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HANDBOOK OF CULTURE AND COMMUNICATION OF TASTE

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THE EDUCATIONAL EUROPEAN PROJECT OF FOOD AND WINE CULTURE

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Introduction

Giuseppa Mandina and Gianfranco Marrone

Food is one of the identifying elements of culture, a driving force behind the international economy, and one of the fundamental communal aspects around which forms of identity and socialization are constructed. Food talks to us about what we are and what we want to be, how we relate to others and how we see our place in the world. Not only does food talk about us and about the society we live in, but above all we talk about food, a lot. Food and wine programmes are ever present on TV all over the world, blogs about food are becoming more and more popular, guides and recipe books climb the best seller lists, every day there are more cooking utensils and appliances available, we eat out more often than ever, and we continue to show off our culinary skills. An then we go on diets, we discuss typical cuisine, we are bombarded with advertising for dishes, ingredients and drinks; marketing in the agribusiness sector has become a branch on its own, not to mention the problems of the distribution of food, sustainability etc.

All this has the effect of increasing the attention focussed on food, and consequently the growing interest in food then increases the media output dedicated to it. It is *gastromania*, the mania for gastronomy in all its forms, and we are all more or less directly involved. However, although a lot of scientific and teaching materials about nutrition exist, there are not many, especially for secondary school students, aimed at studying the culture and communication of taste, not understood simply as information about eating well, but as an awareness of the social importance and value of nutrition - nutrition as a means of expression, a mirror and at the same time a reflection of society.

It was the realization that this was lacking that led to the creation of CUCOTA (Culture and Communication of Taste), a three year project financed by Erasmus+[1]. Through a network of European partnerships, made up of secondary schools specializing in food

1 More specifically, it is an Erasums+, Strategic Partnership, Key Action 201 project, which began in July 2018.

and wine, universities and a local action group[2], this project has sought to put in place a series of instruments (this manual, the glossary and the project's website - www.cucota.eu), primarily aimed at students at high schools specializing in food and wine, who will be professionals in this sector in the future, but also for those who are simply curious and want to find out more about the language of food. The objectives of the project were to promote the idea of culture and communication of taste, and new ways of doing research into food and wine, as well as international cooperation and relations between different systems and levels of education.

The research methodology that was used to look into the issues of and about food was semiotics, a discipline that studies the phenomena and processes through which sense is produced and circulates in society, regardless of whether those who produce this sense have an intention to communicate it. Semiotics analyses texts, not only in the traditional sense (texts as literary works) but also cultural products that have similar formal characteristics to texts understood in the traditional way (spaces can be considered as texts, as can practices, objects etc.). The theoretical assumption is that cultural products which are extremely different from one another can have similar structural characteristics. For example, a novel is a text with well-defined borders that uses a series of meaningful elements to express meanings, and the same can be said for an advertisement, a restaurant, and why not, a cooking utensil. For this reason, in this manual you can read about advertising and diets, ethics and cinema, packaging and interculturalism, without distinction. These cultural phenomena, as will become clear, contain meanings that are much deeper than they may appear at first sight, products and processes that talk about society and its organization, values and cultural identity.

The manual then deals with the culture of food and wine from a point of view that is completely new compared with traditional school curricula, and looks at important and very widespread phenomena, which are marginalized in traditional courses of study. The idea is to offer tools for analysis and design, theoretical presentations and case studies, using a structured interdisciplinary method for teaching key skills, based on the current reality of society, which can stimulate curiosity, projects, a critical spirit and debate. This is why all the partners collaborated in writing the various chapters, and the students and teachers of the schools actively contributed.

From this point of view, professional schools specializing in the food and wine sector need to find a new forum in which they do not simply repeat the same old formulas at every hour and for

2 The CUCOTA partnership is made up of three high schools specializing in the food and wine sector (Vincenzo Florio State Professional Institute for Food and Wine and Hotel Services, Trapani – leader of the project –, Sofia Secondary School of Bread Making and Confectionery, Kaunas Food Industry and Trade Training Centre), three universities (the University of Palermo, the New Bulgarian University, Kaunas University of Technology) and a local action group (GAL Elimos).

every occasion, but instead offer themselves as cultural hubs, and return to "telling the story" of food. Today, more than ever, it is essential to return to the educational and training values of food, its contents, its knowledge, the historical, legal and ethno-anthropological aspects that relate to it, the social, ethical, political, philosophical and ritualistic dimension that food brings to mind, overcoming cultural and discriminatory barriers and rediscovering the psychophysical balance between mind and body.

For this reason, it is necessary not only to teach students to recognize the contents and the objects of the experience, the food itself, through the senses, but also to appreciate gastronomy through the smells, aromas and flavours of their own experience, to recognize the multicultural and multi-ethnic influences of migrating populations and preserve them from globalization. The project therefore focusses on the necessity to know and interpret the gastronomic sciences in a holistic way, because educating people about food means knowing how to tell the story of gastronomy, ingredients and the land.

From this point of view, the direction of the course of action/research of the project is clearly towards a rethinking of the curricula of the professional food and wine schools, with an inclination towards semiotic/communicative aspects.

The approach adopted by the project has had repercussions in the world of research, allowing an in-depth study into the field of the semiotics of taste, and more in general a development of studies in the area of food and wine, by introducing a little known method of analysis and focussing on areas of intervention that are traditionally not dealt with very often.

The language used in the book is simple and accessible and the chapters contain examples taken from everyday experience. The technical terms have been highlighted. They refer back to a glossary where they are illustrated in a few lines with practical examples. Every chapter contains focus points for further study and brief charts that use specific examples to illustrate particularly important cases, which are relevant in relation to the main theme of the chapter.

SECTION I

CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Food from an intercultural perspective
Tastes, identities, languages

Simona Stano

1. WE ARE WHAT WE EAT: TASTE AND SOCIO-CULTURAL IDENTITY

"Tell me what kind of food you eat, and I will tell you what kind of man you are". How many times have we heard these words? Introduced by gastronome Brillat-Savarin in his well-known *Physiology of Taste* (1825), this aphorism has been increasingly mentioned not only in scholarly books, but also in a variety of messages circulating within social networks, online forums, weblogs, and the mass media. But what does it mean? How can food define our identity? In the following paragraphs we will attempt to answer these questions, hence pointing out the inter-cultural characterisation of food and taste.

1.1. BEYOND FOOD PROPERTIES: CULTURES AND PERCEPTIONS OF EDIBILITY

In China, Thailand and many Asian countries people largely consume larvae, locusts, and other insects. In Peru it is common to eat hamster's and llama's meat. In Africa and Australia some tribes cook and eat snakes. By contrast, these same habits would probably sound odd, or at least unfamiliar, to Europeans or North Americans. Why? Is there anything in the organic composition of insects, hamsters, snakes or other foods that can explain such preferences and taboos? Unquestionably, there are some substances that are biologically unsuited to be eaten by human beings, but that's not the case of these foods: we are not talking of any poisonous or indigestible items. In this sense, the case of insects is emblematic: their exoskeleton is principally made of chitin, a substance whose digestibility by humans has been commonly questioned and on some occasions also denied. However, even if confirmed, such a fact could not explain, alone, why Europeans and North Americans do not eat insects, while they largely consume other foods rich in chitin such as crabs, lobsters, shrimps and other crustaceans by removing their shell or even eating it (when sufficiently soft). Furthermore, the problem of chitin could be easily solved by eating insects in their larval form, before their body is shed by the external skeleton. Definitely, the reason of the European and North American reluctance to eat insects cannot be explained in purely material terms.

Fig. 1. Tray with bowls of food, including fried insects, used in Lao cuisine. Traditionally prepared by the families going to the temple, this meal is generally shared with the Buddhist monks there (©Basile Morin 2018).

Exactly as insects, many of the items that we do not eat are substances that are perfectly edible from a biological point of view. But yet we do not consume them. This means that, although human beings eat, first of all, to survive, in the collective sphere food gains meanings that go beyond its basic function and affect our perceptions of edibility.

