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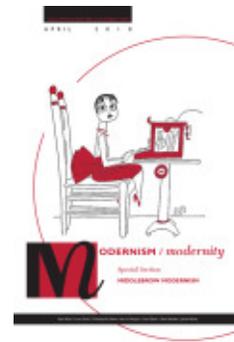
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War Rations and the Food Politics of Late Modernism

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War Rations and the Food Politics of Late Modernism

By Allison Carruth

We all eat food; and whatever sacrifices we may have to make to take care of the needs of our fighting men, the American people will continue to be better fed than any other nation on earth

—Elmer Davis, Director of the Office of War Information (1942)

Nothing nourishing, / common dealtout food; / no better reading / than keeps us destitute.

—Lorine Niedecker (1945)

Food, U.S. propaganda director Elmer Davis suggested in 1942, was a profoundly political matter during the Second World War. As global famine conditions and national rationing programs came to define the daily lives of most people, agriculture and eating became fraught emblems of military power, war trade, and political allegiances. In the context of transatlantic literary culture, the wartime politics of food animates a wide range of modernist writers.¹ By the same token, food writers such as M. F. K. Fisher and Elizabeth David adapt modernist aesthetics to the project of instructing home cooks on how to prepare gourmet meals out of scarce resources and black market ingredients. We should thus consider avant-garde writers such as Samuel Beckett and Lorine Niedecker to be coextensive with these gastronomical figures; considered together, their works constitute an expressly transcultural form of late modernism that turns on a cultural divide between austerity and luxury (or what George Orwell

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768 terms “luxury feeding”) as well as a felt anxiety vis-à-vis the expanding power of the United States and its food-centered economy.

Although no critical account attends to the preoccupation with food in literary modernism, that preoccupation proves to be a productive area of inquiry for modernist studies. In treating food aesthetically, modernist writers neither resist the culture of consumption nor disavow the “social life of things,” to cite Fredric Jameson and Arjun Appadurai respectively, but squarely confront the global market in the practices and ideologies that fuel the food economy.² In what follows, I investigate the conceptual interplay of global scarcity and U.S. overproduction in four texts of the Second World War: Objectivist poet Lorine Niedecker’s *New Goose* poems (1935–1945), American food writer M. F. K. Fisher’s *How to Cook a Wolf* (1942), British cookery writer Elizabeth David’s *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (1950), and Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* (1953). We can understand these texts both as artifacts of late modernism and as historical interventions in the transatlantic power of food during the Second World War, thus taking seriously Jameson’s claim that the affirmation of modernism’s autonomy from politics “requires a good deal of (ideological) footwork to sustain” (*SM*, 164).³ By way of definition, I take late modernism to be a transitional literary movement that includes avant-garde and popular texts and that bridges modernism and postmodernism, on the one hand, and the Depression and Second World War, on the other.⁴ Making a particular case for the significance of M. F. K. Fisher to the account of late modernism, I further suggest that Anglo-American literature in this period cannot be understood apart from a transatlantic context or from the shifting power relationships of U.S. capitalism and British imperialism.

The Poetics of Rationing and the War Economy

In one of her many war-inflected poems, Objectivist poet Lorine Niedecker correlates the weapons of the Second World War with the economics of U.S. agriculture and daily habits of farmworkers. Opening with a reference to the atomic bomb, the poem moves on to describe the dairy town of Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin and the print shop where Niedecker worked as a copyeditor for *Hoard’s Dairyman* from 1944 to 1950.⁵

In the great snowfall before the bomb
colored yule tree lights
windows, the only glow for contemplation
along this road.

I worked the print shop
right down among em
the folk from whom all poetry flows
and dreadfully much else.

I was Blondie
I carried my bundles of hog feeder price lists

down by Larry the Lug,
 I'd never get anywhere
 because I'd never had suction,
 pull, you know, favor, drag,
 well-oiled protection.
 I heard their rehashed radio barbs—
 more barbarous among hirelings
 as higher-ups grow more corrupt.
 But what vitality! The women hold jobs—
 clean house, cook, raise children, bowl
 and go to church.

What would they say if they knew
 I sit for two months on six lines
 of poetry?⁶

Written in 1950, the poem opens on a snowy day in early December on the road that Niedecker presumably traveled from her home on Black Hawk Island to the print shop. The first stanza immediately inflects a romantic trope—a poet's contemplative walk across a sublime winter landscape—with the spectral figure of “the bomb,” which at once recalls the Pearl Harbor attack of December 7, 1941 and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on the sixth and ninth of August 1945. In this palimpsest of the air strikes that opened and closed the Pacific theater of the Second World War, the poem transmutes the winter storms of the Great Lakes into the atomic fallout over Japan. Against pastoral renderings of this iconic American landscape, Niedecker thus connects the Wisconsin dairy region to the global weapons of world war and, perhaps too, the fascist “radio barbs” of Ezra Pound.⁷ According to the poem's formal correspondences, which yoke weapons and words but also world war and national work, it would seem that no place is safe from, and no one entirely innocent of, the century's total war. To this point, Elizabeth Willis observes that the “most frequently recurring nouns” in Niedecker's poems are war and work, a thematic emphasis that reflects her poetic process of incorporating extra-literary material in which public and private “content often merge . . . including private commentaries on the public matters of governance, art, war, and labor politics.”⁸

The 1950 poem revolves, in particular, around the interconnected machines of war and agriculture, which, according to the poem's logic, pose a fundamental threat to poetry. Juxtaposing the utilitarian pages of *Hoard's Dairyman* (with its “hog feeder price lists”) and the speaker's scant “six lines of poetry,” Niedecker imagines her poetic writing to be incommensurable with her work as a copyeditor in the war economy that the large dairies and related agriculture commodities of the *Dairyman* signify. In contrast to First World War poets who imagine poetry as a vehicle of war memorial, Niedecker figures poetry as out of step with the war. In the poem's stark calculus, there is the quietism of poetry and the “dreadfully much else.” The poem does not correlate this figure to the wartime suffering of Midwestern folk culture that the second stanza evokes and that informs much of Niedecker's poetry. Rather, in increasingly colloquial

770 diction, the poem lambastes the industrial and material structure of the agricultural economy: the “suction, / pull, you know, favor, drag, / well-oiled protection” that drives rural workers to move up the ranks from “barbarous hirelings” to “corrupt higher-ups.” The machinery of war and this “well-oiled” machinery of the food industry work in tandem to rearticulate pastoral conceptions of rural America. Against the enjambed form and contemplative tone of the first stanza, the latter stanzas proceed via a series of simple sentences and noun phrases. Analogous to the tickers of commodity prices and government-sponsored radio announcements but also to the machine guns of the Second World War, this staccato cadence reinforces the poem’s implicit argument that the production of food and bombs is the interconnected and defining backdrop to daily life in this period. This idea emerges even more forcefully in an earlier draft of the poem, in which Niedecker concludes the poem’s first stanza not with the spatial figure of a backcountry road but with the temporal trope of “our time,” suggesting that the poem is addressing the war’s fundamental *Zeitgeist* (LN, 386–87).

Yet we may ask what the poem’s thematic nexus of U.S. agriculture and consumer culture have to do with the bombs of the Second World War? One indication comes in the speaker’s off-hand reference to the war’s radio barbs. As examined in detail below, the most prolific printing presses and radio tickers in the United States during the 1940s were those funded by the Office of War Information (OWI), whose chief instruments were the poster, the film short, and the radio broadcast. Administered by the OWI, U.S. propaganda during the war centered on the rhetoric that Allied nations would win the war because of their democratic institutions, but also because of the productivity of the U.S. economy and, especially, its agriculture. In tandem with this state-sponsored rhetoric, radio advertisements for foodstuffs and other consumer goods employed virulent racial epithets to reinforce military campaigns against Germany and Japan. Having worked as a scriptwriter for a Madison radio station in 1943, Niedecker would have been familiar with these forms of political and commercial broadcasting during the war. Her poem suggests, moreover, just how influential such radio barbs were on everyday consumer habits, gendering those habits in terms of the working-class women who “hold jobs,” clean, cook, and raise families. The poem’s final line speaks to the particularly ubiquitous discourse that surrounded the U.S. rationing program, a discourse that characterized patriotism as the duty of consumers, and especially women, to conserve food. The speeches and posters that promoted ration compliance to women were indeed both prolific and vitriolic, as suggested in a 1943 poster that entreats women to “save waste fats for explosives.” (Fig. 1)

To encourage conservation, gardening, and price ceilings, this rhetoric of war rations aligned food consumption with the war in Europe and Asia but also with the vitality of U.S. agriculture and consumerism. While these campaigns aimed to conserve U.S. food surpluses for the purpose of providing food aid to overseas militaries and civilian populations, they also functioned to jettison certain foodstuffs, such as animal fats and tin cans, into the literal production of weapons and supplies.⁹ A response to this militarization of food, Niedecker’s poem imagines agricultural labor and rural poverty as constitutive of the United States’ political and economic power during the war. In



▲
Fig. 1. "Save waste fats for explosives," 1943 poster created by Henry Koerner to promote the collection of animal fats to produce glycerin for explosives and drugs. Reprinted with the permission of the University of Minnesota Libraries, War Posters Collection.

