective) – ultimately assigning certain identities to one’s self and others (46). The regular partaking in a social taboo of eating, which our contributors analyze here, would align the individual’s identity with what Deleuze and Guattari have coined, specifically in capitalist-structured societies, the *schizo* of one’s social milieu. The schizo, for Deleuze and Guattari, “is the subject of the decoded flows on the body without organs” (34), a subject that strays from the norms set by capitalist production and, thus, “plunges further and further into the realm of deterritorialization,” seeking out the limits of the social structure and claiming a new identity in the process. In so doing, however, this deterritorialized subject undergoes a process in which they become an indigestible entity within the larger societal digestive system. Deemed indigestible, the subject is simultaneously cast into the realm of the abject, as delineated by Julia Kristeva in her famous chapter on the abject/abjection, *Powers of Horror* (1980), becoming a threatening symbol to the larger social order and situating its indigestibility/abject-ness. The governing order of the subject attempts to double down on this “infection” – as we see in Laura Wright and Romain Peter’s contributions – and repress it. This is because, in the words of Kristeva, the abject “stand[s] for the danger to identity that comes from without: the ego threatened by the non-ego, society threatened by its outside, life by death” (71). The schizo, the abject, the indigestible entity, is the ultimate menace to the structures maintaining specific power paradigms in place. More specifically, Kristeva writes:

The vision of the abject is, by definition, the sign of an impossible object, a boundary, and a limit. A fantasy, if you wish, but one that brings to the well-known Freudian primal fantasies, his Underfantsien, a drive overload of hatred or death, which prevents images from crystalizing as images of desire and/or nightmare and causes them to break out into sensation (suffering) and denial (horror), into a blasting of sight and sound (fire, uproar). (154–155)
As a result of the emphasis on the synesthetic relationship between the indigestible subject and food/eating, the chapters of this volume exude visceral responses of rebellion to the power structures of their respective contexts. Therefore, to allow this subject to roam free, even in its deterritorialized space, threatens to undo, in a horror-provoking fashion, the social fabrics that produce from a privileged space the territorializing desires of its self-serving structures of power.

Instead of discarding these indigestible/abject identities, like capitalist societies historically are wont to do, this volume questions the paradigms that designated them as such. As the following contributions assess, the process of digestion is not merely physiological; it is also a process that resonates with sociocultural histories and individual positionalities within a society and the ways in which these societies “digest” the individual. As much as our food choices are governed by hierarchies above, the instances described in this volume reveal a sense of rebellion against these overarching structures; non-normative food choices and eating practices, the refusal to eat, and the expulsion of food together are seen as acts against the patriarchal orders, organized religion, colonial powers, the atrocities of war, and even the publishing and film industries themselves.

For chapters such as Wilson Taylor’s, Francesca Calamita’s, and Benjamin Legg’s – to name just a few from the list – that work with bodies of literature, it is pertinent to underscore why literary works and their food- and eating-centered tropes are particularly apt sites for the revealing of cultural nuances and fragmentations. Marilyn Cohen in Novel Approaches to Anthropology: Contributions to Literary Anthropology (2013) emphasizes how integral literature is in the reflection of a society. For Cohen, literature “provides descriptive information about the social structure and organization of a society including the existence of social institutions and customs and information about values and norms that may be inferred for the characters and their behavior” (5). Through literature, readers can more profoundly understand the cultural traditions and customs of the society or societies that the literary work represents.

We argue that it is possible to extrapolate this idea to analyses of film as well. Anne L. Bower was one of the first to touch upon this relationship in her edited volume Reel Food: Essays on Food and Film (2004), highlighting the use of food as a plot device in well-known films such as Itami Juzos’s Tampopo (1985), Peter Greenaway’s The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover (1989), and Alfonso Arau’s adaptation of Laura Esquivel’s novel, Like Water for Chocolate (1992). Craig Batty expands upon this formative scholarship on the strategic relationships between film characters and food in his contribution to Food, Media and Contemporary Culture: The Edible Image (2015). In “You Are What You Eat: Film Narratives and the Transformational Function of Food,” Batty notes that it is through the characters’ “perspective[s], point of view[s]
and narrative drive – through *agency*” that the viewer follows the film and makes sense of it (30, emphasis original). The particular relationship between characters, food, and eating in the film’s plot, Batty adds, “is employed as a deliberate screenwriting device to visualize and make felt the underlying story (character arc and theme) being told” (34, emphasis original). Again, we see how filmmakers take advantage of the synesthetic quality of both food and film to produce a narrative capable of physically captivating an audience through which to convey particular meanings. Returning to Cohen, fiction and the act of reading (both literature and film, we argue) are particularly potent means for learning about a culture and its people. Additionally, as Cohen notes, “since human beings are never fully defined by historically or socially constructed roles, aesthetic experiences like reading literature,” or reading films, “allow for questioning accepted norms, and imagining new identities, social relationships, and possible worlds” (6). Through a focus on disordered eating in literature and film, the following collection endeavors to problematize the “accepted norms” that deem certain manners of eating as outside the boundaries of normativity. In so doing, these alternative scopes for viewing the mundane and the grotesque convey a hope for the creation of new, more accommodating, ontological spaces.

### Defining Disordered Eating

The editors and contributors of this volume alike understand the gravity of eating disorders – from which a reported thirty million people, of all ages and genders, suffer in the United States alone – and discussion of such life-altering diseases is never to be taken lightly. This volume, however, seeks to achieve two objectives. First, we aim to recognize different instances of disordered eating, not just those psychologically categorized by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) as “not otherwise specified,” but ones that do not require any pathologization. Second, these chapters aim to get to the root of disordered eating: What is the reader or viewer actually seeing unfold, and to what extent does the consumer have a sense of agency? In other words, we aim to tackle the *why* of the literary and filmic representations of disordered eating and (in)digestion. In so doing, we question the traditional tenets of disorder as a label associated with that which is outside the norm.

Let us consider the example of anorexia nervosa, characterized by a distorted body image and excessive dieting that leads to severe weight loss with a pathological fear of becoming fat. According to Opal, an eating disorder treatment center based in Seattle, Washington, anorexia implies a “disturbance in the way in which one’s body weight or shape is experienced, undue influence of body weight or shape on self-evaluation, or persistent lack of recognition of the seriousness of the current low body weight.” While this definition bears a significant amount of truth,
this volume explores other modes of rationale behind this disorder, even positing that the practitioner not only recognizes the seriousness of low body weight, but also practices to instill a sense of control in a life where other aspects are constantly in jeopardy. As Jenny Platz writes in her treatment of Pro Ana and Mia blogs, “In general, the sites document the blogger’s process and desire to control her body and life through anorexia and bulimia in a world where the author must contend with strict parents, a stressful semester, unrequited love, depression, or physical trauma.” Meanwhile, Benjamin Legg, writing on A hora da estrela/The Hour of the Star (1977) by Clarice Lispector, underlines a definition of disordered eating that this volume strongly supports: that the bigger disorder in question is not of the individual practitioner, but, instead, of greater society. Referencing the theories of Susan Bordo, Legg writes:

‘The psychopathologies that develop within a culture, far from being anomalies or aberrations, [are] characteristic expressions of that culture... the crystallization, indeed, of much that is wrong with it’ (3). In the case of Macabéa, we see in her struggles with food and eating the physical results of economic injustice, while in her doctor’s disordered response we encounter Brazilian society’s anxieties around that injustice and its status on the global periphery.