1.2. HOW TO DISTINGUISH EDIBLE FROM INEDIBLE SUBSTANCES: A MATERIALISTIC OR CULTURAL QUESTION?

The process of distinction between edible and non-edible products can be explained in different ways. From a materialistic point of view, the substances selected as food seem to have a more favourable balance of practical benefits over costs (either in terms of efforts needed to produce them or effects that they have on environmental aspects) than other substances, which, having cheaper and more nutritious substitutes, tend to be discarded. This would explain, for instance, why the most carnivorous cuisines are generally associated with relatively low population densities and lands not suitable for agriculture, while the most herbivorous cuisines are adopted by dense populations whose habitat and food production technologies make livestock likely to reduce the amount of proteins and calories available for humans. In this perspective, all food taboos and prescriptions can be explained in terms of an "ecological advantage" based on rational processes of adaptation, even though people do not generally rationalise such a process.

However, it must be said that not always groups sharing the same ecological conditions also share the same food preferences or taboos: let us consider, for instance, the increasing number of people opting for vegetarianism or veganism not because of the material conditions of their habitat or food production technologies, but rather for ethical reasons (see chapter "The ethics of eating"). In fact, in order to be "good to eat", substances should be first of all "good to think", that is to say, they must nourish people's collective mind (i.e. their system of values, beliefs, and customs) to be considered suitable for their stomach. Our biological need for nourishment is always inserted in a system of values, and, either according to a totemic (as in animistic religions), a sacrificial (as in ancient history), a hygienic-rationalist (as in contemporary Western dietetics) or an aesthetic (as in gastronomy) logic, all cultures develop classification systems according to which all products with nutritional qualities are divided into two categories: edible and inedible. Definitely, such choices cannot be explained solely in material or ecological terms, but require to take into consideration social and cultural factors.

1.3. BEYOND PHYSIOLOGY: TASTE AS A SOCIOCULTURAL FACT

When dealing with food preferences, it is impossible not to make reference to another crucial concept: *taste*. If we look for the word "taste" in the dictionary, we will find its definition in terms of the "special sense that perceives and distinguishes the qualities and flavours of a dissolved substance in the mouth". In this sense, taste is conceived as a bodily sensation, which varies from person to person. In fact, we all have specific receptor cells, called taste buds, which are located around the so-called *papillae* that can be found on the upper surface of our tongue, soft palate, upper oesophagus, cheeks and epiglottis. Such receptors (which can vary in number and form from person to person) allow us to perceive the sapid molecules present in food or any other item introduced into our mouth, thus highlighting the individual character of taste.

But the gustatory experience does not end there. First of all, it is essential to note that taste does not only consist in perceiving, but also in distinguishing the qualities and flavours of the substances dissolved in our mouth. In order to do so, we need to share some common categories: despite the very vast range of sapid molecules present in food, in fact, we currently refer to five basic categories (salty, sweet, bitter, acid and, only in the last decades, **umami**) to distinguish and describe the sensations perceived while tasting specific foods. In ancient times, by contrast, more varied classifications were used: while Plato distinguished bitter, sweet, salty, sour, astringent, and pungent, for instance, Aristotle placed sweet and bitter on opposite ends of the spectrum of flavours, with salty, pungent, harsh, astringent, and acidic in between. And even more complex typologies have been used along history.

Fig. 2. A screenshot from the movie Ratatouille.
While Remy, a young rat with highly developed senses of taste who dreams of becoming a chef, tastes some cheese and a strawberry, variable coloured forms and lines appear on the screen to synaesthetically represent his sensory perceptions (©Walt Disney Pictures / Pixar Animation Studios 2007).

Things are made even more complex by the **synaesthetic** characterisation of taste, which involves various senses at the same time: in fact, we do not perceive food exclusively by the sense of taste, but also through the sight (which has become very important in contemporary gastronomy, where special attention is devoted to the visual presentation of food), smell (which completes and enhances the elemental capacity of taste, also allowing us to recognise inedible substances such as rotten foods even before introducing them into our mouth), touch (which allows perceiving the texture and temperature of foods), and hearing (which can affect our perception of food, especially in relation to texture). Provided such a variety of sensations, social and cultural belonging are fundamental to the way in which gustative sensitivity develops and is able to classify and describe flavours. It is in this sense that taste can be conceived as a real means of knowledge, as well as a way to come into contact with other people.

2. NOT ONLY WHAT WE EAT: COOKING TECHNIQUES, TABLE MANNERS, AND COMMENSALITY

We have seen that culture plays a crucial role in the food domain, since it determines our perceptions of edibility and taste. But it's not all about what we eat and how we perceive it. It is also about how we cook food (*cooking techniques*): if some practices, such as roasting or boiling, are very common across the world, others, such as "Hāngi" (i.e. a traditional Maori method of cooking food using heated rocks buried in a pit oven) or "Baghaar" (i.e. a technique used in Pakistani and Indian cuisine consisting in frying spices and then using the oil to flavour dishes), are unique to specific countries, regions or cultures.

Fig. 3. A group of men around a Hāngi at Te Whaiti.
Photograph taken by Albert Percy Godber in October 1930 (©Godber Collection, Alexander Turnbull Library).

And it is also about how we eat food (i.e. by using our hands, pieces of cutlery, chopsticks, or any other utensil), as well as about the rules (i.e. speaking or keeping silent, making or not making noise while eating, minutely masticating foods in the mouth or directly swallowing them, etc.) we have to respect while eating (**table manners**). Finally, it is also about the symbolic space characterising the eating experience (**commensality**), with some people conceiving the meal as a private, almost individual experience and other people rather emphasising sharing and interchanging.

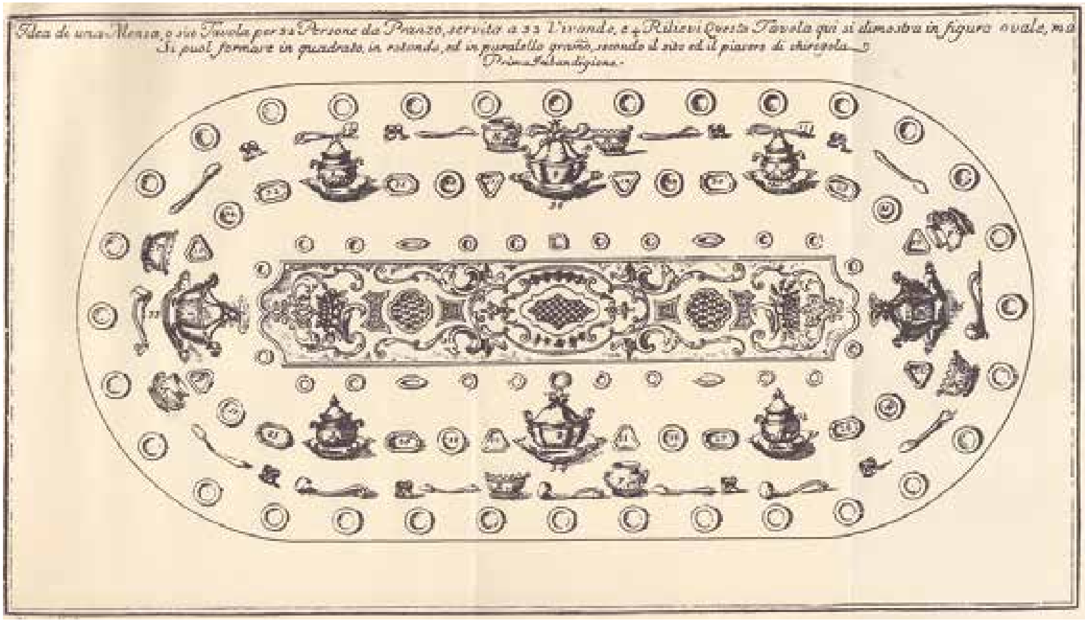

Fig. 4. An illustration from the ancient book Il cuoco galante by Vincenzo Corrado giving instructions for setting a table for 32 diners (©Vincenzo Corrado 1773).

All these aspects, which are generally referred to as **food-ways**, are minutely ruled in every culture, even in the most familiar and informal meal: a number of class, gender, economic, social and cultural aspects intervene on such dynamics, and it would be very difficult, or in any case extremely artificial, to apply the same set of rules inherent in a certain culture to another one.