772 contrast to the national discourse of shared sacrifice, which naturalized the patriotic citizen as a middle-class consumer enjoying a rationed yet substantial diet of “three squares a day,” Niedecker’s poetry of the 1940s takes as its organizing trope the social stratification and poverty of workers. As the four-line poem cited in the above epigraph quips, the experience of rationing for a “destitute” community is one of “Nothing nourishing, / common dealtout food.” Echoing this aphorism, another poem from the same 1945 manuscript unfolds as an apostrophe to the local grocer: “What’s today, Friday? Thursday! Oh, nothing till tomorrow.”¹⁰ Niedecker perhaps most forcefully expresses this critique of the wartime food economy as structured around inequity rather than solidarity in a poem that pits the “government men” who control agricultural production (instructing the speaker, “Don’t plant wheat, / we’ve got too much”) against an ironic lack of food in rural food-producing communities:

Our crop comes up thru change of season
to be stored for what good reason

way off and here we need it—Eat
who can, who can’t—Don’t grow wheat

or corn but quack-grass bread!
such things they plant around my head. (*LN*, 121)

This poetic exposé of the U.S. economy as oxymoronic in producing food surpluses that do not alleviate hunger is not confined to the poverty of agricultural Wisconsin, however. Niedecker positions regional food scarcity on a continuum with global famine conditions and austere ration programs: “a story about the war,” as one poem begins, that records the enormous rift between the social elite (figured in this case as the French Vichy government) and civilians who are “too hungry too flatter” (*LN*, 118–19).

Niedecker thus emerges as a poet who is fundamentally concerned with the persistence of hunger, despite American food surpluses, both within and outside of the United States.¹¹ In comparison to the global famine that impacted Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Asia, the United States boasted grain surpluses throughout the 1940s, a situation that proved central to American power in Europe and Japan after the war ended. In pointing to this global context for the American war economy, Niedecker’s poems prove emblematic of late modernism, which this essay shows is preoccupied with eating as a central signifier of wartime deprivation and as a politicized form of civic identity.¹²

Food Rations in the Land of Plenty

As one of its most important economic effects, the Second World War solidified the global power of the American food economy. Due partly to beneficial weather and partly to war-related policies, American farmers produced food surpluses throughout

the 1940s. In the words of Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman, the Second World War transformed the United States into “the greatest agricultural production plant on earth.”¹³ Both during the war, when farm yields increased by one-third, and after the war, when the Marshall Plan expanded food aid to Europe, agriculture figured as a form of civic and even military service in the United States.¹⁴ The government instructed farmers, for example, to “view their farms as factories” analogous to the nation’s war plants.¹⁵ Similarly, government propaganda encouraged consumers to view eating as a political duty, publicizing compulsory ration programs and voluntary conservation campaigns as essential to an Allied victory. In contrast to much more stringent forms of food restriction in Europe and Asia, however, the U.S. could also promote its agricultural reserves, and American middle-class consumers continued throughout the war to eat relatively well; to cite the war’s first director of rationing, John Kenneth Galbraith: “Never in the long history of human combat have so many talked so much about sacrifice with so little deprivation as in the United States in World War II.”¹⁶

In December 1942, as part of the “Victory Program” that allowed President Roosevelt to reorganize government bureaucracies, OWI Director Elmer Davis delivered a national radio address to explain a new points rationing program.¹⁷ Overseen by Agriculture Secretary Claude Wickard and administered by the Office of Price Administration (OPA), the program expanded the number of rationed goods while also enacting a points system to allow consumers greater flexibility in purchasing any particular food or other rationed good. Rationing of sugar, coffee, tires, steel, and gasoline had begun earlier in the year and, in the case of gasoline especially, had already spurred black markets.¹⁸ The new program, Davis announced, would restrict more goods but would ensure an equitable distribution of commodities that were either scarce or required for war operations. The speech does not detail which foodstuffs would fall under the points system; rather, it aims to bolster public opinion of the underlying rationale for rationing and, by extension, the U.S. declaration of war.

While Davis argues for solidarity with the U.K. in the war against Germany, Italy, and Japan, he also distinguishes between the deprivation of Europe and the prosperity of the United States. The speech censures both critics and skeptics who perceive rationing as a program to deprive citizens of daily nourishment in order to feed foreign populations. In response to this criticism, Davis argues that rationing functions to manage the United States’ food surpluses, feeding Americans while also providing for the national military and its allies. Davis thus suggests that, at home, Americans will continue to eat well, while the United States will provide international food relief out of its agricultural surpluses; he concludes this section of his address by figuring the nation as the perennial land of plenty: “We all eat food; and whatever sacrifices we may have to make to take care of the needs of our fighting men, the American people will continue to be better fed than any other nation on earth.”¹⁹

In this and related propaganda, the Office of War Information repeatedly distinguishes the economic condition of the United States from that of its allies as well as its enemies. After stressing the alimentary needs of Europe, Davis goes on to contrast the politics of food in the United States and Germany:

Food is a weapon in all wars, but in this one more than usual. The enemy has used it as a weapon, negatively—looting the conquered people of their food supply, and giving back to them just enough to keep them alive—indeed not always even that much; hoping to break their spirit. . . . We are using our food supply as a weapon, positively; so distributing it that the American army and navy, and the American people, will be well nourished; yes, and so that the armies of our allies will be kept strong.²⁰

This passage obliquely references the Nazi's coordinated programs of land seizures and stringent rationing in occupied countries.²¹ In contrast to these brutal tactics, Davis proclaims, the United States upholds an egalitarian system of food production and distribution, “using [its] food supply as a weapon, positively” to nourish the armies that will defeat Germany and Japan while nourishing the home front especially well. Nonetheless, he concludes, “food is a weapon that we have more of than anybody else; but that doesn't mean that we can afford to waste it.” Davis's rhetoric is paratactic and declarative, organized around stark comparisons that link the pastoral tropes of U.S. abundance with the procedures of democracy; rationing, he implies, does not represent an infringement on consumer-citizen liberties but rather upholds the democratic principle of cooperation. This syllogism relies on the idea of an American middle class as it solidified in the period—the idea, satirized in Niedecker's poem, that the national body is comprised of individuals who work, play, and consume alike.

The interwar experience of the Great Depression seems to haunt this rhetoric of rationing. In his recent study of New Deal modernism, Michael Szalay describes the cultural anxieties that justified new forms of economic planning and government control in the thirties: “The Depression was occasioned, many believed . . . because the American public either did not or could not purchase the goods churned out by American industry.”²² In response to this problem of overproduction, the New Deal aimed not just to redress unemployment and poverty but to ameliorate “the displacing conditions of modern life in a rapidly evolving capitalist society.”²³ The rhetoric of ration compliance during the Second World War reinforced the underlying paradigm of the New Deal according to which the government would manage the economy to ensure social and economic equality: in the words of the ration campaign's tagline, “produce and conserve, share and play fair.” (Fig. 2) During the war, the government contracted with over twenty-four artist associations representing a total of 8,000 artists—the so-called “Artists for Victory”—to produce such posters. Many of the artists employed the international style of modernism to frame the government's nationalist discourses. The “play fair” poster, for example, uses the geometrical designs of second-generation modernists like Piet Mondrian; the poster's form thus augments the cultural capital of seemingly pedestrian consumer habits. At the same time, the War Food Administration deployed this poster campaign to discipline women as guardians of the national food supply by entreating them to take the “Home Front Pledge,” a campaign that Niedecker's 1950 poem figures as an undue burden on working women.²⁴ According to the logic of the Pledge, the housewife's practices as a food consumer position her on the frontlines of the domestic war effort.



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Fig. 2. "Keep the Home Front Pledge," 1942; Norman Rockwell, "Freedom from Want," *Saturday Evening Post*, 1943. Reprinted with the permission of the University of Minnesota Libraries, War Posters Collection.

776 These rationing campaigns echo Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1941 pronouncement that U.S. support of the war would culminate in a worldwide middle-class. In his famous "Four Freedoms" speech, Roosevelt vowed that an Allied victory would secure freedom from want for "every nation."²⁵ Ramón Saldívar clarifies the ideology underlying Roosevelt's speech, arguing that "what is at stake in Roosevelt's momentous pronouncement of a world order built on the groundwork of the Four Freedoms is nothing less than a renewed commitment to an ideal vision of a unified American nation working to effect that brave new world order."²⁶ Saldívar's analysis allows us to theorize food rationing as a problem for "the pledges of American democracy" during the war.²⁷ Occluding experiences of hunger both within and beyond the borders of the United States, the Four Freedoms discourse figures the nation as free from discrimination, fear, and hunger, a nation, in other words, of plenty.

While this formula of political democracy as alimentary abundance supported the U.S. government's war campaign, in practice, rations drew into relief the inequities of class and race that allowed some citizens to consume much more than others. Although Davis's 1942 address publicly promotes an egalitarian image of the war economy, a confidential OWI memo to radio station producers characterizes the risk of hoarding as serious and labels potential "chiselers" as traitors.²⁸ In direct opposition to Davis's public radio broadcast, the confidential memo maintains that, "We live no longer in a 'land of plenty.' . . . If we are to have ships, planes, guns and tanks . . . then we must skimp on sugar, gasoline, metals, rubber and other commodities."²⁹ Addressing the risk that unequal standards of living will lead to non-compliance, the memo directs radio producers to depict rationing as an organized system of sharing resources. This disjuncture between the public and private rhetoric of rationing underscores the fraught status of food during the war. In *American Hungers*, Gavin Jones makes an elegant case for material poverty as a crucial but undertheorized category in U.S. literature and culture; he argues that the efforts to comprehend poverty's "persistence" in the world's most affluent nation have been "remarkably controversial aspects of American intellectual and social history, just as [they continue] to unsettle national ideologies and to disrupt conventional ways in which we think of class and cultural identity."³⁰ During the Second World War, as the U.S. economy rebounded, the persistence of famine both within and outside of the United States troubled the entwined discourses of American democracy, prosperity, and humanitarianism. To quell social discontent about rationing in particular, and hence to maintain the nation's agricultural surpluses, the government aimed to convince every citizen that he or she had plenty of food to eat, and the food supply thus came to define the national imaginary. At the same time, the international reliance on U.S. food yields increased dramatically during the war such that, by 1945, the United States was providing one-tenth of the world's foodstuffs (*PP*, 100). To address this global food demand, the postwar Truman administration incorporated substantial food relief provisions into the Marshall Plan. Despite negative public opinion in the U.S. on European and Asian food relief, those provisions ultimately solidified the position of the United States as a world food power, which in turn has been a key structural factor since 1945 in the nation's wider political, economic, and cultural hegemony.