The focus on disorder and its relation to food on the level of the individual serves as a means to locate symptoms within larger pathologies plaguing the sociocultural contexts of the literary and filmic works in question. In terms of Platz’s examination of Pro Ana and Mia blogs, rather than promoting disorder, she sees the blogs as spaces of self-care enacted through the Ancient Greek practice of hupomnemata, calling attention to American society’s penchant for swift demonization of that which appears disordered. With regard to Legg and his examination of Lispector’s most widely analyzed work, he traces Macabéa’s strange eating habits to histories of economic inequality in Brazil and its associated shame on the level of international appearances.

Foregrounding the individual experience of disordered eating and social indigestion as metonymic of larger societal fissures across cultures shifts the critical attention from the individual as schizo to, instead, the governing milieu as the breeding ground for these disorders. This volume, therefore, brings into question the meanings of “normal,” challenging the binary definitions of eating as normal or as deviant. The chapters do not treat the following acts of disordered eating as medically fraught, but, rather, as acts by a consumer which contradict her society’s standard order of operations. Disorder is not necessarily that of malaise or of illness and, in other words, is not “out of order,” implying brokenness. Instead, our rendition of disorder represents a moment against order. The consumer is not broken; we suggest, rather, that her eating,
refusal to eat, and physiological reactions to food all contend that the institutions which govern her interactions with food are out of order. Throughout each of the chapters presented in this volume, the undercurrent is, indeed, disordered eating of a resistant nature.

Resistance performed through disordered eating, as delineated in the following chapters, often veers into the realm of the grotesque. The schizo, eating excessive quantities of food and socially questionable combinations and types of food, shocks the sensory register of the reader/viewer, simultaneously loosening the standard definition of what (or who) food is. As Bernard McElroy writes in *Fiction of the Modern Grotesque* (1989), the literary grotesque often functions as an examination of hostile physical worlds that “overwhelm the individual, denying him a place and identity,” (17) surrounding him with violence, brutalization, and dehumanization. In so doing, the writer casts “an assault upon the idea of a rational world” and “upon the reader himself, upon his sensibilities” (75). This transgression serves to shock the reader, initiating her own critical thought process. But we must acknowledge the limitations of trying to understand representations of the grotesque and its abject counterparts. Justin D. Edwards and Rune Graulund write in *Grotesque* (2013):

as a term, grotesque can ... never be locked into any one meaning or form, historical period or specific political function. This means that any attempt to locate the grotesque is by definition bound to fail. For if there is any one thing that defines ‘the’ grotesque it is precisely that it is hybrid, transgressive and always in motion. (15)

A Transcultural Approach

The acts of eating and defecation reduce the billions of humans to their fundamental physiologies, their basic modes of survival. Once that baseline has been established, we wish to add in the nuances of how one’s positionalities – of one’s gender, class, religion, race, and national referents – determine the norms of eating, and, thus, how the consumer (or, by contrast, those who refuse to consume) eats against that grain.

The importance of investigating food in literature is underscored by a recent surge in publications on the topic. Food, despite its ties to daily monotony in terms of bodily survival, has become an undeniably crucial site for exploring the semiotics of identity politics. As Lorna Piatti-Farnell and Donna Lee Brien write in their introduction to the recently published volume of chapters that address the semiotics of the edible, *The Routledge Companion to Literature and Food* (2018): “Like all literary tropes and allegories defined by their associations to identity, food has the ability to transform itself into situations, and express numerous preoccupations within the anthropological structures that define us as
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‘human’” (1). This is because the human experience of ingesting food is an undeniably synesthetic one, prompting and provoking physiological reactions in the mind and body that, in turn, influence the body’s subject positioning within its external reality. Piatti-Farnell and Brien elaborate: “Food, cooking, and eating are linked to both cultural anxieties and desires in relation to human experience” (2). In other words, food and the manifold ways in which it is procured, cooked, consumed, and expelled directly correlate with individual “anxieties” and “desires” within specific cultural contexts. It is also telling of the individual’s place in that world. The repetition of the various experiences of food, not unlike Judith Butler’s argument in Gender Trouble (1990) regarding the repetition of gender performances, serves to stylize the body’s identity and positionality. Although repetition implies sameness, the experience of eating is highly diversified by the gendered, racial, and/or class-based implications of the body’s unique navigation of its surrounding social reality. Through a critical reading of a broad scope of literary and filmic works, (In)digestion explores the ways food and eating metaphors, entwined with themes of disorder, serve to stylize a subject’s identity while simultaneously revealing ambivalences within the (gendered, racial, and/or class-based) power structures governing that subject.

Along with Piatti-Farnell and Brien’s contribution, the study of literary food metaphors has experienced an upswing at the end of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first century, with commentaries spanning a multitude of geographies. Some examples include Maria José Queiroz’s A literatura e o gozo impuro da comida (1994), which offers a general study of the relationship between the written word and food from Greek mythology to contemporary Brazilian literature. Maggie Lane explores the representations of food in the novels of Jane Austen in Jane Austen and Food (1995). Timothy Morton’s Cultures of Taste/ Theories of Appetite: Eating Romanticism (2004) provides a collection of chapters that analyzes tropes of diet and consumption in the literature of the Romantic period. As highlighted above, Tompkins studies the intersection of food, eating culture, and race in nineteenth-century American literature in Racial Indigestion: Eating Bodies in the 19th Century (2012). Specifically, Tompkins explore the ways in which black bodies refused to be consumed and digested through white mouths in antebellum literary works. The importance of her work is magnified by the inclusion of cultural objects along with literary texts, highlighting the interdisciplinarity of her approach. Pina Palma in Savoring Power, Consuming the Times: The Metaphors of Food in Medieval and Renaissance Italian Literature (2013) foregrounds food and its linkages with the literature, philosophy, art, history, and theology of the Italian Renaissance, and the ways in which food and its representations straddle the realms of the earthly and beyond (26). Mariano García and Mariana Dimópulos have also compiled chapters on literature and food in a wide
array of works from Balzac to F. Scott Fitzgerald in *Escritos sobre la mesa: literatura y comida* (2014). Our volume joins these ranks, whole-heartedly supporting this diversity, geographic and otherwise.

In line with these collective works, we assert that food is not just necessary for corporeal survival. As we observe through literature and film, food – eating, preparation, choice – are means of expressing one’s identity and positionality within society: of where one stands with respect to governing bodies and cultural systems. As Elena Popan emphasizes to readers in the first chapter of this volume, food is a vehicle of relationality, one which establishes the backbone of norms and tastes of contemporary consumer society. Through the medium of film, viewers may grasp the primacy and the combinations of textures and colors of foods – both traditional and unusual aliments – which determine orderly and disordered eating: what makes us salivate, what “normal foods” are regularly featured on viewers’ plates, and what grotesque moments of eating revolt the audience. Citing scholars who set the theoretical framework for both her work and this volume overall, Popan states:

Food is a part of our everyday reality and is the basis of any economy, which makes eating ‘an ideological as well as physical act’ (Counihan & Van Esterik 3, 6). It is for this reason that viewers respond constantly to images related to food; food has primacy in our lives, a primacy that is part of our symbol-making and symbol-decoding capacity (Bower 9). Food also has such an ‘ambiguous, unpredictable, contentious, and high-stakes status in consumer society’ (Carson, Baron & Bernard 5). At the same time, it can be seen as a metaphor for what we love or hate about our society (Belasco 15), offering a powerful lens for ideological studies of film.