3. FOOD, LANGUAGE, AND COMMUNICATION

The cultural and symbolic characterisation of the elements considered so far makes it possible to compare food to language: exactly as language, in fact, food (in all its aspects) allows us to express our values, beliefs, morals, etc. – in other words, our "cultural identity". Furthermore, it is a powerful means of communication with other people, and in this sense represents perhaps the most immediate way through which we can come into contact with other cultures.

More specifically, two major attitudes towards other "food languages" can be identified: on the one hand, human beings seem to suffer from a biological need for food variety, that is to say, an omnivorousness that drives us to adapt to environmental changes and explore a multitude of new foods and diets (**neophilia**); on the other hand, we also fear the risks associated with new foods and new food sources (**neophobia**), thus opting for prudence and resistance to change. The tension between these two opposite poles gives origin to the "**omnivore's dilemma**": humans, as omnivores, seek and explore new potential foods, but remain wary of them until these are proven safe (in a material, but also symbolic sense, as we discussed in the previous paragraphs).

Not only personal, but also historical, social and cultural aspects make people more likely to adopt either a neophilic or a neophobic attitude towards new food systems or languages. In the past, for instance, the fear for the new seemed to prevail, as effectively exemplified by the 15th and 16th century European explorers and conquerors' approach to the gastronomic universe of the so-called "New World", who found it hard to theoretically 'classify' their new experiences, and so "filtered" them through their own criteria and habits. In the anonymous *Relatione d'alcune cose della Nuova Spagna, & della gran città di Temistitan Messicò. Fatta per un gentil'huomo del Signor Fernando Cortese* (1556), for example, *maize* is presented as "a grain like a chickpea" that sows cobs "like panic-grass", while *tortillas* are described as a "kind of bread", and turkey is defined as a "big chicken like a peacock", thus persistently referring to the Mediterranean culinary tradition with which its author was familiar. Moreover, even from the practical point of view the acceptance of these new foods in the European context remained for a long time absolutely marginal, as proved by the case of potatoes: easily accepted in regions characterised by a soil ill-fitted for the cultivation of wheat or rye, the American tuber was mostly rejected or submitted to treatments aiming at integrating it into the process of bread making in France, where bread represented an unavoidable element of people's life, both on the material side (as it was the main ingredient of soups and other dishes, prevailing on meats and cold cuts) and the symbolic dimension (with particular reference to Christianity). It was only at a later stage that it was introduced as a new *cultivar* in those regions and increasingly adopted in cooking.

Things have evidently changed in today's world, where a number of migratory flows, travels and worldwide communication systems have made the encounters among different food cultures become increasingly evident and consistent, affecting (much faster than in the past) the existing culinary traditions and rapidly becoming part of them. But an easier contact does not necessarily imply acceptance or a better understanding, nor it automatically increases a neophilic attitude, as we will consider in details in the following paragraph.

4. CONTEMPORARY FOODWAYS BETWEEN GLOBALIZATION AND LOCALISATION

Whether eagerly exalted or strongly criticised, **globalization** is a factual characteristic of the contemporary world: the development of new technologies of communication and the advances in transportation have caused a process of international integration and connection, enhancing the interchange and interdependence of products and economic activities, and also of world views, ideas and other aspects of culture. These processes have increasingly affected also food, causing the crossing and overlapping of different foodways. Migrations, travels, and communications incessantly expose local food systems to global exchange. Of course, this is not a totally new thing: food exchanges and displacements have always existed, and in no other area have the interactions between the global exchange and local cultural practices been as evident as in food cultures. However, the globalization of markets has incredibly increased such exchanges and interactions, with contrasting effects as regards to the cultural dimension of food.

On the one hand, the greater availability and diversity of food choices made possible by globalized markets have enhanced a neophilic attitude toward exotic foods, broadening both culinary horizons and intercultural tolerance. Thus "ethnic food" has become a fundamental presence in Western food cultures: restaurants offering exotic food experiences are increasing in number, and in many city markets local products are increasingly complemented with spices, vegetables and other foods required for the preparation of ethnic dishes. This same phenomenon, furthermore, has progressively become popular on a wider scale, affecting large distribution chains: in North America and Europe, for example, recent decades have seen the increase of foreign foods on supermarket shelves, sometimes in sections specifically devoted to ethnic food (e.g. soy noodles, Mexican tortillas, chili sauce, spring rolls, or sushi), and sometimes even next to local and more common products (e.g. basmati rice, coconut milk, or exotic fruits). Moreover, a number of experiments in the field of the so-called "fusion cuisine" have fostered hybridization by successfully combining elements of different culinary traditions (such as in the case of the famous Tex-Mex cuisine, which is known worldwide for tastily mixing South-western United States and Mexican cuisines; or of the various adaptations of Japanese sushi that have arisen in the last decades, giving origin to hybrid plates such as the popular Peruvian-Japanese *maki acevichado*[1]).

Fig. 5. Figure 5. The maki acevichado served at Costanera 700 in Lima, Peru (©Simona Stano 2019).

1 The so-called maki acevichado combines the Japanese food *par excellence*—that is, sushi—with the most representative Peruvian food—that is, *ceviche*. Both of them are characterised by a great versatility, which has certainly favoured the

On the other hand, globalization has also resulted in the domestication of other culinary traditions, which have had to adapt to local taste and habits. As the Chinese cuisine (which has been described as one of the most remarkable examples of the globalization of food) became popular in the US, for instance, Chinese restaurants' owners had to choose between emphasising or playing down their exoticism. In most cases the second option prevailed, originating a process of domestication resulting in the creation of new dishes, such as the famous *chop suey* or the so-called "fortune cookies", which are in fact American-Chinese invented foods. The same applies to *kebab*, *falafel* and other foods of the Levantine cuisine sold in Western Europe, which have almost totally lost their ethnic characterisation and are nowadays conceived as "street" or "fast" foods by most people.

Another risk commonly associated with globalization is the homologation or homogenization of taste: critics of globalization denounce the reduction (and almost disappearance) of distinctive food tastes, cultures, and techniques, which have been overwhelmed by global products. This is the so-called process of "McDonaldization": everything in the food industry (and, at a more general level, in contemporary society) has been homogenized, from the type of food offered to its presentation and portion sizes, from the costs to the layout of the restaurants, etc. However, McDonald's itself has increasingly promoted a process of adaptation to local foodways (e.g. serving sushi in Japan, falafel sandwiches in Egypt, etc.), thus opting for "glocal" solutions. In several cases, then, the perceived danger of homologation deriving from globalization has resulted in the enhancement of local realities: specific schemes and labels for geographical indications and traditional specialties labels have been adopted internationally to protect the names of specific products and promote their unique characteristics, as linked to their origin and traditional know-how. And various forms of locavorism (such as the so-called "Zero Km phenomenon" in Italy, or the substantial preference for local farmers' markets and locally produced food in Lithuania, Bulgaria and many other countries) have arisen, inviting people to consume exclusively locally produced food, although with some criticisms.

All these elements, together with the contrasting effects in terms of food security and safety, emphasise the complexity of globalization and its effects in the food domain. From the point of view of cultural dynamics, the most important aspect to be considered, as the described examples show, is that if on the one hand globalization has broken down some cultural differences, on the other hand it has also activated processes of diversification and integration that tend to redefine the uses and meanings of food products and techniques.

origin of this "fusioned food", itself including a number of varieties and recipes.

5. FOOD AS CULTURAL HERITAGE

Provided the cultural characterisation of foodways analysed so far, it is not surprising that the production, preparation, consumption and sharing of food has long been considered a form of cultural heritage. Not only food is made of substances that form part of the so-called "natural heritage" and requires tools that can be ascribed to the "tangible heritage", but, even most importantly, food rituals, culinary techniques, dietary regimes, and many other aspects of foodways represent forms of "intangible heritage".

The UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, for instance, includes:

- The "Gastronomic meal of the French" (since 2010), conceived as a customary social practice based on conviviality, the pleasure of taste (as reflected in the setting of the table, the attention devoted to the visual composition of the plate, the structure of the meal – consisting of an aperitif, four courses and finally liqueurs –, and the pairing of food and wine) and the balance between human beings and the products of nature;
- The "Traditional Mexican Cuisine" (since 2010), defined as a cultural model encompassing farming, ritual practices, traditional culinary techniques, ancestral community customs and manners;
- The "Mediterranean Diet" (since 2013), described as a set of skills, knowledge, rituals, symbols and traditions concerning crops, harvesting, fishing, animal husbandry, conservation, processing, cooking, and particularly the sharing and consumption of food characterising the Mediterranean area;
- The Japanese "washoku" (since 2013), intended as a socio-cultural practice based on a set of skills, knowledge and traditions related to the production, processing, preparation and consumption of food, and especially associated with an essential spirit of respect for nature;
- The "Turkish Coffee" (since 2013), and especially the rich communal traditional culture surrounding its preparation and brewing techniques;
- "Oshi Palav" (since 2016), the traditional Tajiki meal and its social and cultural contexts.

As it can be easily noticed, the idea of "tradition" plays a crucial role in the definition of these practices and habits. But what is exactly a tradition? If we look at the dictionary, it is defined as "an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behaviour (such as a religious practice or a social custom)". This definition tells us that cultural continuity in social attitudes, customs, and institutions plays a crucial role in this sense, but does not clarifies how much time is required before one can properly speak of a tradition. In fact, most traditions that appear or claim to be old are often quite recent in origin and sometimes even fictitious. We should therefore more properly talk of “invented traditions”, intended as both traditions actually constructed *a posteriori* and formally instituted, and traditions emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief period but establishing themselves with great rapidity. This does not mean that there are traditions that are more “valid” or “genuine” than others, but simply that traditions (in the food domain as well as in general terms) cannot and should not be conceived as permanent essential qualities of specific physical places or people, but rather as historical and cultural outcomes of complex continuous processes of **hybridization** with other cultures (and tastes).

FOCUS 1

Edible insects: “the food of the future”?

Fig. 6. Recorded number of edible insect species. (©FAO 2013; source: Centre for Geo Information, Wageningen University, based on data compiled by Jongema, 2012).

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), around 2000 edible insect species supplement the diets of approximately 2 billion people, especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Conversely, it is only recently that entomophagy (i.e. the consumption of insects by human beings) has acquired considerable visibility in Western countries, mainly as a response to the increasing concern of **food security** and sustainability.

By 2030, in fact, it is expected that over 9 billion people will need to be fed, along with the billions of animals raised annually for food and as pets. Insects have been acclaimed as "the food of the future" because they can be found everywhere and reproduce quickly, thus easily allowing both gathering and farming. Furthermore, they have high **feed conversion rates** (i.e. they can convert 2 kg of feed into 1 kg of insect mass, while cows, for instance, require 8 kg of feed to produce 1 kg of body weight gain) and a low **environmental footprint** (i.e. reduction of greenhouse gases, water consumption and land-dependence; transformation of bio-waste, such as food and human waste, compost and animal slurry, into high-quality protein that can be used for feeding animals; etc.). Finally, they are nutritious, with high-quality protein, fat and mineral contents that are comparable with meat and fish. And according to current research, it seems that insects may pose less risk of transmitting infections to humans, livestock and wildlife in comparison with mammals and birds.

However, further research is required on the potential of insect allergies for humans, as well as on sanitation procedures ensuring **food safety**, especially on an industrial scale. Other crucial issues for investigation and development include maintaining genetic diversity to avoid colony collapse in insect farming, protecting wild insect populations from the introduction of alien and invasive species and establishing appropriate legislations regulating insects as food and feed at the international level.

Furthermore, in order to promote consumers' acceptance, new ways of integrating insects into human diets should be developed. In fact, insects can be eaten whole or ground into powder, which allows incorporating into other foods: if pioneering companies such as *Hotlix* in the US, *Jimini's* in France, or *Bush Grub* in the UK certainly share the merit of having successfully introduced crickets, mealworms and other bugs into the snack market, the insect sale has evidently improved after the appearance of start-ups and other business operators offering processed bug foods such as biscuits (*Bitty Food* in the US; *Micronutris* in France), chips (*Six Foods* in the US), meatballs (*Damhert* in Belgium), burgers (*Essento* in Switzerland), bread (*Fazer Bakery* in Finland), pasta (*Aldento* in Belgium, the Italian-managed *Bugsolutely* in Thailand), sauces (*One Hope Kitchen* in Canada) and energy bars (*Exo Protein*, *Lithic* and *Chapul* in the US; *GetSharp* in France; *Crobar, Eat Grub*, *Zoic bar* and *Bodhi* in the UK; *Sens bar* in the Czech Republic). Thanks to the possibility of grinding bugs into power and hence use them to prepare a variety of foods, these products and brands have increasingly contributed to introduce some insect species, such as grasshoppers and crickets (*Orthoptera*), beetles (*Coleoptera*) and yellow mealworms (*Tenebrio molitor*), into Western diets by adapting them to local tastes and culinary traditions. But it is not only about products: in order to successfully open the way to their insect-based foods, innovative designs and appealing campaigns mainly addressed to young foodies in search of novelties and athletic customers looking for healthy and nutritious food have been adopted, thus responding to another crucial issue highlighted by the Technical Expert Consultation on Assessing the Potential of Insects as Food and Feed in Assuring Food Security, held in Rome on 23–25 January 2012, that is, the need to improve communication and consumers' awareness on entomophagy.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON EDIBLE INSECTS?

Even though most insects are harvested in the wild, some data are available on the species that are mostly consumed worldwide. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization, the most commonly edible insects are beetles (Coleoptera, 31 %) and caterpillars (Lepidoptera, 18%), followed by bees, wasps and ants (Hymenoptera, 14%). Then we have grasshoppers, locusts and crickets (Orthoptera, 13%)—which are expected to become increasingly common, since they represent a large part of the the growing Western or Western-oriented insect market—, cicadas, leaf and plant hoppers, scale insects and true bugs (Hemiptera, 10%), termites (Isoptera, 3%), dragonflies (Odonata, 3%), flies (Diptera, 2%), and other species (5%).

Further readings:

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Anthropology of Food

Sebastiano Mannia

1. ANTHROPOLOGY OF FOOD

Food production, preparation, and consumption are all cultural acts. Through these actions, food becomes an essential element in the definition of individual and collective **identity** and one of the most effective tools for communicating and transmitting it.

Man's ability to transform nature has its consecration in the discovery of fire. Used to warm up, defend oneself, illuminate, send out signals, etc., fire has marked a decisive and enormous cultural development in human history, especially in the field of food. Claude Lévi-Strauss, founder of structuralism, whose work had a profound impact on the previous century's thinking, defined the cooking of food with fire as "the invention that made humans human". The discovery of agriculture and animal husbandry practices has also changed the destiny of mankind and is closely connected to food and nutrition.

Food is inseparably connected to life and to the ordinary and extraordinary activities of people and communities, since it is now unquestionable that it is not only used as nourishment but also as signifier. This ambivalence of food, as nourishment and sign, helps to identify, recognize and classify the gender of people, their job, their social class, their age, but also forms of power, public and private roles, festive dimensions, and the anthropology of food: therefore, it assumes a decisive role in the investigation on food production and consumption practices, on the link between certain foods and contexts, as well as in the analysis of the articulated socio-cultural universe related to food. Besides, this nourishment-sign bond becomes relevant in the study of the mediation process that gastronomy has today more than ever in the complex relationship between different cultures: a meal, its structure, its preparation and the ways in which it is consumed constitute the expression of the social relations of the culture which expresses them and these acts can communicate, classify and even discriminate. The act of eating also makes explicit the boundary between familiarity and unfamiliarity, intimacy and distance. For example, drinks are shared with strangers, acquaintances, colleagues, and family. Meals are shared instead with family members, close friends and important guests.

Therefore, food is communication: both convey information. Food is a sign, because it summarizes, communicates and transmits a situation. Like language, cooking also consists of terms (products, ingredients), grammar rules (recipes), syntactic rules (menus), rhetoric (convivial behaviours). Language and cuisine also express symbolic values because they represent a specific culture and its individual and collective identities; thus, they are a privileged tool of self-representation and intercultural communication, in their present construction and in their progression from the past. Besides, the anthropology of food maintains that social sciences research in the field of food should not be limited to the structural analysis and therefore to the only synchronous dimension of cultural/alimentary facts, but that the use of a dynamic approach which investigates the transformations of culinary practices and hence also the diachronic level, is indispensable. As a matter of fact, food and eating are modified in relation to major societal changes, such as industrialization, migration, globalization, or innovation in the fields of transports, conservation techniques, mechanization, the media, etc., essential elements in the modification of the contemporary *homo edens'* eating habits.