One might imagine that the political rhetoric of rationing and belt-tightening during the Second World War inhibited conspicuous displays of consumption and especially fine dining. Yet throughout the 1940s, affluent consumers patronized French restaurants in both New York and London. While in London those restaurants doubled as bomb shelters for their diners, they elicited considerable critique as spaces of what George Orwell called “luxury feeding,” spaces that sheltered upper-class Londoners from the material and military realities of the war. Notably, Orwell directs his 1942 critique of London gourmandise to an American audience, including it in one of his London Letters to the *Partisan Review*: “at long last, and against much opposition in high places, the Ministry of Food is about to cut down ‘luxury feeding’ by limiting the sum of money that can be spent on a meal in a hotel or restaurant. Already, before the law is even passed, ways of evading it have been thought out, and these are discussed almost undisguisedly in the newspapers.”³¹ Orwell here exposes the political paradigm of rationing as shared sacrifice to satiric scrutiny, figuring fine dining as an extralegal form of gluttony. By comparison with the London restaurant scene that persisted in the shadow of bombing raids, a thriving gourmet restaurant industry emerged in New York during the war. Chefs who had arrived in the United States for the 1939 World’s Fair in Flushing and then stayed on as refugees after the German invasion of Poland opened French restaurants or joined the staffs of established hotel dining rooms, providing decadent and often quasi-illegal meals to their urban patrons.³²

Against the backdrop of “luxury feeding,” on the one hand, and state-sponsored ration books and meal plans, on the other, the dissident voice of California-born food writer M. F. K. Fisher emerged. As seen throughout her early writings, Fisher attends not only to the traditions of gastronomy and French cuisine but also to the political and military uses of food after 1939. The status of eating as an antidote for and a signifier of war is nowhere more salient than in *How to Cook a Wolf*, Fisher’s 1942 cookbook, revised in 1951 and republished in 1954, whose expressed aim is to enable culinary innovation in the rationed kitchens of the Second World War.³³ Most British and American cookbooks published in the period provide practical recipes to comply with ration programs; in sharp contrast, *How to Cook a Wolf* intersperses recipes that are anything but practical with commentary on the politics of wartime gastronomy.³⁴ Max Rudin describes the book as a work of “culinary modernism,” but it is better described as an intervention in both culinary literature and literary high modernism.³⁵ In *How to Cook a Wolf*, Fisher inflects modernist forms—nonlinear narrative, montage, and irony for example—with journalistic commentary on overconsumption and government rations. The cookbook can be understood, moreover, as a late modernist work, in that Fisher’s use of these aesthetic forms rearticulates the conceptual commitments of Anglo-American modernism. More precisely, the cookbook arrests the mythological forms of history that define high modernism by redirecting modernist techniques to the material (and often banal) history of war rationing, middle-class appetites, and the agricultural industries that underlie them.³⁶

778 The culture of rationing and standardized cooking proved generative for Fisher's 1942 cookbook, whose missive is an exposé of rationing as an instrument of state control that exacerbates social inequalities as well as wartime deprivations, which Fisher figures as the "wolf at the door."³⁷ Critical of the ideologies that motivate rationing in the United States, Fisher promotes a "creative economy" of cooking that might disrupt the nation's economic, political, and military interests in the program. Her introduction, for example, critiques the OWI's rhetoric that food production and consumption should serve the military's war strategy. Against the government's call to eat on behalf of the nation and its military-industrial complex, Fisher calls on her readers to eat selfishly: "Now, when the hideous necessity of the war machine takes steel and cotton and humanity, our own private personal secret mechanism must be stronger, for selfish comfort as well as for the good of the ideals we believe we believe in" (*HCW*, 3–4). The directive redirects the government's gendered rhetoric, which views food as a matter of national security and housewives as auxiliary soldiers, by encouraging readers to eat without regard to their ration cards. In a late chapter entitled "How not to be an earthworm," Fisher uses a stark wit resonant with Niedecker's tone in the 1945 and 1950 poems to reveal food rationing as a means not of symbolic civic service but rather of literal weapons production: "Since this country went to war, a great deal has been done to prepare us for emergencies (a polite word for bombings, invasions, and many other ugly things)" (*HCW*, 184). The chapter goes on to trace this shifting meaning of emergency during the Second World War:

In the old days, before Stuka and blitz became part of even childish chitchat, every practical guide to cookery urged you to keep a well-filled emergency shelf in your kitchen or pantry. Emergency is another word that has changed its inner shape; when Marion Harland and Fanny Farmer used it they meant unexpected guests. You may, too, in an ironical way, but you hope to God they are the kind who will never come. (*HCW*, 187)

Evoking the threat of a German or Japanese invasion on the U.S. mainland, Fisher here participates in war propaganda while also reframing its logic. The passage historicizes the Second World War as a period that ruptures gastronomical meanings of food by linking cooking to the operations and technologies of war. No longer can a cookbook use the term "emergency shelf" without evoking the fear of the blitz; thus, Fisher goes on to say, her cookbook will recommend emergency foods not to feed an unexpected neighbor but rather to survive potential blackouts, bombings, and invasions. Ironically, the foods Fisher recommends for such catastrophic emergencies are the very processed foods (unpalatable in her view) that the Second World War and its food rationing produced. Fisher observes that such mass-produced foods can be used to simulate home cuisine via a kind of "chicanery." Dismissive of the affordability and convenience of processed foods, Fisher suggests that new food brands such as Hormel, Kraft, and Kellogg Cereal Company—whose products began to dominate store shelves during the 1940s—produce food suitable only for the war's emergency conditions. Vanilla wafers, prepared soups, artificial and synthetic fats, and processed cheese will nourish her gourmet readers,

Fisher's indicates by analogy, only in so far as the Hershey "Tropical Bar" will secure the basic survival of Allied soldiers in Japan and China.³⁸

Against the uniform and often unpalatable prescripts of the government's Food Nutrition Board, Fisher goes on to craft an avant-garde gastronomy whose methods recall that of the bricoleur. The recipes and techniques that appear throughout the cookbook encourage the reader to be "lavish" with whatever "odds and ends" that they can obtain. While the term lavish might resonate only with an elite class of home cooks, Fisher also promotes a technique of "dressing up" affordable ingredients. In one breakfast menu, for example, Fisher recommends toast "generously buttered": "It can be piles of toast, generously buttered, and a bowl of honey or jam, and milk for Mortimer and coffee for you. You can be lavish because the meal is so inexpensive" (*HCW*, 8). Butter, sweeteners, preserves, and coffee were all in short supply (or at least subject to rationing) in the U.S. at the time, and thus not necessarily inexpensive. In the British context, food writer Elizabeth David describes precisely such foods as rare luxuries and the food shortages in Britain as bleak. To offset the scarcity of certain ingredients, furthermore, David's 1950 cookbook provides the names of specific food retailers in London, complete with addresses, where her local readers might find the rare ingredients that some of her recipes require.³⁹ In contrast, Fisher provides little pragmatic advice for procuring rare ingredients (such as truffles, citrus fruit, and duck confit) when encouraging her readers to cook lavishly. Nonetheless, the meal described above remains one primarily of toast combined with a modest amount of more decadent ingredients that can be varied depending on the reader's pantry and budget.

To develop the "creative economy" that *How to Cook a Wolf* imagines, Fisher recommends an enormous range of cooking techniques. Her third chapter—"How to Distribute your Virtue"—assumes the form of montage, an almost incoherent collection of tactics and implements for home economics that combines the traditional and the modern, the technological and the rudimentary, the time-intensive and the labor-saving. One such catalogue of techniques for fuel conservation in the kitchen includes the rudimentary technique of steaming food in a haypacked box, a practice that Fisher describes just before referencing the technological convenience of a pressure cooker. As social historian Joy Parr's research demonstrates, such kitchen technologies emerged at the intersection of modernist design and war economics.⁴⁰ During the interwar years, modernist designers from Europe and the United States "gloried in the kitchen"; in the words of American designers Teague and Dreyfuss, "modernism in all its aspects would enter the whole dwelling through the kitchen door." Promoting the end products of these modernist designers, consumer goods companies aggressively promoted the adoption of kitchen appliances in the thirties and forties, figuring them as symbols of a "highly capitalized kitchen."⁴¹ When Fisher includes the haypacked box in her own model kitchen, then, she implicitly undercuts the modernist (or more aptly, futurist) ideology of technology adoption as a form of civic as well as consumer identity.⁴²

Fisher moves from this critique of kitchen efficiency to a meditation on the importance of fresh vegetables, suggesting that inventive salads can offer an antidote to both ration cards and kitchen technologies by allowing the home cook to play with

780 both raw ingredients and culinary conventions. In the context of world war, one could argue that the call for playing with food smacks of escapism. How can a “fresh salad” of a “dozen tiny vegetables” be anything but trivial in the face of the war’s casualties and global famine conditions? And yet Fisher formulates food play as a powerful act of engagement that might counter, if only momentarily and microscopically, an ideology of eating in service of the war, which figures in both Niedecker’s poetry and Fisher’s food writings as less a war against totalitarian regimes than a war on behalf of capitalism. If an earlier generation of high modernists and haute gourmands neglected domestic cuisine, Fisher imagines a kind of dissident home cuisine that resists both state food controls and “capitalized kitchens.” To counter these standardized yet unequal food systems, Fisher invents a model of foraging, improvising, and consuming the “resources you have.”⁴³