This volume lingers on Warren Belasco’s metaphor of love and hate and, moreover, the register of what acts of consumption are positively and negatively received, and why they are portrayed and viewed in that light. Our chosen lens is the digestive system, through which food is processed. While food and its representations within literature and film remain central to the analyses, this volume is unique in its assessment of another telling outlet: digestion. The relationship between food and the body is one of chemical and physical processes, and, as this volume underlines, of order and disorder, and of tolerance and rejection. In other words, the volume explores literary and filmic tropes of (in)digestion and their associated meanings. Through the process of digestion, food can re-emerge in various, and often socially taboo, ways. It can be released from the borders of the body in an act of abjection. The act, in so doing, brings to the foreground histories of sociocultural oppression that have established societal boundaries and normativities. The food we eat, and the food our bodies choose to digest – or, just as strikingly, not eat, and not
digest—therefore reveal individual struggles against systems of norms, and the societal changes the consumer seeks to initiate with a single bite.

Comparisons that span temporalities, cultures, and nations, such as this one, aim to place into perspective the larger power structures that influence our global society. Rita Felski and Susan Friedman, in their co-edited volume *Comparison: Theories, Approaches, Uses* (2013), advocate, for example, the utility of cross-cultural and cross-temporal comparison through an exploration of the relation between comparative literature and cultural anthropology. Felski and Friedman write in the introduction to this collection that “comparison is central to the analysis of world systems, transcontinental connections, and interculturalism, not only in the current phase of globalization but throughout human history” (2). We acknowledge the significance of comparing literature from opposite sides of the Atlantic and from various temporalities, as well as works that encompass social worlds influenced by different histories. Such an undertaking unveils commonalities not readily apparent and promotes cross-cultural understanding. At the same time, this study aims to illuminate historical connectivities as well as value cultural divergences and specificities. As Shu-mei Shih elaborates in “Comparison as Relation,” all literatures should be seen as “participants in a [global] network of power-inflected relations” (84); literatures across the globe reflect larger relations of power that influence not only small collectives but also larger, global communities. Making space for these seemingly disparate literary and filmic analyses—in terms of geographies and temporalities—thus places them in a larger context of global history and contemporaneity.

Since this volume assesses disordered eating as it is manifest in literature and film, the first section of the volume lays some of the theoretical groundwork with which to read the subsequent chapters. These three chapters, by Elena Popan, Aida Roldán-García, and Jenny Platz, are at once case studies of disordered eating which span multiple cultures—or, in the case of Platz, considers a virtual geography, given her presentation of eating disorders on the Internet—and which speak to the formal qualities of (in)digestion in aesthetics. As discussed above, Platz’s chapter underlines the sense of control expressed through blogs written and maintained by practitioners of anorexia and bulimia. Popan’s chapter begins the volume, underscoring the fundamental importance of food in cinematic works, as well as the stakes of film censorship, as she refers to illustrations of gastronomic hypocrisy among the Soviet elite. Top cadres indulge in luxurious, tropical foods, from caviar to oranges: foods which the collectivized, hungry masses of Communism could only dream of tasting. Taste and texture are two senses at the center of Roldán-García’s work, as she discusses the use of haptics in Ang Lee’s *Eat Drink Man Woman* (1994) and its Mexican-American remake by María Ripoll, *Tortilla Soup* (2001). Through these formal
qualities, Roldán-García draws the connection between taste and patriarchal authority, noting the direct correlation between a father’s loss of taste and his waning influence over his daughters. Since viewers use their own personal experiences to determine which discourses and meanings they assume as their own, they question discourses associated with their analogous filmic Other, because they do not correspond to those experiences. In the case of *Eat Drink*, those spectators who recognize themselves in the characters might end up questioning traditional Orientalist depictions of Asians as exotic and mysterious people, because they do not correspond to their own individual experiences or the represented reality of the movie. That is, spectators realize that the characters are far from being enigmatic creatures acting in strange ways – and yet they all have common problems and concerns regarding love and family.

In the volume’s second section, “Disordered Eating beyond the West,” Kenta McGrath transports readers to the Pacific campaigns of World War II, as Japanese troops consume the bodies of Allied soldiers, prisoners of war, civilians, and even each other, thereby demonstrating the prevalence of survival over human morality and ethics during wartime. Still focusing on Japan, but this time in the twenty-first century, Katsuya Izumi assesses Hayao Miyazaki’s character of No Face, who embarks on an eating rampage, unaware of what he is eating and digesting: a sign that the Japan he once knew has lost its way. Benjamin Legg discusses tropes of malnourishment in his analysis of Clarice Lispector’s novel, *A hora da estrela* (1977), and its 1985 film adaptation, underscoring in particular the protagonist’s troubled relationship with sweets, evoking the devastation wrought on northeastern Brazil by centuries of sugar monoculture. Laura Wright’s chapter rounds out the section, examining Korean novelist Han Kang’s 2007 novel *The Vegetarian*. Kang’s work interrogates the ways that protagonist Yeong-hye’s dietary choices, particularly with regard to her refusal to consume meat and other animal-based products, marks her body and psyche as unfeminine, pathological, and disordered; in turn, Wright acknowledges that Yeong-hye’s dietary choices are based on ethical convictions that politically and socially subvert acceptable social norms and gender-based expectations in ways that leave her trapped between empowered vegan identity and pathologized anorexia, in a space of uncertainty with regard to her ability to self-determine.

The volume then progresses to moments of disordered eating in the literary and filmic canons of the West in the section “Disordered Eating in the West.” For the West, food is often seen as a source of pleasure rather than anxiety. As Peter Jackson writes in *Anxious Appetites: Food and Consumer Culture*, “Conflicting emotions arise because food has such powerful material and symbolic properties. It is vital to our health and well-being, and closely bound up with our embodied identities (when ingested food literally becomes part of our selves). It has strong metaphorical force as well as being a necessity for sustaining life and well-being” (4).
The section begins with Romain Peter’s assessment of J.K. Huysmans’s *Against Nature* (1884), in which Des Esseintes, the protagonist, conducts a series of gastronomic experiments to discern connections between food and the mystic. Wilson Taylor considers James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), following the unorthodox consumption practices of Leopold Bloom, “the wandering Jew” through early twentieth-century Dublin. Meanwhile, referencing the work of Dacia Maraini, Eilis Kierans underscores the societal turbulence of postwar Italy, and in particular women’s struggles for emancipatory rights, blurring confectionary sweets with the pains of pregnancy. Italy’s Catholic heteropatriarchy is likewise a figment of Francesca Calamita’s chapter, as she considers Igiaba Scego’s short story “Salsicce (Sausages),” featuring a young female Muslim protagonist who negotiates her identity through food – namely, pork, a staple of Italian cuisine, but an unlawful, haram food according to the Qur’ān. Finally, Emily Gruber Keck rounds out the section, discussing the fecopoetics and socioeconomic dynamics present in the popular American movies *American Pie* (1999) and *Bridesmaids* (2011); Paul Finch loses his aura of elegance and classy tastes when, tricked with laxatives, he must seek relief in the girls’ restroom, and likewise, maid-of-honor Annie, of a decidedly lower socioeconomic class, organizes a lunch for the bridal party, but her “poor” choice in restaurants gives the women food poisoning.