Foods are experienced, catalogued and possibly accepted within a food system, and they acquire an identity and a relational code of their own. Moreover, eating is a ritual and the life of individuals is interwoven with rituals based on food. Countless foods have been laden with symbolic meaning and are at the centre of myths and ritual practices, prescriptions and proscriptions. Nowadays in particular, as in the past, food and gastronomy are at the centre of individual and collective representations of people. Besides, in recent years the ability to cook has had a considerable diffusion, with the proposal of culinary events, especially on television, where educational and entertainment programs follow one another, but also in newspapers, books, and magazines. Cooking and gastronomy schools and universities have been created, and food is more or less pervasive in people's lives. In this landscape, old foods come to the attention of individuals in a new fashion and vice versa, invested with new categorizations and new values, sometimes positive, sometimes negative. Foods that were once considered healthy become dangerous now, which gives rise to food alarmism; and at the same time, in the light of new scientific discoveries, foods once considered harmful become salutary.

Food stands out in its wide anthropological dimension because it is the reflection of people, communities, societies and because it satisfies two important appetites, the physiological and the symbolic ones.

2. EVERYDAY FOOD, FESTIVE FOOD

The interest of the social sciences in food and eating-related practices develops especially when we begin to look at ritual practices in an articulate way and therefore at the distinction between everyday foods and special foods. According to Michail Bachtin, the difference between festive food and everyday food is that the first is for everyone, for the community, it is the food of squandering, of abundance; ferial food instead represents daily life, loneliness. Whether to participate or not in a banquet is the first sign of inclusion and belonging to a group, also because at the table we define roles and relationships between the diners. If the daily food is meant essentially to nourish, the festive food serves to create social relationships, to renew identity and belonging. While daily meals are eaten at home by family members or in staff canteens, festive food represents an opportunity for meeting and communication, it is at the centre of sharing and social solidarity. A feast celebration, affirmation of a special moment, turns everyday life and ordinariness upside down through food. Besides, everyday food follows space and time rules that are not as complex as the ones implied in festive food. The ordinary meal usually comprises one single course. On the other hand, the festive meal is structured according to a different time-space dimension which is articulated, extended, complex and which implies the consumption of several, often sophisticated, courses. In poor societies, the feast and its food interrupt daily food deprivation. Especially in traditional cultures, the demarcation between daily food and festive food was evident, since the preparation and consumption of certain foods were connected to specific holy days.

Altars laid in honour of the saints, tables full of food in suffrage of the dead, food offered and food received, highlight the extraordinary nature of food on holidays, highlighting the "ritual richness". Each festival has its own food, its own eating models, its own peculiar ceremonial systems that regulate the production and consumption of specific dishes. If on the one hand food is an instrument of the feast, on the other, the feast celebrates food and its abundance. Thus, we can say that festive foods foster new alliances, propitiate future well-being, dissolve the debt with the saint or the Madonna for a grace received. Those specific foods, prepared and consumed on that particular occasion ritual, become an essential sign of that feast, they are a constitutive and functional element of the feast. Those foods *are* that feast.

As mentioned above, the consumption of food as a nutritional act prevails in the weekday dimension, while in the festive one the communicative connotation becomes manifest. Two functions: eating and meaning. Food therefore responds to primary and elementary needs, and has economic and symbolic value. Special foods are still packaged today in suffrage of the dead, which emphasizes the original function of food offerings to the souls of missing relatives. The story of the human and vegetable creation, dissolution, and regeneration was expressed in the funeral ceremonies of the past through the contiguity of laughter and weeping, lamentations and feasts. The latter were often ritually consumed on the graves of dead relatives: from Ecuadorian *las guagas de pan*, an anthropomorphic wheat bread with jam, chocolate, milk, etc., to the Sicilian *pupi di zucchero*, coloured sugar statues representing paladins or male or female figures from cartoons, from the *soul cake* (spiced biscuits) prepared in honour of the souls of the dead in Ireland and the United Kingdom, to the Guatemalan *fiambre*, a savoury spicy dish that can be composed of more than 50 ingredients including different types of meat, sausages, cold cuts, vegetables and spices.

Christmas and New Year are holidays that revolve around food abundance and excesses, especially today. For example, in Italy, dishes, cakes, special breads, including tortellini, lasagne, soups, capons, pandoro, panettone, etc. are prepared and consumed to denote the festive convivial moment. English Christmas, on the other hand, is intimately linked to the *Christmas Pudding*, a dessert that goes well with brandy or rum, while French Christmas is characterized by the consumption of *buche de Noel* and *galette de rois*.

Carnival is another time of excess. In relation to specific chronotopes established by tradition, the carnival is lived as a time of subversion of rules, of gender, status, skills, and role reversals; it is the time of food excesses, misbehaviour, sexual licentiousness, etc. Carnival is the time of pork, cured meats, sausages, cheese, omelettes and sweets, including *castagnole*, *frittole*, *zeppole*, *chiacchiere*, more or less abundant depending on economic availability; all these are offered to masked people and to those who renew the community's carnival rites.

Easter and the ceremonies of the Holy Week are the best example of the dialectic between myth and rite. The death and rebirth of Christ clearly subsume the death and rebirth of nature. The Easter breads and cakes emphasize well the ancient roots of the festivity and its meanings. But Easter also includes eggs, meats, cheese, vegetables, wine, spirits and drinks that, for example, the confraternities eat and drink during the sacred representations.

The food consumed together, donated, redistributed, displayed, essentially represents the indispensable core around which the ceremonial actions develop. In this perspective, food begging and ritual accumulation reaffirm the mechanism of the social production of abundance, the accumulation of wealth to be consumed together. Food excess and wealth are intimately linked to life and rebirth, to the continuity of the group, to community solidarity, to collective sharing, which are the basis of the food gifts exchange practiced during festivals.

3. RELIGIOUS PRESCRIPTIONS AND RELIGIOUS PROSCRIPTIONS

The cultural dimension of food is expressed, in each society, with a set of rules that help to define on the one hand permitted and prohibited foods, and on the other hand, the food diversity of the *homo edens*. These aspects are the result of historical, political, economic, environmental, and religious forms of conditioning that have affected the different populations. In particular, the religious sphere has influenced in a more or less decisive way the eating habits of many cultures, through the establishment of rules which have regulated the eating habits of the faithful, that is, the prohibition to eat certain foods and in several cases also the preparation of the same foods and their ritual use. The contrast between permitted and prohibited foods is also reflected on the time of consumption, i.e. foods permitted at a given time may become prohibited at another time. In this direction, regulated food has a positive influence on community cohesion and solidarity, contributing to the definition of individual and collective identities and to the renewal of collective memory.

Anthropologists have been dealing with prohibited and allowed foods in the religious sphere for some time. The Symbolist school of Mary Douglas, for example, has investigated the symbolic meaning of culinary prohibitions; Marvin Harris and the materialists, on the other hand, have focused on the environmental characteristics of the areas where such prohibitions apply, tracing their origin in a well-pondered evaluation of costs and benefits.

If the meat of cattle and pigs is used in several ways in the cuisine of many cultures, for the Hindus cows are sacred because they embody the gods and consequently slaughter and consumption are prohibited both by religious practice and by the Indian regulatory system; at the same time, pigs are considered impure by the Muslim faithful who therefore abstain from eating pork. With regard to these bans, materialists argue that the reasons must be sought in the socio-economic conditions that affected the cultures in question in the past. Only later did religion orient and define the food practice. In the case of Hinduism, at a certain point, the need to protect cattle must have been generated by the fact that it was at the centre of ritual sacrifices and collective feasts of the Veda populations, and so cows were in danger of extinction. The Hindus, however, limit the consumption of meat so as not to harm the animals, preferring a vegetarian or vegan eating style. In the case of the Muslim ban on pork consumption, such a ban would have been necessary to ensure the protection of natural habitats and cultural heritage in the Middle East and only later this became a sacred rule corroborated by religious belief.