The earnestness of the book’s recipes remains in doubt, however. As Fisher expounds in chapter four, the war makes gourmet cooking and food writing untenable, and cookbooks, restaurant reviews, and gastronomical manifestos now function as imaginative literature rather than practical handbooks or class primers. By extension, the wartime readership of food writing has widened, providing “good escape-reading material in direct ration to the possibility of following [recipes] in our small kitchens and hurried hours” (*HCW*, 29). The pun on ration is significant in this remark, suggesting that the government’s food shortages are in fact not egalitarian and that consumers will therefore respond to gourmet cookbooks as aesthetic, rather than pragmatic, artifacts in “direct ration” to their social situation. More modernist than pulp, Fisher here participates in the mid-century coterie of American and British reviewers, cookbook authors, and chefs: such figures as James Beard, Nora Ephron, Sheila Hibben, and A. J. Liebling. Foodies *avant la lettre*, these culinary arbiters articulate an urbane culture of fine cuisine. However, Fisher ultimately appears offbeat and unorthodox in the context of this culinary establishment. Somewhat akin to Niedecker, Fisher achieves a smaller readership and crafts a more modernist style than her peers, a “minorness” that affords her a kind of generic and political freedom. As a somewhat marginal and upstart member of the transatlantic food coterie, Fisher thus occupies a privileged position, from which she can produce food writing as an aesthetic as well as political form of literature. At times, Fisher promotes egregiously extravagant recipes, as for French consomé or red wine reduction, under the premise that either reading about or, if income allows, preparing such dishes will keep the wartime wolf’s “pungent breath” from knocking down the door. Against such proscriptions for indulgent consumption as a rejoinder to U.S. war rations, Fisher simultaneously addresses the transnational problems of hunger, poverty, and scarcity.⁴⁴

The insistence on international experiences of the war accompanies an implicit critique in *How to Cook a Wolf* of the privileged economic position of the United States. One of the longest sections in the book—“How to Carve the Wolf”—laments that North Americans rely so heavily on meat for bodily fuel. Fisher suggests that this dependency borders on a consumer obsession, an obsession laid bare by the relatively minimal restriction of meat sales during the war. Despite the rhetoric of stringent food

control on the part of the OWI and the War Food Board, the actual practice of meat consumption, as Fisher describes it, subverts the governmental rationing discourse. As food historian Harvey Levenstein corroborates, U.S. meat restrictions began with a voluntary “Share the Meat” campaign in 1942 that morphed into a 2½lb weekly meat ration per capita the following year, a ration that was more than two times that of the British ration and almost ten times that of other European meat rations.⁴⁵ Niedecker turns this transatlantic food divide into the subject of one of her 1945 poems, which depicts the hunger of French citizens during the Second World War by parodying a Vichy official, who chastises the people to “eat your beef-ounce from a doll’s platter / you’ll think it’s a roast wrapped in butter” (*LN*, 119). This odd dramatic monologue clarifies Niedecker’s synthesis, to cite Rachel Blau DePlessis’s term, of imagist and surrealist poetics.⁴⁶ In particular, the lines call attention to the physical and psychic effects of European food rations by positioning an everyday commodity (in this case, a one-ounce portion of beef) against a strange and even fantastic image (i.e., the “doll’s platter”). Through the attendant tonal shift from the mundane to the macabre, the poem thus makes the quotidian experience of meat shortages outside the United States a provocative signifier of war suffering.

In contrast to the dearth of meat in the global diet, meat remained not only central to American food culture but achieved the status of a de facto political right. When the government provided advance announcement of protein rations in 1943, for example, a “hoarding frenzy” emptied grocery stores of canned meats and fish (*PP*, 80–81). The public demand for meat was so high, in fact, that a 1943 announcement of meat rationing provoked riots and looting: in Cleveland, 50,000 people assembled to demand meat from grocers, while in New York City, 2,000 butchers marched on the wholesale meat market district (*PP*, 83). In the 1951 version of the chapter “How to Carve the Wolf,” Fisher alludes to the relatively large size of the U.S. protein ration during the war as well as the subsequent postwar meat glut. Considered in tandem, two passages, the first published in the 1942 edition and the second added to the 1951 edition, connect everyday appetites for meat to wartime food policy and to the wider U.S. military-industrial complex. In the first passage, Fisher undercuts her earlier lamentations on meat scarcity (and the challenges it poses to home cooks) with a satirical allusion to the “zub zub zub” of media hype about potential meat shortages. Fisher suggests that the media only exacerbates the cycle of overproduction and overconsumption of meat in the United States:

There are several more or less logical reasons why meat grows scarce in wartime: soldiers need it, there are fewer cattle, zub zub zub. It is unfortunate that so many human beings depend on eating some form of animal flesh every day for strength. Many of them do it because their bodies, weakened or diseased demand it. Others simply have the habit. Habit or necessity, it becomes a truly worrisome expense in wartime, so that money spent for meat must be used to buy as much nourishment as possible, even at the risk of a certain monotony. (*HCW*, 87)

782 Fisher's use of the phrase "more or less" gives pause. The phrase questions the official rationale for food control in the United States from 1942 until 1945, suggesting that the federal government's argument that rations function to prevent scarcity and to curtail war-related shortages is misleading. To Fisher's point, U.S. ration programs functioned less to redress food shortages in the United States than to divert certain foodstuffs for weapons and supplies production, to expand European lend-lease contracts, and to encourage civilian allegiance to the war. These material and symbolic objectives do not square, moreover, with the persistent surplus in the U.S. of staple crops and meat products, a surplus that made consumer runs on foods possible when rumors of potential shortages circulated. To this point, Fisher's phrase "zub zub zub" mimics the media buzz that inflamed public fears in the U.S. of meat shortages, which, in turn, prompted urban meat riots. While Fisher does not directly reference the riots, her distinction between necessary and habitual meat consumption infers it.

The second passage, which provides a recipe for calf's head, further satirizes the meat gluttony that Fisher observes to be a defining characteristic of U.S. consumer culture at mid-century. The first portion of this passage mocks white Americans' distaste for offal, the form of meat that was most readily available and least expensive during the war. In the conclusion to the passage (shown in brackets as an addition to the 1951 version), Fisher supplements the original recipe with a critique of the postwar explosion in both beef and pork consumption:

One way to horrify at least eight out of ten Anglo-Saxons is to suggest their eating anything but the actual red fibrous meat of a beast. A heart or a kidney or even a sweetbread is anathema. It is too bad, since there are so many nutritious and entertaining ways to prepare the various livers and lights. . . . [I believe this more firmly than ever, but am years wearier in my fight. Now, when I want to eat what English butchers call "offal," I wait until everyone has gone to the Mid-South Peoria Muezzins' Jamboree and Ham-bake, and then make myself a dainty dish.] (*HCW*, 101)

As suggested by contemporaneous newspaper headlines, the government's promotion of offal and ground meat upset the middle-class Anglo-American palate, at least as white writers and food critics defined it. One such headline—"Tongue Vegetable Casserole Stretches Meat Allowance"—describes the coordinated effort of nutritionists, food writers, and government bureaucracies to encourage middle-class white families to consume "undesirable" cuts of meat.⁴⁷ Yet those same consumer groups resisted this alimentary prescription, revealing the class bias and racial stereotypes informing their distaste for offal. In this context, Fisher's 1951 allusion to a suburban "Mid-South Peoria Muezzins' Jamboree and Ham-bake" caricatures the steadfast allegiance of white middle-class and affluent Americans to a "meat-and-potatoes" diet, correlating that diet to the food culture of potlucks and buffets. In sharp contrast to a culture of overconsumption, Fisher reflects, other populations within and outside of the United States experienced the war and its immediate aftermath as a period of sustained malnourishment. In juxtaposing suburban buffets and global famine conditions, Fisher employs her cookbook to make manifest the stratified structure of the domestic

and international food economies that the war years further stratified. To this point, Fisher's chapter on starches—"How to Pray for Peace"—characterizes the potato as the principal food of impoverished and displaced victims of the war: "It is easy to think of potatoes, and fortunately for men who do have not much money it is easy to think of them with a certain safety. Potatoes are one of the last things to disappear, in times of war, which is probably why they should not be forgotten in times of peace" (*HCW*, 123). Fisher alludes here to the infamous Irish potato famine and, by extension, to the scarcity of everything but root vegetables in Europe during the Second World War. More importantly perhaps, she reminds her readers that scarcity and deprivation are highly contingent experiences.

While the program of standardizing and rationing the national cuisine to provide for each citizen's nutrition purported to fulfill President Roosevelt's political promise to end want during the war, *How to Cook a Wolf* suggests that state food controls failed to resolve the fundamental social inequities of hunger. Fisher's late modernist cookbook further demonstrates that an evidently innocuous prescription—to "share alike" and eat a "balanced" diet—obfuscates the structural imbalance of the global food chain during the war. Critiquing food conservation, food aid, and national cuisine as a sign of the war's shared sacrifices, Fisher catalogues the voracious appetites of American consumers to imagine everyday acts of eating as indicators of U.S. world power.