From the early-modern to the contemporary, from East to West, from dire hunger to the excessive and grotesque, our work ventures to the border-crossings of disordered eating, where the consumer speaks volumes with just one bite.

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Notes

1 Officially self-identified as socialist countries, the states from the Eastern Bloc (USSR, East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Albania) operated between 1948 and 1989 along Soviet-inspired principles of governance, which primarily promoted the control of a single (Communist) party organizing the country’s economic, political, and social development (a semi-exception to this was Yugoslavia, which devised its own system of governance, but maintained the control of the Communist Party). Because they were all under Communist rule, these countries are often called “Communist states” although they never claimed to have achieved Communism, but rather considered themselves on the path of Socialism.

2 For a transnational approach of food in relation to memory, see Ana Grgić’s *Food as Transnational Object in Balkan Cinema* (2015).

3 The degrees of censorship in the Eastern Bloc vary from one country to another, as well as from one time period to another. In most of the countries, periods of very strict censorship alternated with periods of relative liberalization. However, censorship was never completely muted, but remained active throughout the entire communist era in Eastern Europe. This chapter is written in reference to this general trend. For an excellent historical and comparative cultural analysis of arts and relative liberalization in the Eastern Bloc, see Piotr Piotrowski’s *In the Shadow of Yalta: Art and the Avant-Garde in Eastern Europe, 1945–1989* (2009).

4 See, for example, Vance Packard (1961), John Kenneth Galbraith (1983), and Herbert Marcuse (1964).

5 See for example Alexander Dovzhenko’s *Earth* (1930), which uses food symbolism in a poetic form in order to celebrate Soviet policies to replace private land ownership with collective farms.

6 See for example Želimir Žilnik’s *Early Works* (Rani Radovi 1969), which depicts the minimalist food that young activists (presumably) eat.

7 As a religious holiday, Christmas was not well regarded by Communist authorities.

8 In *How We Survived Communism and Even Laughed* (2016), Slavenka Drakulic mentions for example the multiple ways in which simple potatoes were cooked, in order to have dishes that would fit for every occasion.

9 In 1984, George Orwell writes:

> In the end the Party would announce that two and two made five, and you would have to believe it. It was inevitable that they should make that claim sooner or later: the logic of their position demanded it. Not merely the validity of experience, but the very existence of external reality, was tacitly denied by their philosophy. The heresy of heresies was common sense. (80)

10 Chytilová stated in her defense that the two Maries were not intended to be role models but anti-heroines that needed to receive an exemplary punishment at the end of the film.

In the chapter, I use the term “ethnic” to refer to anything marked ethnically from a Western perspective. That is, anything related to ethnic minorities, ethnocultural groups, indigenous peoples, and non-Western cultures.

I use the adjective “intercultural” to refer to elements that cannot be ascribed to a single culture because they fluctuate between two or more cultural contexts. Lee’s and Ripoll’s movies are examples of intercultural films: *Eat Drink Man Woman* stands between Taiwanese, Chinese, and Western cultures, and *Tortilla Soup* alternates between US Latino, Anglo-American, and Brazilian cultural frameworks.

Since my analysis is focused on how haptics affect Western audiences’ film meaning construction and reception, in this chapter ethnic and racial otherness refers to any element which differs culturally and racially from Western and Eurocentric standards. From this perspective, ethnic, and racial differences are represented in these two movies by the Chinese and Latino cultures and communities.

In the film, we find other characters who also epitomize this dichotomy – for instance, Mrs. Liang and her daughter Jing Rong.

Though her analysis is focused exclusively on *Eat Drink*, I argue that Laine’s statements on food and gastronomy symbolism can be also applied to *Tortilla Soup*.

“Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield et al. 149).

In this chapter, we understand Americanization as the influence that US American culture (customs, habits, values, etc.) exercises on other cultures and societies.

From antiquity to the Scientific Revolution in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Western epistemologies upheld a decidedly determinist biological discourse that regarded body temperature as the main element establishing men’s and women’s physical, psychological, and social differences. Men embodied heat while women were cold:

While heat supposedly made man intelligent, courageous and forthright, cold made women unintelligent, timid and deceitful. Moisture was said to make women fickle, while dryness made men steadfast. Softness, in turn, made women both soft-hearted – compassionate – and soft-minded – incapable of forceful thinking. (Classen 1997, 2–3)

Hence, women’s Western association with the irrational was understood as a lack of ability to think in complex terms and a tendency to act according to emotions, feelings, and sensations (Beauvoir 1949; Classen 2012): “Mind and reason are superior to the emotions and senses and divorced from one another. Man is mind and represents culture: the rational, unified, thinking subject; woman is body and represents nature: irrational, emotional, and driven by instinct and physical need” (King 31). In relation to the senses, as a result of these sexual and physiological differences, men were believed to delight in more rational activities whereas women were to enjoy more bodily satisfactions (Classen 2012, 75). Because of that, senses were traditionally gendered as well: “In accordance with the mind/body, male/female duality […], men tended to be lined with the ‘rational’ senses of sight and hearing, and women with the ‘corporeal’ senses of smell, taste, and touch” (Classen 4).

We consider cultures to be unstable entities which change through time.
In her text, Laine uses the following quote by Laura Marks to corroborate her point:

The cinematic encounter takes place not only between my body and the film’s body, but my sensorium and the film’s sensorium. We bring our own personal and cultural organization of the senses to cinema, and cinema brings a particular organization of the senses to us, the filmmaker’s own sensorium refracted through the cinematic apparatus. One could say that intercultural spectatorship is the meeting of two different sensorial systems, which may or may not intersect. Spectatorship is thus an act of sensory translation of cultural knowledge. (*The Skin* 153)

Jacques Lacan uses the term “misrecognition” (*Fr. méconnaissance*) to designate the contradictions felt by a child when looking and recognizing him/herself in the mirror for the first time. These contradictions arise from the differences the infant believes to exist between his/her reflection and its own body. That is, the image in the mirror seems to be more complete, perfect, and ideal when compared to the physical and motor limitations felt by the infant. Hence, recognition leads to misrecognition (Mulvey 60). In this chapter, I use this Lacanian term to refer to the differences and contradictions felt by spectators when recognizing and identifying themselves with someone in an intercultural or ethnic movie. In this case, though, the audience represents the infant, the film becomes the mirror, and the projection is embodied by the cultural Other.

Since its beginnings, Hollywood has been responsible for creating and perpetuating stereotypes about racial and ethnic minorities which have been incorporated into Western sociocultural imaginary. Chinese, like other Asians, have been usually portrayed as villains, wise mystic people, martial arts masters, nerds, and store owners. Female counterparts have been usually represented as sexualized and submissive entities (prostitutes), martial arts experts, and *femme fatales*: dangerous, seductive women.

