Hearty or Delicate? Food and Gender in the Novels of Agatha Christie

Silvia Baučeková

Pavol Jozef Šafárik University, Košice

Abstract

This paper examines Agatha Christie's usage of food imagery in the construction of her characters' gender identities. Gender is defined as constructed and performed, rather than pre-determined and fixed. In addition, both, crime fiction and food are understood as strongly gendered phenomena. It is argued that Christie created a number of characters who use food to construct alternative and transgressive gender roles for themselves. This is especially visible in the desexualization of her two famous detectives, Hercule Poirot and Miss Marple, which enabled Christie to transform the genre of the classical crime novel and eventually to introduce a female detective.

Keywords: Agatha Christie, classical crime novel, food, gender, desexualization, transgression