British Austerity and American Food Power

In stark contrast to U.S. food rationing, the postwar Labour government in Britain imposed draconian restrictions on bread consumption, a controversial scheme that contributed substantially to the Labour Party's political defeat in 1951.⁴⁸ As the recurring image of dry, dark rationed bread in George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* indicates, postwar wheat shortages prompted fears that both the war and the austerity of wartime government control would never end.⁴⁹ A 1946 League of Nations report reveals, moreover, that European leaders implicitly blamed the United States for apparently interminable famine conditions.⁵⁰ The international appeal to the U.S. for grain exports and food relief routinely made headlines, and as a result, the issue of food scarcity featured prominently in President Truman's 1946 appeal to American consumers, ranchers, and farmers for grain and meat conservation. While the food relief programs built into the Marshall Plan expanded U.S. food exports and, thus, economic power, consumers in the United States continued to eat more food than any other country per capita. To take up Fisher's concluding point in *How to Cook a Wolf*, although the United States claimed that its population made tremendous food sacrifices during the Second World War, those sacrifices appear relatively scant when placed in a transnational context.⁵¹

Tony Judt, in his recent history of postwar Europe, describes the condition of Britain's food supply during and after the war as profoundly austere: "everything was rationed, restricted, controlled. . . . This was the age of austerity."⁵² While a brief economic recovery occurred in Britain and elsewhere in Europe just before September 1939,

784 the continent never really emerged from the depression of the early 1930s. The key markers of that depression during the war were the ration card and the long queues for food.⁵³ While the British government, akin to the United States, depicted food shortages as universally shared, working-class citizens experienced shortages the most acutely. As Orwell writes in his August 1941 letter to the *Partisan Review*, “there is no real food shortage” in Britain for the middle class because “the lack of concentrated foods (meat, bacon, cheese and eggs) cause serious underfeeding among heavy labourers, such as miners who have to eat their midday meal away from home.”⁵⁴ Nonetheless, British propaganda emphasized the need for citizens not just to “share alike,” as in the U.S., but also to suffer on behalf of the nation. Austerity rather than conservation thus characterizes the discourse of rationing in Britain.⁵⁵ The disparity between British and American food culture in the 1940s and early 1950s provides an unexamined context for the transatlantic study of both late modernism and food writing, a point made particularly salient in Elizabeth David’s 1950 *Book of Mediterranean Food*. The endurance of austerity programs and food shortages in Britain after the war inspired David’s cookbook, which took shape from recipes that she had been collecting while living abroad during the war. The project functioned for David and her imagined readers as a rejoinder to the gastronomical wasteland she encountered in postwar London. As David explains in letters, this return to London was, above all, a return to “the awful, dreary foods of rationing.” The “bleak” homecoming provoked the gourmet David to cook more rather than less, making “the most out of rationed ingredients, ignoring the powdered and dehydrated foods to which the English had become conditioned” and “scour[ing] Soho” to search out “lemons, olives oil, [and] bootleg butter.”⁵⁶

Composed in London between 1947 and 1950, *A Book of Mediterranean Food* is as much an artifact of the Second World War as a postwar cookbook, a culinary tract that emerged from the peculiar forms of migration and paramilitary service afforded to Anglo-American intellectuals in the late 1930s and early 1940s as well as from Britain’s particular imperial interests in the war. As Judt clarifies those interests, Britain’s dual status as an Allied power and the reigning imperial nation required enormous economic and military expenditure: “the only way for the country to pay its way in these overstretched circumstances was for the British to impose on themselves unprecedented conditions of restraint and voluntary penury.”⁵⁷ For Britain, rationing signified a sacrifice made not only to win the war but also to maintain the empire, and the pride that many citizens expressed about wartime austerity measures—or rather, that the Ministries of Food and Finance expressed on their behalf—reveals how essential not only German defeat but also imperial possession were to British national identity.⁵⁸ While David experienced those austerity programs belatedly, she had worked, during the war, directly in the service of the British Empire. Following an inverse trajectory from Fisher’s wartime return to the United States from Europe, David migrated further and further south in the years between 1939 and 1947—from Marseille and Antibes to Athens, Corsica, and the Greek Island of Syros to Alexandria and, finally, New Delhi—each move prompted by the advances of the German and Italian armies. While the original intent of these travels was personal (a combination of romance and

food tourism), David's holiday morphed into a form of civil service: in Alexandria, she worked as a staffer for the British Admiralty and befriended the writer Lawrence Durrell; in Cairo she served as a researcher for the British Ministry of Information; and she moved finally to New Delhi to join her then-husband, an administrator for the British Commander-in-Chief of Middle East operations.⁵⁹

The literary and culinary product of this period, *A Book of Mediterranean Food* reflects, even more so than *How to Cook a Wolf*, a transnational gastronomy. In prefaces to the book's four principal editions, David contrasts the monotonous rations of postwar Britain with the vibrant cuisines of North Africa and India, which she had enjoyed throughout the war. The book thus takes the form of a gastronomical war memorial, recording foods that are "no more than exotic memories" in postwar London. In "those icy, hungry weeks" of 1947, when severe winter storms exacerbated food shortages and famine conditions, David "took refuge from reality in writing down memories of the food I had cooked and eaten during my Mediterranean years." David thus enacts a form of food exoticism, even as the book constructs an unconventional model of Mediterranean food that de-centers French provincial cooking in favor of Greek, Turkish, Moroccan, Italian, and Spanish cuisines.⁶⁰ In relationship to the British Empire and to David's imperial service, the cookbook constructs a faulty map of the war's political blocs. Put differently, David's cross-cultural guide to Mediterranean food—an Anglo-American category for cuisines that cut across Southern Europe and North Africa—diverts readers' awareness of the political structure that undergirds both the British Commonwealth and the Allied bloc. In other words, David gives her readers the food of Italy and Morocco rather than of Egypt and India, the colonial locales where she concluded her own wartime service.

In his seminal 1988 essay, Jameson theorizes the cultural underpinnings of British imperialism (and the system of global capitalism that the empire both produced and ultimately gave way to):

In Colonialism, a significant structural segment of the economic system as a whole is now located elsewhere, beyond the metropolis, outside the daily life and existential experience of the home country, in colonies over the water whose own life experience and life world—very different from that of the imperial power—remains unknown and unimaginable for the subjects of the imperial power, whatever social class they may belong to.⁶¹

Using *Howards End* as a case study, Jameson argues that Britain's modern form of empire produces a geographic "totality" in which citizens are intimately linked as consumers and producers and yet utterly remote from one another politically and psychically, a social map that no one person can read or comprehend in its entirety. In response to such geographic dissonance, Jameson argues, modernism adopts mapping as its formal procedure, a kind of compulsion to solve the intractable geopolitics of imperial capitalism.⁶² In *A Book of Mediterranean Food*, this modernist procedure is patently at work. From the vantage point of postwar London, David attempts to map the Mediterranean region through the geographically eclectic composition of her recipes. Yet this culinary geography ultimately displaces and stands in for the discontinuous

786 boundaries of the British Empire, which in turn underwrite David's status as a world food traveler. In place of the imperial map of the United Kingdom, then, David offers a guide to Mediterranean food. In contrast to Fisher's gourmet send-up of war rationing, which proceeds by mapping the discontinuous yet interdependent structure of the U.S. and European war economies, David deploys a kind of culinary nostalgia that preserves the fuzzy picture of Britain's imperial interests in the war. While *A Book of Mediterranean Food* emerges similarly to *How to Cook a Wolf* from the experience of war rationing, then, its sentimental catalogue of "rich," pan-Mediterranean foods distracts readers not just from the experience of, but also the political and economic reasons for, British austerity.

Staging Famine in *Waiting for Godot*

In the second act of *Waiting for Godot*, upon the re-entrance of Pozzo and Lucky, it becomes clear that Vladimir alone can remember the prior day, or rather the prior act, whose temporal relation to the second proves indeterminate. Vexed by Vladimir's insistence that the two couples have already met, Pozzo launches into an extended complaint on the constraints of time and the human burden to parse days, while Estragon simply dozes off. In response to these disavowals and non sequiturs, Didi reflects that tomorrow will, nonetheless, take the same form as today:

Was I sleeping, while the others suffered? Am I sleeping now? To-morrow when I wake, or think I do, what shall I say of to-day? That with Estragon my friend, at this place, until the fall of night, I waited for Godot? That Pozzo passed, with his carrier, and that he spoke to us? Probably. But in all that what truth will there be? (*Estragon, having struggled with his boots in vain, is dozing off again. Vladimir looks at him.*) He'll know nothing. He'll tell me about the blows he received and I'll give him a carrot. (*Pause.*) Astride of a grave and a difficult birth. Down in the hole, lingeringly, the grave-digger puts on the forceps. We have time to grow old. The air is full of our cries (*He listens.*) But habit is a great deadener.⁶³

Lois Gordon, integrating philosophical and psychoanalytic approaches to Beckett's drama, interprets such impasses as consequences of *Waiting for Godot's* existential "paradox of survival."⁶⁴ In the absence of verifiable facts, new information, or the will to leave this spot, Beckett's characters proceed through the behavioral force of "habit." This "note of uncertainty," Hugh Kenner argues, "plagues the whole Beckett cosmos, where the reliability of a witness is always open to question."⁶⁵ Jameson has rearticulated this argument about the play's existential uncertainty and the absurd forms of repetitive action it generates, citing Beckett as an exemplar of late modernist bids for aesthetic autonomy. In Beckett's case, Jameson writes, dramatic minimalism excludes referential and historical content through the "mechanism" of the "incomplete sentence": "a kind of aphasia in which the syntactic conclusion, known in advance, does not have to be given" (*SM*, 200–201, 205). The analogy of aphasia is provocative, extrapolating Lucky's mostly mute part to the play itself, theorizing *Waiting for Godot*

as a form of drama that refuses not just logical dialogue or motivated action but the audience's comprehension.