According to Ty, self-exoticization is an act of self-exposure to satisfy the voyeuristic desires of others. The self is modified or reconceptualized in order to appeal to other people’s desires and projections.

This allure follows the same principle that makes microscopic and detailed images of common things such as insects and leaves so fascinating. In these cases it is not so much about the object, but how it is portrayed.

Laine uses Lisa Heldke concept of “Food adventurism” as “[...] an attitude that is not far from cultural colonialism. Food adventurers love to try new cuisines, and they are always in search of new and remote culinary cultures that they can use as raw material in their own food practices to make themselves more interesting” (Laine 111).

Food porn refers to the explicit, suggestive, and attractive visual display of food with the only purpose of providing visual pleasure and arousing desire to eat. It is especially used in advertising.

By “ethnic filmmaker” I refer to filmmakers who are marked ethnically in Western contexts because of their origins and cultural heritage, and filmmakers who address topics related to ethnic otherness (Ibid. 1): cultural representation, immigration, social injustice, etc.

Note the uses of ellipses are by the blogger.

For gender theory on Pro Ana and Mia, refer to: “Pro-anorexia/bulimia Censorship and Public Service Announcements: The Price of Controlling Women” by Nicole Danielle Schott and Debra Langan, Karen Dias’ article “The Ana Sanctuary: Women’s Pro-Anorexia Narratives in Cyberspace,”
and Elisa Burke’s “Pro-anorexia and the Internet: A Tangled Web of Representation (Dis)Embodiment.”

3 For psychological and sociological research on Pro Ana and Mia, please refer to “Constructing Identities in Cyberspace: The Case of Eating Disorders” by David Giles, Teresa Sofia Castro’s and Antonio Osorio’s “Online Violence: Not Beautiful Enough... Not Thin Enough. Anorectic Testimonials in the Web,” and Kathleen Custers’s “The urgent matter of online pro-eating disorder content and children: clinical practice.”

1 A blog post by Asia Policy Point suggests that the controversy may have been sparked by a mistranslation of the phrase “ritual acts of cannibalism” in Morikawa Soichiro’s Japanese article about the book, published in WEDGE Infinity magazine. Morikawa translates “ritual” as fushu, connoting what is “customary, or common practice – which does not really match the nuance of ritual” (“Sourcing Misinformation”).

2 In his extensive study of Japanese war crimes, Hidden Horrors (1996), Tanaka collates a ghastly collection of evidence which shows that the practice of cannibalism was diverse and widespread. Victims were from a host of different countries and include those who died in battle or from starvation and illness, were killed specifically to be eaten, and, in some rare but gruesome cases, were kept alive as an ongoing food source.

3 These scenarios show how important it is to determine whether cannibalism also entailed murder, as the ethical implications are radically different. J. Jeremy Wisnewski, for example, argues that cannibalism can be ethically justifiable without even considering hunger as a factor, so long as it “occurr[s] after the cannibalized has died, and further, that the cannibalized has not been murdered” (265).

4 He may have the two confused, however, when he later claims that the privates were killed because they had cannibalized the latter.

5 Convinced that Koshimizu was ultimately responsible for the murder of the privates and lied about his involvement, Okuzaki visited his home with a gun; upon finding that he was not in, he shot his son instead. It is this level of fanaticism which leads historian Iriye Akira to draw ironic parallels between Okuzaki and the wartime Japanese Army (1037), the very institution which Okuzaki despises and denounces.


1 “Freyre tampouco é benevolente com o processo geral de industrialização. Pelo contrário: Freyre critica repetidamente a industrialização, por exemplo, dos doces, pirulitos e balas que ameaçam a doçaria tradicional” (Rocha 17).

2 ... primorosamente higiênica, quase tão bonita de aspecto quanto os reclames ilustrados de presuntos em lata, mas de ordinário sem gosto ou sem “it” (Freyre, “Há quitutes...” 24).

3 In 1939, he published Açúcar/Sugar, a book-length essay on the importance of sugar in the development of Brazilian civilization that includes over 150 traditional recipes for cakes, candies, jams, and ice creams.

4 De modo que a nutrição da família colonial brasileira, a dos engenhos e notadamente das cidades, surpreende-nos pela sua má qualidade: pela pobreza evidente de proteínas de origem animal e possível de albuminoïdes em geral; pela falta de vitaminas; pela de cálcio e outros sais minerais; e, por outro lado, pela riqueza de certas toxinas (Freyre 113).

5 Ressalte-se ainda que o ofício da baiana de acarajé pode ser considerado um dos marcos da história e da resistência do povo negro e em especial, da mulher negra no Brasil” (ibid., 7).
All of my references to what Toshio Suzuki says about Miyazaki and Spirited Away are from the Daily Shincho article titled, in my English translation, “‘No Face at the beginning was a side character who did not even have a name’: Power of idea of Miyazaki Hayao who withdrew his retirement and the art of work of Studio Ghibli,” which can be found at www.dailyshincho.jp/article/2017/05241730/?all=1. Translations are all mine.

This is a piece of evidence to deny that Spirited Away is Chihiro’s coming-of-age story.

I am aware that people discuss the bathhouse’s name 油屋 online (for example, cinema.pia.co.jp/com1543/27738/), and some of them point out that to use 油屋 for a bathhouse’s name is not unusual. They also say that 油屋 might have come from 油屋熊八 (Aburaya, Kumahachi) who is related to either hot spring or bathhouse in Japan. Considering these historical facts that Miyazaki might have had in his mind, I still want to suggest the possibility of reading 油 as an indication of oil for cooking because of its abundant use in the film that includes various foods.

The kanji that I use as examples here are understandably related to food and eating because they show up in the restaurant street. 飢 means “starving”; 食 means “eating or food”; 横丁 can be something like “food court”; and 豚 means “pig.” However, by using these examples, I cannot say that the signifiers without the signified in this film show the close link between the devouring acts and multiple identities that I have explained in the previous sections because there are many other kanji in this film that are not related to eating or food and that cannot be read in any coherent ways. What I argue with these signifiers is Miyazaki’s familiarity with the postmodern theory of language and I try to rescue multiple identities/meanings or the lack thereof from their status of negative connotations.

I only briefly explain the importance of the kanji Lucken uses: 目 and 眼 are interesting because both mean “eye”; 千 and 尋 are important because they transcribe Chihiro’s first name, 千(chi) and 尋(hiro); 博 is also important because it is read “haku” although Haku’s name in kanji will be 璟, a different kanji. I will explain the importance of 生 in my text because it is important for my argument.

Kang’s novel was translated into English in 2015.

According to Human Rights Watch’s 2019 World Report, “Between June and August 2018, tens of thousands of women demonstrated to demand the government take action against spycams in women’s public toilets and other violations of women’s privacy involving cameras.” Further, until April of 2019 abortion was a crime punishable by up to one year in prison or fines up to two million won (US$1,794), and married women had to have their spouse’s permission to get an abortion. Finally, “the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women reviewed South Korea, and raised concerns regarding the absence of the comprehensive anti-discrimination laws and the low levels of reporting of domestic violence.”

An examination of media coverage of several deaths of children whose parents were vegan, as well as media scrutiny of pregnant women who are vegan makes clear the ways in which veganism is perceived as a danger to children when it is practiced by their mothers. For a more comprehensive analysis, see The Vegan Studies Project, pp. 89–96.