More generally, the Muslim food culture of the faithful is regulated by the Koran. These rules define the permitted foods, *halal*, and the forbidden ones, *haram*. In addition to pork, it is forbidden to eat meat for which the name of God has not been invoked, animals with canine teeth, reptiles, amphibians, birds of prey, insects. The consumption of alcoholic beverages is also prohibited. On the other hand, the consumption of fruit and seeds, of aquatic species with scales fished still alive, animals with a cloven hoof, such as cattle, sheep and goats, camelids, of wild species such as gazelles and deer, feathered fowls without claws such as chicken and turkey is allowed.

The Jewish religion also divides food into two categories, permitted and prohibited – *kashèr* or *kosher* vs *ṭaref*. Eating customs provide for the consumption of ruminants and animals with cloven hoof (with the exception of pigs, prohibited in the Leviticus), fowls (except birds of prey and nocturnal birds), aquatic species with fins and scales. All animals, except fish, must be slaughtered according to the *shechitàh*, that is in a quick, respectful and compassionate way and with the aim of draining blood quickly. It is not allowed to consume meat and dairy products in the same meal, while alcoholic beverages are allowed even if, for example, as in the case of wine, the stages of production must take place according to the Jewish norm, from the pressing of the grapes to the final consumption.

In Christianity there are no food prohibitions; there is no regulation that prohibits the consumption of food or drinks. Instead, periods of abstinence and fasting are indicated, that is the requirement to avoid eating meat at certain times of the year, such as Good Friday, or during Lent.

The monotheistic religions mentioned above, specifically Islam, Judaism and Christianity, are united by the consumption of lamb meat. The most important religious feasts, the Jewish Pesah, the Christian Easter and the feast of the Islamic mutton (Id al-Adha), in fact, provide for the consumption of sheep meat and the lamb is the symbol of these feasts.

Buddhism does not provide for prohibitions but has food recommendations. The consumption of meat is not prohibited, but abstention from its consumption is considered a value because it implies the salvation of animals from slaughter. Buddhists who opt for a different diet from that of vegetarians, and therefore occasionally put meat on their menu, should not participate in the sacrifice of animals.

On the basis of what we have just said, one should think of the importance that the consumption of certain foods assumes in the current historical period characterized by migration phenomena, and therefore the consumption of a certain dish connected to a specific country, and how it actively participates in the process of affirming the individual and collective identity of a given culture.

4. TASTE AND AVERSION

Taste is relative. Good and bad are not absolute categories, universal, and are not given in nature. Taste and aversion are the result of a long process of additions, cuts, unions and separations of historical, social, cultural, economic, and religious nature. And they are the result of space and time variables. Therefore, taste is not a rigorously fixed reference, but it represents a relative behaviour that is transformed. It is possible to identify two spheres of taste: the first is as *taste tout court*, that is, a subjective perception and experience of the palate without historical and cultural references; the second is *taste as knowledge*. In this case, food is evaluated and classified. Eating becomes a thought and not mere taste. In this perspective, taste becomes a collective communicating dimension, a cultural experience elaborated over time and mediated by many variables.

The aversion for certain foods and smells, therefore, is not a natural fact but a cultural categorization. Taste belongs to the order of culture that orients us towards what is good, what we like, and dissuades us from what is disgusting and repulsive. For the Chinese, dog is a delicacy, while in Europe it has become man's best friend. In Italy and France, mushrooms are appreciated and used in various ways in national cuisines, while for northern European societies they were until recently pet food. Mediterranean cuisine is closely linked to the great monotheistic religions and, as we have seen, if for many individuals pork is impure and strictly prohibited, for others pork and its by-products are absolutely essential. Another recurrent example is horse meat: for the English, the consumption of horsemeat is an abomination, just as the Scandinavian peoples considered murderers those who killed a horse. For many Italians, and not only, instead, a horse steak marinated with garlic and parsley is a sought-after specialty.

What you like and consume in a given historical period, can vary in another era, but especially what you consider a delicacy in one place, can be classified as disgusting in another. And, just think of the cheese with worms of Sardinia, *su casu marzu* (a cheese that is obtained as a result of the laying of eggs by the cheese fly, from which are born the larvae that feed on the cheese itself proliferating inside), sought after and particularly appreciated on the island, or Roman style tripe, which will hardly find the consent of those who have never tasted it. Thai bat soup will not arouse the enthusiasm of many Europeans, as well as fried scorpions prepared in China, considered a delicacy, or mice cooked in some areas of Asia. Striving to swallow a course of guinea-pig or monkey is quite a complicated undertaking for those accustomed to eating pasta and beef or lamb meat. Grasshoppers, earthworms, spiders, etc., variously prepared depending on who prepares them, are the basis of the menus of many populations, but will hardly arouse the enthusiasm of the palates accustomed to the French *foie gras* or the German *thüringer rostbratwurst*. In any case, there are also those who are constantly looking for "extreme foods". Anthropologist Marino Niola has argued that "with the crocodile skewer and zebu tartar cuisine moves to the zoo. This pushed exoticism seems to be the last frontier of globish catering, always looking for new sensorial experiences. Often thrilling, and not necessarily pleasurable. So the *fassone* gives way to the python, the free-range chicken to the lion rampant, the sauté rabbit to fried batter kangaroo. The menus of the trendiest restaurants on the planet now resemble a fantastic zoology manual worthy of Jorge Luis Borges' surrealist imagination".

All these foods are delicious to some, disgusting to others. The exhibition at the Disgusting Food Museum in Malmö, Sweden, is based on this axiom. It is a museum in which 80 of the world's most disgusting foods are "exhibited". The museum offers visitors a sensory experience, as they can choose to smell and enjoy some of these foods. For example, Swedish *surströmming*, herring fermented in jars that generate a strong smell and taste between putrid and rancid, or Icelandic *hakarl*, a preparation that includes the burying of shark meat for several months until it rots; it has a strong smell of ammonia and its consumption is accompanied by *brennevin*, a local brandy, or even the above mentioned Sardinian *casu marzu*.

Even the vegetarian dimension is unrelated to nutritional issues and is imbued instead with cultural choices and constructions. The refusal to eat meat is a complex reason for those who are born omnivorous. It is the freedom to choose what to eat, refraining from the consumption of living beings, that guides the diets of vegetarians and vegans. And it is an ancient complex, varied cultural vision, because meat is either associated with a bloody act, the suffering of the animal, or to its harmfulness to human metabolism. McDonald's adjusted their menus to these ideas and in 2012, in India, they opened the first vegetarian fast food.

Each culture, therefore, categorizes according to its own parameters the beautiful and the ugly, just and unjust, good and bad. Each culture has a food code that has defined and admitted as good certain foods, while categorizing others as undesirable. Food is precisely a cultural trait, and the propensity for some foods and the refusal for others, even though they are edible, has a cultural origin.

5. FOOD AND FOOD PRACTICES BETWEEN LOCAL AND GLOBAL

The contemporary era is characterized by the spontaneous or induced mobility of individuals and, therefore, by multicultural contexts in continuous change. In this scenario, food plays a fundamental role in the construction of individual and collective identities, since it holds ethical, cultural, symbolic, religious, etc. values. Food choices are linked to social self-identification practices, and so every food must be recognized, accepted and included through a process of authentication that will make it autochthonous.

The relationship between "local" and "global" is one of the most important issues in the contemporary social sciences debate. In the field of food and eating, in order to be perceived as local, a dish or an ingredient must become part of exchange networks that allow to enter a confrontation with the other, the different, thus acquiring its own identity built in the confrontation. Moreover, the historical processes of mutation that inevitably influence the general food sphere must be considered for every food or culinary tradition.