While compelling as descriptions of the play's form, this trajectory in Beckett criticism continues to ignore not so much the play's "referential content" as the materiality of its theatrical world. In these accounts of *Waiting for Godot*, the interpretation eclipses the thing itself, the live play with its five actors, single tree, many props, and fallow country setting. Attentive to those material artifacts in the text and on the stage, we can reframe the play as one in which performed despair and formal scarcity are products not of any existential situation but of the particular conditions of a post-atomic world in which, according to the play's dramatic situation, only one out of five people has enough to eat. Vladimir's above monologue demonstrates that the intractable uncertainty about what happened yesterday and what tomorrow will bring coexists with the ineluctable deprivations of this particular present. As elsewhere in the play, the stage directions undercut Vladimir's philosophical ruminations, insisting on Estragon's struggle for basic physical comfort. Thus, to Vladimir's rhetorical question, "in all that what truth will there be?", the stage directions respond: "*Estragon, having struggled with his boots in vain, is dozing off again. Vladimir looks at him.*" The cue to action invites the audience to look with Vladimir at Estragon and his tattered, ill-sized, stinking boots rather than to meditate further on the problem of relativity. Vladimir picks up his train of thought with the grandiose assertion that tomorrow, when Estragon wakes, "He'll know nothing," an assertion that the opening of Act Two has already verified. Yet again, the philosophical statement falls flat when Vladimir goes on to enumerate the particular suffering that will most certainly befall Gogo once more: "He'll tell me about the blows he received and I'll give him a carrot." The choreographed pause that follows this line is significant, inviting us to pause on the most banal of props in the play—the carrot—before pursuing Didi's aphoristic speech on the human condition as "astride of a grave and a difficult birth" (WG, 104–105).

While "habit is a great deadener," the recursive actions that propel the play are enacted, at least in the case of Estragon, as if for the first time; nor do those recursions deaden the expression of physical pain, emotional despair, or abject fear that the couple experiences. "The air is full of our cries," Vladimir says, and then proceeds again to pause (WG, 105). The twin pauses in his monologue thus stress for the audience two evidently opposing forces in the play—Estragon's appetite for carrots and the cries of the dead. I argue that we understand the proximity of these two pauses as central to the drama of *Waiting for Godot* in that they correlate the bodily hunger of Estragon with the play's repeated references to the dead of the Second World War and to the social hierarchies that the war failed to end.

Jameson and Gordon both acknowledge the presence of such historical "externalities" in the play: in Jameson's reading, those referents center on the "allegorical schema" that stages the "British Empire (Pozzo) in relationship to its colonies in general and Ireland in particular (Lucky)," while in Gordon's, they center on allusions to the Holocaust (SM, 200–201).⁶⁶ However, these arguments take the form of asides, or concessions, about anomalous moments of historical signification that, as Jameson contends, Beck-

788 ett's later work rejected entirely because of their capacity to rupture the play's formal experiments. Regardless of Beckett's original intent for or retrospective assessments of *Waiting for Godot*, the play's references to the Second World War are at once spare and insistent. At one point for example, without provocation or explanation, Vladimir looks out at the mound of dirt behind them and demands of Estragon, "where are all these corpses from?" During another discussion on the origin and burden of thought, Vladimir again draws Estragon's attention to the spectral presence of corpses, as he "cries out" to Gogo, "A charnel-house! A charnel house!" (WG, 71). In evoking the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, Didi's interruption avers that we cannot think our way out of the horrors of the Second World War, just as it suggests that the human burden of abstract thought is not the greatest misery of all.

While minimal, the social scaffolding of the play stems directly from these poignant evocations of the Second World War and the Holocaust. It would seem that in the play's post-atomic landscape—which, despite the flowering of the lone tree between the play's two acts, shows little sign of arable life—a social order persists that is at once feudal and totalitarian. By this account, Pozzo figures as an exploitive landlord and a foil for Godot, whose power in turn might best be compared to Big Brother's rule by fear and absence in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. While the play's landscape is a dystopian one, carefully stripped of temporal and geographic setting, Beckett provides a cipher for the place in Vladimir's memory of the Rhône Valley and the field work he once did harvesting grapes. We learn at the close of Act Two, for example, that Vladimir remembers harvesting grapes in the Rhône, a reference that recalls Beckett's years during the Second World War serving the French Resistance and living in the southwest provincial town of Roussillon. Although Estragon remembers almost nothing about this shared history, and Vladimir forecloses the memory almost as soon as he recalls it (with the quip, "There's no good harking back on that"), the allusion begs the question of how the time and place on stage before us compare to Didi's remembered past of agricultural labor.⁶⁷

In addition to its fallow and violent characteristics, the setting of *Waiting for Godot* (which Estragon insists on calling "Cackon County") is both stratified and materialistic, a caricature perhaps of the postwar ideology of competition and prosperity. The possible reasons that Vladimir and Estragon continue to wait for Godot emerge early in the first act, when, after flirting with the option of hanging themselves, Didi and Gogo decide that they should at least wait to hear Godot's "offer."

Beckett's use of a term drawn from finance and real estate works analogously to Niedecker's evocation of the "pull" required to succeed in the postwar and post-atomic American economy. The stakes of Vladimir and Estragon's decision to wait are, in other words, material as well as existential in that Godot's appearance might improve their status in this strange social order. As in Niedecker's poem, the language when the pair reflects on whether to stay or go is colloquial and clichéd, the speech of businessmen rather than tramps:

Estragon: Don't let's do anything. It's safer.

Vladimir: Let's wait and see what he says.

Estragon: Who?

Vladimir: Godot.

Estragon: Good idea.

Vladimir: Let's wait till we know exactly how we stand.

Estragon: On the other hand it might be better to strike the iron before it freezes.

Vladimir: I'm curious to hear what he has to offer. Then we'll take it or leave it. (WG, 13)

Continuing in this vein, the two speculate that Godot will likely consult his agents, correspondents, and bank accounts before providing them with an offer in response to their "vague supplication." The humor in this exchange—the darkly comedic movement from the couple's contemplated suicide and existential musings to Godot's financial solvency—parodies postwar discourses of political negotiation and economic reconstruction. The parody recurs when Estragon attempts, in Act Two, to extract money from the helpless and now-blind Pozzo. In response to Pozzo's proposition of one hundred francs, Estragon cries out, "It's not enough," to which Vladimir humorously retorts, "I wouldn't go so far as that" (WG, 92). As an explanation of Estragon's hostility, we learn that the two are economically beholden to Pozzo, whose private land surrounds both them and the road.⁶⁸

Against this playful banter on matters financial, the play enacts, if mostly by inference, the material power that both Godot and Pozzo hold over Didi, Gogo, and Lucky. In response to Estragon's inquiry as to where they "come in" in this world, Vladimir speculates, "on our hands and knees." The figure of speech leads Estragon to wonder if they have "no rights any more," an evidently naïve comment that prompts Vladimir's stifled laughter (laughter being "prohibited" now). The line seems particularly resonant with the economic and political regimes of postwar Europe as well as the loss of rights during the war under the Nazi and Vichy governments. As the play's final discourse suggests, Vladimir and Estragon are powerless to move precisely because of their material and political dispossession vis-à-vis Godot (WG, 107).

The particular vulnerability that the pair experiences with respect to food highlights the abject poverty that the two suffer, in stark contrast to Godot's imagined luxuries. Composed during Beckett's postwar "siege" of literary activity in Paris, the play thus dramatizes the ironies of the food economy in the critical years of 1946 to 1948, when rations persisted long after the war's end. In one of many embraces, Gogo recoils from Didi, exclaiming that the latter stinks of garlic. In response to this absurd rejection, Didi replies, "it's for the kidneys." The retort provokes laughter, and in that laughter we sense the tragic irony of the exchange, for a man that cannot even furnish a carrot is unlikely to have meat (WG, 15). One of the most poignant expressions of Didi's powerlessness is his dearth of good food, which prevents him from fulfilling his companion's constant cravings even as Estragon's intense hunger seems, at this late date, only capable of demanding a carrot.

On the heels of their first extended discourse on Godot, Estragon "violently" exclaims to Didi, "I'm hungry!" (WG, 15). The exclamation leads in turn to the play's first dis-

790 course on food. By staging the poverty of Beckett's antiheroes, the comedic exchange reminds Beckett's contemporary Parisian and London audiences of the famine conditions that continued and, in some regions, intensified after the war. Against Pozzo's subsequent lunch of chicken and wine, Vladimir can only offer to Estragon one carrot and a handful of turnips, the latter of which he tries to pass off as carrots:

Vladimir: Do you want a carrot?

Estragon: Is that all there is?

Vladimir: I might have some turnips.

Estragon: Give me a carrot. (Vladimir rummages in his pockets, takes out a turnip and gives it to Estragon who takes a bite out of it. Angrily.) It's a turnip!

Vladimir: Oh pardon! I could have sworn it was a carrot. (*He rummages again in his pockets, finds nothing but turnips.*) All that's turnips. (*He rummages.*) You must have eaten the last. (*He rummages.*) Wait, I have it. (*He brings out a carrot and gives it to Estragon.*) There dear fellow. (*Estragon wipes the carrot on his sleeve and begins to eat it.*) Make it last, that's the end of them. (WG, 16)

In this scene, both the need to eat and the act of eating—much like Estragon's discomfort with his boots or recollection of bruises—interrupts, defers, and makes comical Vladimir's philosophical inquiries. The key word in this scene is “rummage”; an action that not only anticipates the sets of later plays like *Endgame* (1958) and *Happy Days* (1962) but also recalls at once the dumpsters and the national canteens of the Second World War. Condemned to the cheapest and most plentiful output of agriculture in the 1940s—root vegetables—Estragon subsists on a monoculture of free (as in unrationed) food. At the same time, Didi warns Gogo that this carrot will be the “end of them,” affording it a special status. These banal habits of eating may not recur, the warning stresses, a warning that the second act realizes when Vladimir attempts to pass off a blackened radish for a carrot.