In addition, there has been a rise in pro-anorexia (pro-ana) websites in South Korea in recent years, prompting increased concern by medical professionals and lawmakers in that country (Han-soo).
This attitude generally called “dandyism” promotes the superior valor of devices and feats of modernity over the beautiful nature worshipped by romanticism. Charles Baudelaire is one of its most preeminent figures and Huysmans confesses his great admiration for the poet in *Against Nature*. It is undoubtedly from him that he inherits the taste for the beautiful artifact.


Huysmans will become famous for his conversion to Catholicism after a long career of scandalous works involving the themes of blasphemy, Satanism, sexual perversions, and debauchery. His works are usually split into two periods (“two Huysmans”): the first spans the early naturalistic works up to *Against Nature*, *Stranded*, and *The Damned*, and the second proceeds from *En route*. Yet he always refused to disavow his first period, and considered his writings as a whole, coherent despite his evolution, and even because of his evolution.

The epigraph of *Against Nature* reflects this acquaintance, as it is a quote from the Flemish mystic Rusbrock: “I must rejoice beyond the bounds of time... though the world may shudder at my joy, and in its coarseness know not what I mean.”

The Baldick translation erases the radicality of this passage by translating “living on a crust of bread,” which gives the impression of voluntary poverty. The original French text, again, is bolder: “S’essayant à ne plus manger,” which must be translated to “making attempts not to eat,” which would preserve the experimental dimension of the engraver’s behavior.

Throughout this chapter, my use of the word and concept of “abject” and “abjection” relies on Julia Kristeva’s definition, explained in *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982), as the simultaneous desire and disgust – the “vortex of summons and revulsion” – that “draws [one] toward the place where meaning collapses” and beckons one to “the border of [the] condition as a living being.” The abject is “what disturbs identity, systems, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (1–4). Bloom’s transgressive hunger similarly functions to “disturb identity, systems, order,” and, as such, subverts the ideological constructions and processes of modernity.

Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly refer to their work as a “schizo-analysis” and the “desiring-machine” as a figure of “schizophrenia,” which they define as the “universe of productive and reproductive desiring-machines” and as the “essential reality of man and nature” (5). They later note that “schizophrenia is the product of the capitalist machine” (33) – that the urgent vitality of the “desiring-machine” is itself engendered by its entrapment within virtual dimensions of deterritorialization and abstraction generated by capitalism. To this end, Bloom himself might function as such a model of what they term “schizo-analysis” (and *Ulysses* might as well – they also argue that “the work of art is itself a desiring-machine” [35]). A “schizophrenic,” such as Bloom, might “continually wander about, migrating here, there, and everywhere as best he can” while “[plunging] further and further into the realm of deterritorialization... it may well be that these peregrinations are the schizo’s own particular way of rediscovering the earth” (33).

*Ulysses* also plays with the transformative potential of language through its impulsive reconfiguration of Leopold’s “metempsychosis” to Molly’s “met him pike hoses” – the word itself undergoes this transfiguration in the novel’s endless re-processing of its own metamorphic logic in both form and content.
“Honey” is the English translation of the Italian “Miele.”

Original:

Mangio il fungo di Alice. Divento minuscola. Entro nello specchio e scivolo dentro un imbuto nero una galleria glutinata dalle pareti molli che mi cacciano in fondo in fondo verso le radici degli intestini verso le strettoie dell’ano che si torce e plof esco cacata da me stessa in un giardino profumato e mi guardo intorno stordita. (3)

“divorando pezzo a pezzo le ossa scarne dei contadini vietnamiti” (30).


“Fa schifo. Lo bevo perché mi ricorda una donna che ho amato” (6).

“come un maiale pregiato” (7).

“liquido bianco appiccicoso” (94).

“come una mosca nel latte” (8).

“Aspetto che mi dica qualcosa di più su di lui” (12).

“la glassata bianca nasconde l’interno del dolce. E quelle violette sono così brillanti così finite non dicono la verità” (12–13).

“Mi sapore della sua lingua amara di caffè. La guancia contro la guancia” (20).

“Mi addormento fra le braccia di Paolo. Un senso di amaro in bocca per il troppo vino bevuto. La pancia gonfia le palpebre pesanti. Sogno che sto male nella mia pelle. E ho voglia di scappare” (48).

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“un senso di peso sul ventre” (10).

“sta cercando di spingersi dentro di me” (10).


“Non sono gelosa... il fatto è che non sono abbastanza gelosa” (15).

“un eccesso di intimità matrimoniale” (15).

It is noteworthy that Western society has traditionally considered meat a male food that symbolizes power and virility. For a feminist critique on the relationship between meat and men, see, for example, Marti Kheel, “Vegetarianism and Ecofeminism: Toppling Patriarchy with a Fork,” in Food for Thought: The Debate over Eating Meat, ed. Steve F. Sapontzis (Prometheus Books, 2004), 327–341.


“Voglio essere presente quando nasce. È anche mio” (53).

“Da ora in poi non voglio che tu faccia un gesto” (54).

“Faccio io la spesa oggi! Dov’è il guinzaglio? Tu pulisci la casa che io penso a tutto” (54).

“per una ricchezza di famiglia mai compresa né digerita” (4).

In The Feminine Mystique, Betty Friedan focuses on the plight of educated white women who, as bell hooks points out, represented a small fraction of women. Hooks emphasizes that the majority of women during the 1950s and 1960s were from working-class backgrounds, and many of them considered it a privilege to stay at home and take care of the family. For further discussion of feminist class struggle, see bell hooks, Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics (Pluto Press, 2000), 37–44.

“Non riesco ad urlare come gli altri. Per quel misto di timidezza e senso del ridicolo che mi porto appresso come una remora bluastro che nuota sempre con me nelle acque fonde della coscienza” (29).
26 “La mattina mi sveglio con lo stomaco in subbuglio. Penso: avrò mangiato qualcosa di guasto. Ma no è lui che ho mangiato. E non riesco a digerirlo. Mi contrae le viscere mi strozza la gola. Mi alzo mi preparo un caffè e mi accorgo che non sto attenta a quello che faccio: sono gesti meccanici che vengono fuori per abitudine. Il mio pensiero è fisso su di lui” (24).

27 “Torno a tavola. Spilluzzico qualcosa. Ma lo stomaco è chiuso sbarrato” (56).

28 “Ma lui l’altro lì dentro la pancia è geloso. Non sopporta la presenza anche solo immaginata di un altro oltre lui. …Vuole che tutte le mie attenzioni i miei pensieri le mie voglie i miei languori siano per lui e solo per lui” (71).

29 “Solo io e lui sappiamo di che si tratta: una quieta allegra voglia di disobbedire alle leggi della gravidanza. Questo figlio aspettato coccolato amato ancor prima di nascere si prende beffe di chi lo considera già suo lasciandosi andare ad un gioco rischioso ma inebriante” (71).

30 In 1978, abortion was legalized in Italy.

31 “Il comodino carico di dolci alla mandorla di cioccolatini che non mangio di biscotti all’arancio di frutta candita di bignè alla crema” (72).

32 “pallida come un fagiolo” (77).

33 “Gonfia di cibo maldigerito” (77).