We often tend to believe that certain food practices and certain foods are ancient, and therefore have a great tradition, underestimating the role that technology plays with changes in the preparation of pasta, cheese, wine, etc. which improve their quality. Every cultural trait, even as concerns food and eating, is the result of transformations: there are foods that have been preserved, reshaped and handed down over time, such as bread, while others have definitively come out of specific diets, for example the Roman *garum*; still others are overshadowed, just think of honey, often replaced by sugar. Finally, the foods which have been introduced more recently are readapted and absorbed by the local cuisine. Think of cocoa, originally from Central and South American countries: for about 500 years it has been variously used in all food systems in the world; or corn, which arrived in Europe after the discovery of the Americas and from which we now obtain soups, flours, breads, etc. The same foods symbols of "Italianity", pasta with tomato sauce and pizza, have a young history, just over two centuries; more generally, without the "American" tomatoes, the renowned Mediterranean cuisine would be quite different.

Fernand Braudel argued that "cultivated plants do not stop travelling and revolutionizing the lives of men". The Mediterranean, for example, is a crossroads where ancient, native foods (wheat, vine, olive) are mixed with "foreign" foods, which have become an effective and constitutive part of the food scene in this area. For these reasons, talking about local food is rather relative. Food travels, arrives from some places and leaves for others, often as a result of epoch-making historical events similar to today's globalization. Think of the impact of the Arab culture on the Western Mediterranean countries food systems. We are talking about a decisive agricultural and eating innovation: sugar, rice, citrus fruits, aubergines and especially dried pasta are foods that have revolutionized the local food systems.

The Mediterranean and, more generally, Europe, therefore, represent places where local and global have coexisted for a long time; spaces in which cultures, beliefs, lifestyles, even in the kitchen, hybridize. Today's gastronomy is the result of mixtures and loans, of contaminations and migrations. In addition to cocoa, corn and tomatoes, America is the original home to prickly pears, potatoes, peppers, chili peppers, some varieties of pumpkins and beans, avocado and pineapple. Many of these foods were not immediately accepted: potatoes, for example, were considered animal feed stuffs. Only in the 18th century did these foods become essential in the various **regional cuisines**. Just consider the preparations that are still made in northern Italy based on polenta and cornmeal, or the multitude of dishes that involve the use of potatoes in most European countries.

Even regional cuisines have nothing archaic about them. They are the product of encounters between local and global elements, between popular cuisines and the fashions of the moment, and became established between the Seventeenth and Nineteenth centuries. Certainly, they propose traditional preparations, many of which date back to the Middle Ages, such as savoury pies or chickpea gruel, as well as much older foods, such as oil, wine, bread and meat, which are daily used. Even exotic foods and spices, in the past, were a global product because they arrived on the tables of wealthy people, homologating food tastes in different areas of the world. Many of the products that today are invested with **typicality** and identity, some recognizable by the PDO, PGI, TSG, etc. labels, which express the *terroir* of a specific area, are imported, have undergone a sometimes conflicting process of recognition and acceptance. Today's consumers, especially a certain group of consumers, look for local food at the expense of global preparations. The first is a symbol of food excellence, a limited product, therefore precious and expensive. The others are homologous mass-produced goods and with more accessible prices for all. In the first case, craftsmanship, traditionality, etc. are certified, guaranteed and become the categories by which the product is identified; in the second case, they are undifferentiated industrial products.

The products covered by the PDO, PGI, TSG, etc. lables are standardized and, therefore, institutionalized. They are formalized identity and commercial goods that, through a specific recognized and accepted regulation, subsume a whole set of characteristics that places them in opposite and contrasting areas. These are local productions which are codified by supra-local rules, identifying the product by elevating its typicality and at the same time homologating it. It is a good that must be transformed in order to be preserved, a different and therefore precious product but whose preservation reduces diversity, a product that is the result of local know-how harnessed without "official" global knowledge, a product that is geographically identifiable but integrated into the world market rules. When you want to affirm the typical over the global, the first is masked by the dynamics of the second. Even the local is global.

It is in particular the eating styles that change rapidly and that are influenced by the encounter/confrontation between local and global. Among the globalized food symbols, we certainly find McDonald's with restaurants scattered all over the world: thanks to their flexibility they have managed to impose a food model. In India, for example, the fast food philosophy has adapted to religious prescriptions that forbid the consumption of beef and beef products; in France, their menus offer *salade niçoise*, and in Greece salad with feta. In Israel, Big Mac is eaten without cheese, in compliance with *kosher* rules that require the separation of meat and dairy products. The McDonald model is opposed by the *Slow Food* movement, which places slowness and therefore taste and food digestibility at the basis of its eating style; the brand is in fact represented by a snail. Between McDonald's globalized diet and local eating styles, we find "**glocal**", or hybrid, models of food consumption.

The Italian cuisine is probably the one that best highlights the ambivalence of the contemporary eating system. Industrialisation and technology have certainly helped and embellished traditional culinary practices and knowledge. Besides, while in the last sixty years the food taste of Italians has in many cases been uniform (think of certain dishes like pasta or certain desserts like panettone and pandoro), in recent decades particular attention has been paid to the proposal of local culinary traditions.

Basically, local and global cuisine coexist, interface and complement each other. With globalization, diversities do not disappear, but, as Massimo Montanari states, if anything, they are accentuated, investing food identities with new senses and functions. These identities, in turn, take specific forms that dialogue with each other. Montanari also argues that there is no contradiction between eating at McDonalds and then having homemade tagliatelle. Two different meals in two different places and moments, only apparently in opposition, expressing two of the various identities that define us.

FOCUS 1

Mediterranean Diet

The expression "Mediterranean diet" appeared for the first time in 1975 in the book *How to Eat Well and Stay Well. The Mediterranean Way* by Ancel Keys and Margaret Haney. The two American scientists arrived in Italy in the fifties to study the difference between the high percentage of US patients suffering with cardiovascular diseases and the low percentage of individuals affected by the same diseases in Naples. The discrepant element between Americans and Neapolitans was the cholesterol rate, the result of a different eating style: in Italy the diet was based on "Mediterranean eating". In 1957, aided by a whole team of doctors, the Keys started a 35-year-long study led in the United States, Italy, Greece, Japan, Finland, Yugoslavia, Holland, aimed at analyzing the relationship between health and lifestyle. At the same time, since the early sixties, the couple began

to assiduously visit the Cilento and got convinced that the lifestyle of local inhabitants concealed the food and eating system they had been long looking for. The name "Mediterranean diet" was born to define this lifestyle, that is a diet based on the use of seasonal products used in several ways, in opposition to the American eating model.
This extraordinary diversity, the Mediterranean diet, was declared UNESCO World Heritage on 16 November 2010. The super-local body recognized a model that makes traditional, classic and contemporary cuisine dialogue; a container of practices, knowledge, values and specificities that also enhance social cohesion and conviviality.
The Mediterranean diet is based on the universal pyramid of the Mediterranean diet which contains the foods that it is preferable to consume and the behaviors that the consumer should observe. These foods are also recommended by the World Health Organization, namely: eat more fruit, vegetables, and cereals; eat fish and shellfish frequently, cheese and eggs a little less frequently, and consume sausages, meat and sweets more rarely. As several scientific studies currently maintain, the Mediterranean diet does not only consist of food, but also of virtuous behaviours, a dietary lifestyle that, as the anthropologist Elisabetta Moro has stated, condenses: 1) eating together, that is sharing food as a ritual moment and a moment of social cohesion; 2) cooking together, with a view to safeguarding food heritage; 3) teaching food and eating culture; 4) promoting physical activity; 5) making the tradition and therefore the gastronomic history of the Mediterranean known; 6) seasonality, that is the use of fresh products that respect the environment; 7) zero waste, that is no unnecessary food waste.