Immediately after this scene, Pozzo comes on stage for the first time along with Lucky, who is carrying a burdensome load that includes a stool, a heavy bag, a great coat, and a picnic basket (WG, 18). Its contents—chicken and wine—would have been indicators of affluence in postwar Britain and France. Indeed, Pozzo's bourgeois social position is signaled directly here, as, one imagines, these foods come either from his land or from the black market. The dissimilarity between Estragon's and Pozzo's meals is so stark as to border on a caricature of social disparities during the period, particularly when the latter man flaunts both his power and his satiation:

Pozzo: . . . with your permission, I propose to dally with you a moment, before I venture any further. Basket! (*Lucky advances, gives the basket, goes back to his place.*) The fresh air stimulates the jaded appetite. (*He opens the basket, takes out a piece of chicken and a bottle of wine.*) Basket! (*Lucky advances, picks up the basket and goes back to his place.*) Further! (*Lucky takes a step back.*) He stinks. Happy days! (*He drinks from the bottle, puts it down and begins to eat. Silence.*) (WG, 22)

While Pozzo eats in this scene, he throws his cleaned bones as waste onto the road. Much to Vladimir's horror, Estragon feels emboldened to beg for the scraps, in response to which Pozzo demands that Estragon ask Lucky—"the carrier"—who would ordinarily have the opportunity to consume them. Faced with Lucky's silence, Pozzo concedes the bones to Estragon who, again to Vladimir's embarrassed pride, "*makes a dart at the bones, picks them up and begins to gnaw them*" (WG, 25). An extended scene, this sequence dramatizes Estragon's hunger, a hunger that prompts him, as the uninhibited and irrational member of the couple, to gnaw on the bones left over from Pozzo's luxury feeding, to cite Orwell again. While Pozzo dines on wine and chicken at his leisure, in other words, Estragon must scarf down scraps of meat.

In tandem, the plays scenes of eating suggest how dire the experience of food shortages, scarce resources, and famine were for those who, like Didi and Gogo, had no money, no work, and no social power during or after the war. Against the discourses of shared sacrifice and fine dining that M. F. K. Fisher situates as pivotal to American food consumerism and that Niedecker figures as smokescreens for national and global famine, *Waiting for Godot* thus stages a potentially endless state of hunger as the war's most dramatic legacy. In their respective representations of world famine and luxury eating, these late modernist texts each probe the power of food in the mid-century period. As a foil to Niedecker's and Fisher's respective satires of the inequities that wartime famine poignantly reveals, David's *Book of Mediterranean Food* aims to preserve rather than critique the culture of gourmandise. By comparison, *Waiting for Godot* enacts a condition of deprivation that turns on the rift between Pozzo's imperial mode of eating and Vladimir and Estragon's abject hunger. A significant conceptual divide between austerity and what Orwell terms "luxury feeding" thus emerges in late modernist texts, one that confronts the consequences of world war in both the geopolitical contours and individual experiences of food.

Notes

1. Particular texts exhibiting this concern include Edna St. Vincent Millay's postwar collection *Mine the Harvest* (1954), T.S. Eliot's dark comedy of manners *The Cocktail Party* (1950), and George Orwell's political allegory *Animal Farm* (1946).

2. Jameson identifies both the "industrialization of agriculture" and "the culture industry" as the related and principal signs of a postmodern break with modernity: that "third or late stage of capitalism," as Jameson describes the postwar period. Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 1991), 101, 302–13, Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), and Fredric Jameson, *A Singular Modernity: Essay on the Ontology of the Present* (London and New York: Verso, 2002), 12. Henceforth abbreviated SM.

3. In setting these texts against government war programs and propaganda, this essay is in conversation with Michael Szalay's thesis that the prewar modernism of the 1930s cannot be understood outside state structures of control and security. Michael Szalay, *New Deal Modernism: American Literature and the Invention of the Welfare State* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2000), 8.

4. In using the term "late modernism," I follow critics such as Frederic Jameson, Marina MacKay, and Tyrus Miller who argue for a period of late modernism, which (1) includes the late works of modernist writers, (2) accounts for the persistence of modernist theory and practice after the Second

- 792 World War, (3) acknowledges transnational developments within modernism, and (4) unsettles the chronology of modernism and postmodernism, suggesting, at the very least, a third term. See SM, Marina MacKay, *Modernism and World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), and Tyrus Miller, *Late Modernism: Politics, Fiction, and the Arts between the World Wars* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999).
5. Marjorie Perloff, "Canon and Loaded Gun," in *Poetic License: Essays on Modernist and Postmodernist Lyric* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 83.
6. The manuscript for this unpublished poem was dated 30 December 1950. Lorine Niedecker, *Lorine Niedecker: Collected Works*, ed. Jenny Penberthy (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 142–43, 386. Henceforth abbreviated LN.
7. While Niedecker wrote the poem before Pound's postwar treason trial, she would have been aware of his radio addresses from Italy. Through Niedecker's relationship with Louis Zukofsky, Pound read some of her work in this period (LN, 6).
8. Elizabeth Willis, "The Poetics of Affinity: Lorine Niedecker, William Morris, and the Art of Work," in *Contemporary Literature* 46:4 (2005), 579, 584.
9. During the war, the primary form of food aid to Europe was the lend-lease program. It was not until after the war, and through the prescriptions of the Marshall Plan, that the U.S. would provide food and monetary aid in the form of "grants." See Eric Hobsbawn, *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Vintage Books, 1996) and Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005).
10. Both poems appear in the unpublished "New Goose" manuscript of 1945. LN, 112–13, 376.
11. In this sense, Niedecker clarifies the poetics of materiality in Objectivist poetry, which Timothy Carmody has usefully described as the conception of commodities "in their full cultural and historical signification and material and phenomenal specificity." See also Michael Golston's assessment of Zukofsky's poetics as a formalism invested in the political and historical *dynamics* of the material world. Michael Golston, "Petaltent Devils: Louis Zukofsky, Lorine Niedecker, and the Surrealist Praying Mantis," in *Modernism/Modernity* 13:2 (2006), 325–26, Timothy Carmody, "Modernism's Objects," review of *The Objectivist Nexus: Essays in Cultural Poetics*, eds. Rachel Blau DuPlessis and Peter Quartermain (University of Alabama Press: 1999) in *Journal of Modern Literature* 27:1 (2003), 210.
12. As Marina MacKay argues, T. S. Eliot's "Little Gidding" "anchors the modernist effort solidly to the experience of war," even as the ideological positions that other modernist writers assumed in the 1940s were in no sense uniform. MacKay, *Modernism and World War II*, 89.
13. Quoted in Ron Kroese, "Industrial Agriculture's War against Nature," in *Fatal Harvest: The Tragedy of Industrial Agriculture*, ed. Andrew Kimbrell (Washington, DC, Covelo, CA and London: Island Press, 2002), 24.
14. Agriculture historian Ron Kroese makes this point salient in his analysis of DDT, which was used to delouse soldiers during the war. By 1944, advertisements and articles appeared in farm magazines announcing that such chemicals and other military technologies would be "coming home" to help farmers. Kroese, "Industrial Agriculture's War against Nature," 23–24. See also Mark L. Winston, *Nature Wars: People vs. Pests* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
15. The agricultural boom during and after the war followed a twenty-year depression in farm prices. Kroese, "Industrial Agriculture's War against Nature," 26.
16. Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 3.
17. Republished in 1943 in pamphlet form, the address evidently had a large enough audience to generate demand for its circulation in print form. Elmer Davis, "Food Rationing and the War: A Radio Address by Mr. Elmer Davis," ed. United States Office of War Information (27 December 1942).
18. Harvey A. Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 80–81. Henceforth abbreviated PP.
19. Davis, "Food Rationing and the War."
20. Ibid.
21. See Hobsbawn, *The Age of Extremes*, and Judt, *A History of Europe since 1945*.

22. Szalay, *New Deal Modernism*, 5.

23. As President Roosevelt proclaimed in a 1935 Congressional address, the state's role was to "provide the means of mitigating" such risks. Szalay, *New Deal Modernism*, 9, 23.

24. Food historian Amy Bentley notes that millions of women took the Home Front pledge during the war, either at rallies, sites of employment, or in their homes during radio broadcasts of the pledge. Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 37.

25. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address to the Congress of the United States: Four Freedoms," ed. Office of the President (6 January 1941).

26. Ramón Saldívar, *The Borderlands of Culture: Américo Paredes and the Transnational Imaginary* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 204.

27. Saldívar, *The Borderlands of Culture*, 213.

28. "Radio Background Material: Rationing," United States Office of War Information (1 July 1942).

29. *Ibid.*

30. In his analysis of James Agee's and Richard Wright's writings of the late 1930s and early 1940s, Jones observes that, "there is little doubt that the economic crisis brought many observers to a wholesale reevaluation of national values." Gavin Jones, *American Hungers: The Problem of Poverty in U.S. Literature, 1840–1945* (Princeton, NJ and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008), xiv, 107. See also Gavin Jones, "Poverty and the Limits of Literary Criticism," in *American Literary History* 15:4 (2003), 765–92.

31. George Orwell, "The British Crisis: London Letter to *Partisan Review* (8 May 1942)," in *My Country Right or Left, 1940–1943*, eds. Sonia Orwell and Ian Angus (Boston: Nonpareil Books, 2000), 207–16. See also John Burnett, *England Eats Out: A Social History of Eating out in England from 1830 to the Present* (London and New York: Pearson Longman, 2004).

32. The most noteworthy of these French restaurateurs were Henri Soulé and Pierre Franey. Franey worked his way up from a saucier to a chef in Soulé's New York restaurant Le Pavillon. A group of food critics and reviewers—Craig Claiborne at the *New York Times*, Sheila Hibben and A. J. Liebling at the *New Yorker*, Nora Ephron at *Esquire* and *New York Magazine*, and Lucius Beebes at *Gourmet*—patronized, reviewed, and in some cases promoted these restaurants for a national if elite readership of proto-foodies. See David Kamp, *The United States of Arugula: The Sun-Dried, Cold-Pressed, Dark-Roasted, Extra Virgin Story of the American Food Revolution* (New York: Broadway Books, 2006), 33.