34 “Mangio solo quello che mi va quando mi va” (79).

35 “La delizia di mangiare ed essere mangiati predatore e preda l’uno dell’altro accaniti nel riempirsi la bocca dei pezzi più desiderati: labbra guance palpebre orecchie lingua collo” (89).

36 “Questa volta ci dividiamo. Ma per rimanere divisi. Gli odori si ricompongono perdono quel bruciore speziato che ubriaca. Non siamo più sospesi nel vuoto in un misterioso spazio fra la terra e il cielo fra mele che esplodono e pesci che volano …” (229).

37 “Devo lasciarlo com’è chiuso nel suo mistero come in una seconda pelle” (230).

38 “Io ti amo Armida,…è questo che volevo dirti…che niente cambia anche se tutto sembra cambiare ti sento più vicina che mai e ti amo tanto” (260).

39 “È giusto che appaia come vuole apparire. Anche se non è la verità. Ma la verità come direbbe lui che cos’è?” (261).

40 “Io sono qui con in mano questa patata che nella sua bianca lucida e tenere compattezza pare racchiudere per sempre il misero e nello stesso tempo grandioso mistero di Miele” (267).

1 Regularly closing ports to NGO boats has become a strategy of the far-right wing of the current government to stop new migrants from reaching Italy by sea. For example, in summer 2018, Italy did not allow Acquarius to disembark; only after several days of debates were migrants allowed to reach Spain and be admitted by the country. In January 2019, Sea Watch 3 was not allowed to disembark its forty-seven migrants in Sicily. For the case of the Italian coastguard ship Diciotti, with 177 migrants on board who were not allowed to disembark in Catania, Salvini might face trial for kidnapping.

2 Robert Press’s article (2016) focuses on emotions of migrants over the course of their journey from Africa to Europe. “Dangerous crossings” are retold by the author who interviewed sixty African migrants in 2014–2016 in Italy and France, providing a portrait of resilience and courage, which deeply differs with the images media offer every day on Italian television and newspapers.
3 *Ius Soli* (2011) is the title of a documentary by Italian-Ghanaian director Fred Kuwornu; it addresses this issue and explores feelings and frustrations as perceived by several children of migrants who were born in Italy.

4 On migrant women’s writing and issues of gender, see another publication by Lidia Curti: *La voce dell’altra: scritture ibride tra femminismo e postcoloniale* (2006).

5 Fernanda Farias de Albuquerque wrote *Princesa* in collaboration with Francesco Iannelli while Nassera Chohra wrote *Volevo diventare bianca* with Alessandra Atti Di Sarro.

6 Ali Farah and Scego were born in Italy; however, they both defined themselves in the past as “immigrant women’s writing.” Brioni reminds us that Scego also identifies herself as part of “la prima generazione di figlie di immigrati nate e cresciute in Italia” [the first generation of immigrants’ daughters, born and raised in Italy] (47).

7 The so-called *tratta delle donne nigeriane* refers to the escalating number of young Nigerian women who are trafficked to Italy to work illegally as prostitutes. Recent statistics confirm that in 2015, about five thousand women were promised a new European life and found themselves trapped at the mercy of their protectors. See http://inchieste.repubblica.it/it/repubblica/rep-it/2016/06/27/news/la_tratta_delle_nigeriane_gestita_dall_italia-142510895/?refresh_ce (last accessed January 19, 2019).

8 Scego’s father was a well-known politician who worked in various diplomatic positions, including ambassadorial roles. She spent her childhood and adolescent years in Italy and she graduated in Foreign Literature at the University of Rome “La Sapienza.” In 2008 she obtained her PhD in Pedagogy at the Roma Tre University with a thesis on the writings of Erminia dell’Oro, Cristina Ali Farah, and Gabriella Ghermandi. She collaborates regularly with largely read Italian newspapers, such as *La Repubblica* and *Il Manifesto*, as well as online magazines specializing in migration issues, such as *Carta* and *Corriere Immigrazione*. A complete biography, compiled by Brioni, is available on the website of the Centre for the Study of Contemporary Women Writing in the University of London. See http://modernlanguages.sas.ac.uk/igiaba-scego (last accessed January 27, 2019).

9 Scego’s corpus of work is extensive; among some of her well-known writings are: *La nomade che amava Alfred Hitchcock* (2003); *Rhoda* (2004); “Dismatria” and “Salsicce” in *Pecore nere* (2005); *Italiani per vocazione* (2005); “Identità” in *Amori Bicolori* (2007); *Quando nasci è una roulette. Giovani figli di migranti si raccontano*, with Ingy Mubiayi (2007); *Oltre Babilonia* (2008); *L’albero in Nessuna Pietà* (2009); *Roma Negata*, with Rino Bianchi (2014); *Adua*, (2015); and *Caetano Veloso. Camminando controvento* (2016).

10 “Salsicce” was awarded the Eks&Tra prize among migrant writers.


12 Italian literature has also many culinary representations from medieval times to present-day writing. See, for example, Christiana Purdy Moudarres, *Table Talk: Perspectives on Food in Medieval Italian Literature* (2010); Francesca Calamita, *Linguaggi dell’esperienza femminile: disturbi alimentari, donne e scrittura dall’Unità al miracolo economico* (2015); Peter Naccarato, Zachary Nowak and Elgin K. Eckert, *Representing Italy through Food* (2017).

13 “le rivendicazioni legate al cibo […] costituiscono a tutti gli effetti una richiesta di riconoscimento che si potrebbe definire completo, composto di elementi non solo fisici, ma anche culturali e psichici, incluse indichiarate o mal
dichiarare o inconscie istanze affettive (2).” My translation in the main body of the chapter.


15 In the memoir *La mia casa è dove sono*, Scego reveals that “Salsicce” is an autobiographical work. As Brioni notes (107), in *La mia casa è dove sono* Scego describes her bulimic attitude and how her frequent episodes of vomiting are a metaphorical way to erase her sense of guilt for living in a Western country where she can afford a wealthy life (2010, 143). Therefore, in this chapter, I will refer to the protagonist of the short story as Igiaba, the first name of the author.

16 “Ma che cara, ti sei convertita? Non era peccato per te mangiare sal-sicce?” (25).

17 “Se ingoio queste salsicce una per una, la gente lo capirà che sono italiana come loro? Identica a loro?” (26).

18 Oltre ai dolci, sul buffet c’erano anche salame, salsiccia, prosciutto e vino rosso: un concentrato di peccati gravissimi, secondo il Corano. [...] Quando mi fossi completamente confusa tra la folla e nessuno avesse più badato a me, allora avrei potuto dare inizio alla mia conversione. Come? Mangiando il salame e bevendo il vino, naturalmente. A sentir tutti, era solo quella la differenza tra noi e i cattolici! (66–67). My translation in the main body of the chapter.


20 “ma ero davvero un’italiana nell’intimo?” (27).

21 “Ti senti più italiana o somala?” (27).

22 In particular, they refer to Cardinal Biffi’s proposal to accept migrants on the basis of their religion, which was made in 2000. See Jacqueline Andall and Derek Duncan, *Italian Belongings. Hybridity in Italian Colonial and Postcolonial Cultures* (2010), 6.