33. "*How to Cook a Wolf* was first published in 1942, when wartime shortages were at their worst. It was revised by the author in 1951 by the addition of copious marginal notes and footnotes and a special section of additional recipes. These have now been incorporated in their proper places in the text, and are enclosed in brackets." Editors' note to M. F. K. Fisher, *How to Cook a Wolf* (New York: World Publishing, 1942, 1954; reprint, New York: North Point Press, 1988), ix. Henceforth abbreviated *HCW*.

34. One such state-sponsored meal plan was the "Basic Seven" chart, the precursor to the Food Pyramid, developed in the early 1940s by the U.S. Food Nutrition Board. See Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 69, and *PP*, 66–67.

35. Rudin contends that Fisher's modernism inheres in her "freewheeling" combinations of French classical cooking (characterized as "sumptuous") and American regional cuisines (marked by "improvisation"). Susan Derwin argues similarly that critics would do well to recognize Fisher as a literary writer. In an earlier article, David Lazard seconds both Rudin and Derwin that Fisher is a modernist writer who simply took gastronomy and food as her central topic. Max Rudin, "M. F. K. Fisher and the Consolations of Food," in *Raritan Quarterly Review* 21:2 (Fall 2001), 131, David Lazard, "The Usable Past of M. F. K. Fisher," in *Southwest Review* 77:4 (1992), 515, and Susan Derwin, "The Poetics of M. F. K. Fisher," in *Style* 37:3 (Fall 2003), 266–78.

36. We might think here of the mythological histories that underlie high modernist texts such as Eliot's *The Waste Land*, H. D.'s *The Walls do Not Fall*, and Joyce's *Ulysses*. *Ulysses*, of course, proves to be a capacious text that incorporates mythological, national, and vernacular forms of history.

37. Fisher introduces this trope in the book's epigraph, a quatrain of doggerel poetry by one C. P. S. Gilman: "There's a wining at the threshold, / There's a scratching at the floor. / To work! To work! In Heaven's name! / The wolf is at the door!"

38. The company produced the Field Ration D and Tropical Bar throughout the Second World War, manufacturing 500,000 bars per hour. McLean Ward, *Produce and Conserve, Share and Play Square*, 223; *HCW*, 188–89.

39. Elizabeth David, *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (New York: John Lehmann, 1950; reprint, New York: New York Review of Books, 1988, 2002), 5, 17, Burnett, *England Eats Out*, 228.

40. During the war, Parr argues, Keynesian economic theory also fueled an ideology of "the highly capitalized kitchen." As modernist designers translated their products for mass production after the Second World War, "the highly capitalized kitchen" affirmed "the affluence and thus superiority" of Western states, the imagined fulfillment, in other words, of Roosevelt's third freedom. Joy Parr, "Issue Introduction: Modern Kitchen, Good Home, Strong Nation," in *Technology and Culture* 43 (2002), 659–61.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Fisher is ambivalent about the convenience of canned goods, which were rationed during the war as a means of conserving tin for weapons production. In chapter four, Fisher champions can openers and tinned soups as an economical supplement to fresh foods, while in chapter five, she correlates the spread of "modern canning" to "those other two omnipresent realities, Death and Taxes" (*HCW*, 45, 49).

43. In chapter nine—"How to be Cheerful while Starving"—Fisher advances foraging over shopping as a method for eating well, sharing the anecdote of a friend who would forage for food to throw dinner parties and to counter her economic poverty.

44. That interest emerges clearly in a later chapter entitled "How not to be an earthworm," which references air sirens and rotating blackouts as well as the importance of stocking the kitchen so that life may go on during the war (*HCW*, 182–90).

45. When a voluntary "Share the Meat" campaign failed to prevent shortages in the United States, the OPA added meat to the new points rationing program released in 1943. See *PP*, 83–84; John Lindberg, "Food, Relief and Famine," ed. Financial and Transit Department Economic (League of Nations, Geneva, 1946); "How Britain Was Fed in War Time: Food Control 1939–1945," ed. London Ministry of Food (H. M. Stationery Office, 1946); Juliet Danziger, "A Farewell to Ration Books," in *The New York Times* (30 September 1945); "Tongue-Vegetable Casserole Stretches Meat Allowance," in *The Washington Post* (7 April 1943); Larry Wolters, "Chatting by Air, London Depicts War to Chicago," in *Chicago Daily Tribune* (9 July 1943); Jackson S. Elliott, "Meat Rationing Likely to Start in Few Days," in *The Washington Post* (15 August 1942).

46. In arguing that Niedecker's poetry synthesizes objectivist, imagist, surrealist, and folk modes of lyric, DuPlessis observes that a recurring node of surrealist association in the poems is the "weirdness of everyday life." Rachel Blau DuPlessis, "Lorine Niedecker's 'Paean to Place' and Its Fusion Poetics," in *Contemporary Literature* 46:3 (2005), 395.

47. This period also witnessed the discourse of a "national" cuisine, which some members of the Food Nutrition Board along with state-sponsored anthropologists employed to promote standardized cooking over regional and ethnic food cultures. See "Tongue-Vegetable Casserole Stretches Meat Allowance" and Bentley, *Eating for Victory*, 24–27, 69.

48. Ina Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain: Rationing, Controls, and Consumption, 1939–1955* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 29–31.

49. George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (New York: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1949; reprint, New York: Plume, Penguin Group, 1983), 5, 60–61.

50. Lindberg, "Food, Relief and Famine."

51. On the whole, Americans consumed more rather than less food during the war in key categories, while British consumers, by comparison, consumed significantly less. Although meat consumption declined 19% in the U.K., it increased 8.9% in the U.S. between 1939 and 1944; similarly, fruit consumption fell by 30% in the UK, but increased by 5% in the U.S. Finally, sugar consumption fell by 31% in the UK but only by 24% in the U.S. (*PP*, 84, and Lindberg, "Food, Relief and Famine," 61).

52. The continued impoverishment of rural European communities in the 1940s, when many American farm owners were entering the middle class or consolidating as corporations, reinforces this disparity. Judt, *A History of Europe since 1945*, 77.

53. See especially Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, Lindberg, “Food, Relief and Famine,” Paul Reynard, *Rationing: A War Weapon* (Paris: Centre D’Informations Documentaires, 1940; reprint, Speech Broadcast of Minister of Finance, 29 February 1940), and “How Britain Was Fed in War Time: Food Control 1939–1945.”

54. In Britain, rationing—specifically of meat, butter, and sugar—began in October of 1939. See Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 16–17.

55. George Orwell, “London Letter to *Partisan Review* (17 August 1941),” in *My Country Right or Left*, 154.

56. Food historian John Burnett argues that, after the war, the gradual de-rationing of foodstuffs sparked a small wave of gourmet cookbooks, including Marguerite Patten’s recipes in the early 1950s as well as Elizabeth David’s *A Book of Mediterranean Food*. That said, David’s book was relatively rare, and almost every publisher responded to the book’s content with incredulity, given that no one had “enough food to cook.” David, *A Book of Mediterranean Food*, 5, 17, and Burnett, *England Eats Out*, 228.

57. Judt, *A History of Europe since 1945*, 162.

58. Government propaganda on the part of the Ministry of Food rallied civilians to make sacrifices to support the enormous war effort, stressing the “magnitude” of the war and encouraging pride in the sacrifices required. A February 1940 Gallup poll found that 51% of the nation agreed “that every person should buy as few goods as possible.” In reality, attitudes toward the rationing were mixed, and lower income citizens expressed discontent with the habits of upper-class citizens who dined at fine restaurants and took shelter in hotels throughout the blitz. Zweiniger-Bargielowska, *Austerity in Britain*, 62–64.

59. Lisa Chaney, *Elizabeth David: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1998), 214–15.

60. At one point, for example, David notes that “the origin of [French] pistou is Genoese, but it has become naturalized in Nice and the surrounding country” (17).

61. Fredric Jameson, “Modernism and Imperialism,” in Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Edward Said, *Nationalism, Colonialism and Literature* (Lawrence Hill, Derry: Field Day Theater Company Limited, 1988), 11.

62. Thus, in *Howards End* the impossibility of mapping London—which bleeds into the “geographic infinity” of the empire—is countered by the “providential ideology of the country house. A refuge from the expansive and chaotic spaces of London, Howards End offers a “self-subsisting totality”. Jameson, “Modernism and Imperialism,” 12, 18.

63. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, trans. Samuel Beckett (New York: Grove Press, 1954; reprint, *En Attendant Godot*, perf. Théâtre de Babylone, Paris, 1952), 104–105. Henceforth abbreviated WG.

64. This “paradox” rewrites Camus’s “Myth of Sisyphus,” in which Sisyphus faces the choice of rolling a rock up a hill each day or leaving it, the only certainty being that the rock will always be there. According to this dilemma, one can get on day by day only by accepting life’s fundamental meaninglessness. In the case of *Godot*, Gordon argues, the characters lack “defiance” about their lot and, thus, express despair about the very state of going on and getting by. Lois Gordon, *Reading Godot* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2002), 57–58, and Hugh Kenner, *Flaubert, Joyce and Beckett: The Stoic Comedians* (London: Dalkey Archive Press, 1962), 67.

65. Kenner, *Flaubert, Joyce and Beckett*, 67.

66. Gordon, *Reading Godot*, 63.

67. Similarly, when Vladimir attempts to compare the landscape of the road to a remembered landscape of their past—that of “Macon country”—Estragon denies any memory of such a place, claiming that he has spent his entire life in this no-place place, which he labels “Cackon country” (WG, 67–68).

68. Fortunately for them, Pozzo suggests, the land is now sub-divided by the public road on which they and the lone tree stand (WG, 20).