23 Several Facebook pages of the leaders of the current government have contributed to spread hate among Italians. In particular, the official page of Matteo Salvini has numerous posts where migrants are not only criticized but also insulted by his followers. Several main European and American newspapers have addressed the issue and compared present-day Italy to Fascist Italy of the 1920s–1940s in terms of integration and lack of rights. Together with the campaign against diversity, *Lega* is also attempting to reduce women’s and LGBTQ rights, particularly in terms of reproductive freedom. Gender Studies has also been deeply misunderstood by the current Minister of Family and Disability, Lorenzo Fontana, and other members of the *Lega*, reinforcing and creating stigma on a much-needed subject in schools and universities. While complete integration in Italy has been difficult and in evolution for a long time, with the current government even more challenges have been added.

24 *Extracommuniatri/o* originally refers to non-European union citizens; however, in Italy, it has been mistakenly used as an umbrella term to refer to all migrants, particularly black migrants.

25 My own translation: “è il primo modo per entrare in contatto con culture diverse” (154).

26 “Non sanno che [...] butto via il sacchetto con il pane indiano farcito di verdure strangolate nell’olio e nelle spezie che la mamma mi fa portare a scuola per merenda” (45). My translation in the main body of the chapter.
“Mi sento somala quando: […] mangio la banana insieme al riso, nello stesso piatto intendo […] cuciniamo tutta quella carne con il riso o l’an-geelo. […] Mi sento italiana quando: […] faccio una colazione dolce […] mangio un gelato da 1,80 euro con stracciatella, pistacchio e cocco, senza panna” (29).

“Forse mangiando una salsiccia passerei da impronte neutre a vere impronte digitali made in Italy” (31).

“Non ho ancora deciso cosa ne farò. Non ho ancora deciso se le man-gerò” (34).

No, sarei la stessa. E se questo dà fastidio d’ora in poi me ne fotterò” (35).

See also Françoise Lionnet, “Feminism and Universalisms: ‘Universal Rights’ and the Legal Debate around the Practice of Excision in France” (2003).

“ma tu sei una nijas (impura), c’hai ancora il kintir (clitoride), non troverai mai marito” (30).

“I’infibulazione non ha niente a che fare con la religione e che è solo una violenza sulle donne” (30).

FGM (female genital mutilation) is practiced predominantly in Muslim societies; however, it is central also to certain Christian and animist groups particularly in Africa, the Middle East, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Sin of gluttony.

“sin dall’inizio, lei non è convinta della bravata […] entrambe le dimensioni, italiana e somala, fanno parte della sua identità, senza che l’una possa prevalere sull’altra o assimilarsi all’altra, negandola.” My translation in the main body of the chapter.

“senza segnalazioni […] senza impronte digitali” (36).

1 This fight has been largely neglected by readings that focus on the trio of rogues as an egalitarian company or community (among others, Alwes and Rust), though some scholars have suggested the metaphorical resonances of Face and Subtle’s excremental language (see, for instance, Boehrer and Dustagheer).

2 Face is describing Subtle as constipated, a reference in which Paster finds pathos, since it seems to imply a case of “extreme hunger and humoral insolubility [in which] the body does not even have much to excrete” (147).

3 Critics have linked both grotesque elements of this punishment to historical practices that would have carried different social meanings for Jonson’s audience; see, for instance, Rust, Foley, and Willard. The similarities of this gulling to the opening are so distinctive, however, that Paster suggests Dapper’s imprisonment in the privy results from Face and Subtle “displacing onto him the anal aggression against each other they had earlier resolved to surrender” (160).

4 On various proposed class-bound motives for Jonson’s satire of various foolish dupes, including Dapper, see among others Alwes, Rivlin, Wooland, and Boehrer. Reading gold and waste as joint results of London’s population explosion, Boehrer argues that Jonson “draws [his] most basic social distinction between characters who recognize shit for what it is and those who mistake it for treasure”; he sees Dapper’s fate as a symptom of his folly, making visible his failure “to distinguish between purity and filth” (152).

5 Though they take explicitly excremental revenge only on Dapper, the rogues’ relationships with their other marks, and with Face’s master Lovewit, illuminate how concern for food shapes their understanding of the social hierarchy they so energetically disrupt; for example, the knight Epicure Mammon fantasizes about “The tongues of carps, dormice, and camels’ heels, / Boiled i’the spirit of Sol and dissolved pearl […] And I will eat these broths with spoons of amber” (2.2.75-76, 78).
6 See likewise Maher and Montoliú.
7 “Jim (Jason Biggs), Finch (Eddie Kaye Thomas) y Stifler (Seann W. Scott), sin embargo, pertenecen claramente a la tradición de la comedia gamberra. […] Como sucede en la comedia gamberra, sus líneas narrativas son totalmente episódicas y los personajes no sufren ningún tipo de evolución hacia la madurez similar a las de Oz y Kevin […] esas humillaciones parecen más bien una convención genéricali” (Montoliú 70–71).

8 Intriguingly, two characters who trumpet their sexual prowess are also punished: Stifler by unknowingly drinking another man’s ejaculation in a beer, and Sherman by exposure as a fraud, which causes him to urinate publicly at prom. These intersections of verbal openness with involuntary bodily openness, in the form of polluted consumption and excretion, indicate that the film’s ideal of manliness also demands the verbal intactness Oz maintains when he withholds his loss of virginity from his friends.

9 Eyre characteristically suggests that Annie has “hit ‘rock bottom,’ largely due to her lack of boyfriend or husband,” representing “the societal anxiety generated by the trend toward delayed marriage” (60). She follows reviews by critics like Denby and Anna Smith “In Cinemas,” and is followed by Klaes, who after describing Annie’s dire financial straits adds that she “most importantly, for the purpose of this paper, fails at sustainable relationships” (66).

10 As Paul Julian Smith notes, the poster with the characters “star[ing] down the spectator in a pink lineup” evoked “goodfellas in fuchsia” (8); other reviewers who emphasized the film’s appeal to men include Anna Smith “In Cinemas,” Medd, Longworth, and Alter.

11 Both views have persisted in retrospective considerations of the film. Otis and Eyre both cite the episode as one of the film’s progressive features (141; 61). However, O’Leary links the scene with the grotesque’s potential for misogyny (296), and Klaes argues that it signals “A cast of well-acclaimed female comedians would not suffice [to draw male audiences] without the poop scene” (71).

12 Before Bridesmaids was released, Apatow worked on multiple films starring Jim Carrey and Adam Sandler, and made his reputation as a writer-director with raunchy hits about men’s struggle to achieve adulthood, particularly The 40-Year-Old Virgin and Knocked Up.

13 Reviews recognized the airplane sequence as a key counterpart to the food poisoning episode in both comedic value and narrative centrality; see, for instance, Hammond, Alter, and Anna Smith “In Cinemas.”

14 As Anna Smith put it, “The script slams those who assume single life to be a fate worse than death and then sends a knight in a cop car to save Annie” (“Bridesmaids” 58), and scholarship has largely followed this trend, from Eyre’s claim that the film “sustain[s] the conservative ideals perpetuated by the romantic comedy and the homme-com” (58, 60) to Klaes’s suggestion that the ending “regress[es], making the modern woman change her ways to repent for her sins and prove her worth for her desired love” (66).