FOCUS 2

"Pasta, Pizza and Mandolin"

Pasta and pizza are the symbol of Italian food and Italian eating. In the world, Italians have long been called "macaroni" and "pasta, pizza and mandolins" is one of the most inflated stereotypes to immediately identify the *Belpaese*. Pasta and pizza have become global foods and symbols. As for the first, according to some it was invented by the Chinese, others attribute its origin to the Arabs of Sicily and Andalusia. In any case, the production and distribution of pasta in recent centuries is certainly Italian. Until the Seventeenth century, as a matter of fact, the history of pasta was closely related to the meetings of cultures and civilizations that have crossed the Mediterranean; since the Eighteenth century, when pasta manufacture was born, this food has been inextricably linked to Campania and Liguria. The definitive consecration of pasta took place when it began to be served with tomato sauce and when, between the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries, Italian emigrants helped to spread it all over the world. Born among poorer social classes, pasta is now divided between street cooking and haute cuisine. A multitasking product that adapts to an infinite variety of seasonings and has been reinvented in all regions: *mezze penne al pomodoro*, *spaghetti cacio e pepe*, *anelletti al forno*, *timballi di pasta*, *spaghetti alla carbonara*, *linguine all'amatriciana*, *cappelletti in brodo*, *tortellini al ragù*, *penne strascicate*, *tagliolini al tartufo*; and more: *fusilli*, *gnocchetti*, *tortiglioni*, *vermicelli*, *conchigliette*, *midolline*, *risoni*, etc. Pasta has originated many cultures and many food traditions, has colonized world cuisines, has become one of the most important symbols of the Mediterranean diet.

Pizza is also a banner of gastronomic Italy that has become a planet food-symbol. Since the Eighteenth century, pizza, popular food par excellence, has embarked on a progressive internationalization that has brought it from the streets of Naples to bakeries around the world. According to food historians, today's pizza is an evolution of the *mense*, that is wheat flat breads attested in the classical period and used to rest food on them. Of course, pizza belongs to the family of *focaccia*, sister for example of the Hispanic *tortilla* and the Arab *pita*.

Like pasta, which is part of the Mediterranean diet and therefore recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity, pizza, or rather the art, tradition, and culture of Neapolitan *pizzaiuoli* has also been made a patrimony by the United Nations Organization, sanctioning and institutionalizing the universality of the local-global food par excellence.

What Does "Typical" Mean?

The Rise of Traditional Foods and Place-Based Labels

Davide Puca

1. THE EMERGENCE OF TYPICAL AND TRADITIONAL FOOD PRODUCTS

Over recent years, it has become common to find definitions such as 'typical', 'traditional', 'locally sourced' either on food bought at the supermarket or when reading a restaurant menu. What do these terms refer too? What are typical foods and why are consumers interested in them?

In general terms, a food product is defined 'typical' when it is characteristic, with a strong connection to the geographic area it comes from. Its unique nature can depend on various elements, such as particular organoleptic qualities connected to the particular climate of the area of production, or its use of artisanal processes passed down from generation to generation.

The thousands of different cheeses that exist in Europe are an example of typical products, often made using cheese-making and aging techniques shared by local communities. The unique characteristics of these foods – such as their aromas, flavours and consistency – arise from the work carried out over centuries to combine a number of different factors through craftsmanship: factors such as the climate and geography of the area, the availability of natural resources, the local flora and fauna, food preferences influenced by tastes, religion and local culture.

Today, following a long period of industrial development that has essentially homogenised the food on offer, the unique qualities of typical food products and their specific provenance are being rediscovered and re-evaluated by consumers.

However, as we will see in this chapter, what makes a food product typical or traditional is a question that is not free from controversy, and is open to various interpretations dependent on the various designations and the discourses that accompany them.

2. AN INCREASINGLY 'GLOCALISED' WORLD

Recent interest in the origin and identity of food products cannot be separated from certain economic, social and cultural features of our time. In fact, we could say that food is a good indictor by which to understand a number of important changes taking place in the contemporary world.

With the globalisation of markets and the explosion of commercial exchanges between different countries and continents, particularly in the second half of the 1900s, products that were unknown up until a few decades ago have, given the ease with which they can now be found, become a common part of our daily lives – and our eating habits. Take the fruit and vegetables that arrive from distant countries. On the one hand, inter-continental transport has made the consumption of exotic fruits commonplace, whilst on the other, supplies from the southern hemisphere mean we have access to all varieties of fresh fruit and vegetables regardless of the season. Never before have we had access to such a choice, and never has food been as 'de-localised' as it is today, separated from the geographical environment and climate conditions with which it was originally associated.

At the same time, the expansion of food markets has allowed European producers to promote and export quality foods that were once purely for local consumers. This is easier between members of the European Union thanks to the common market, but it is equally possible with countries outside the Union, with whom commercial agreements have been reached.

This cultural and commercial exchange with distant places is causing contrasting reactions in western societies. The availability of 'ethnic' and 'exotic' foods certainly encourages curiosity in the new, allowing us to stand in the explorer's shoes each and every day. We can choose to immerse ourselves in different cultures, eating sushi, kebabs, couscous and all sorts of things, eating in foreign restaurants or trying out new ways of cooking in our own homes. The importation, at lower prices, of products that are already produced in our countries favours the consumer, allowing them to access goods that were once considered a luxury.

However, the simultaneous presence of local and foreign goods on the shop shelves stimulates in us a need for clarity. We feel disoriented by so much diversity. Furthermore, the numerous food scams uncovered over recent decades have demonstrated that we are not always able to fully determine the provenance of the materials that we buy, or their quality. A few years ago the substitution of beef with horsemeat in ready meals, such as frozen lasagnes, was discovered. The scandal, which exploded in Europe, bought to light not only widespread fraud, but an interminable and unknown supply chain: before entering the unsuspecting consumer's home, the meat in question had travelled thousands and thousands of kilometres through numerous countries, taking months to travel.

As if that were not enough, the importation of low cost products from economically-disadvantaged countries has placed many western producers in the agribusiness sector at risk. These producers, having to bear the highest production costs and most strict environmental, hygienic and qualitative standards have been significantly damaged by foreign competition with its unfair conditions, and by labelling systems that, very often, shed no light on the origin or various qualities of the goods in question.

Food globalisation and the consequent lengthening of supply chains has broadened our awareness and opportunities, whilst simultaneously making us more demanding when it comes to transparency regarding the geographical origin, sustainability and quality of the foods we put on our table.

To sum up, we can say that globalisation, first and foremost, poses an issue of identity: if what we are is expressed by what we eat, in an increasingly globalised world there is a growing need to reassert local food culture and, with this, our sense of belonging to a community.

In this sense, it is clear how we can only talk about local food in relation to the global expansion that has marked our economy and culture over recent decades. The tension between this expansion and the globalisation of goods and flavours and, as we have seen, the subsequent re-assertion of local values and products, has led to the creation of a neologism: 'glocalisation' (with its adjective, 'glocal'). As we can easily tell, the word comes from a fusion between two opposite ideas: 'globalisation' and 'localisation'.

3. EUROPEAN QUALITY SCHEMES

What are the consequences of this apparently contradictory phenomenon of the globalisation and localisation of the food market?

At an institutional level, the demand for transparency when it comes to the quality and origin of foods on the market, and the protection of local food and wine delicacies, has, over recent decades, led to the development of complex regulations. New systems for the protection of locally produced foods, defending the interests of both producers and consumers, were first instituted nationally by certain European countries, and later by the European Union using two tools for the common organisation of the food sector: the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy) and the CMO (Common Market Organisation).

Since 1992 in particular, the European Union has proposed new standards for certifying, protecting and promoting typical and traditional food production by all member states: these are the PDO, PGI and TSG schemes.

Last updated in 2012 (EU regulation 1151/2012), the 'geographic indications' system saw the harmonisation of those regulations previously developed autonomously by certain member states– France and Italy in particular – who were already using similar logos in order to protect product food quality.

The main objective of this regulatory system is to protect European food products from fraud or imitation, and to promote their unique nature, permanently binding the food's identity to its area of origin and its original characteristics. In this way, the system of protections adopted by European countries combines the two concepts of 'typical' and 'traditional'. On the one hand, regulated food products can be traced back to a geographic area of origin, a condition for the use of a particular denomination, whilst on the other, the regulations prove an historic connection between that kind of food and the geographic area, preserving its production methods for the present and the future.

As we will see, the three acronyms, often welcomed onto the packaging of the food we buy, stand for:

- Protected Designation of Origin (PDO)
- Protected Geographic Indication (PGI)
- Traditional Speciality Guaranteed (TSG)

Fig. 1. PDO, PGI and TSG Labels. Labels on typical and traditional food products certified by the European Union always carry, alongside the full name in clear view (for example, 'Kalamata olive oil'), one of the three coloured logos. The PDO label is easily recognised by its red colour, the PGI and TSG labels are both blue and yellow with differences in the illustration they carry.

3.1 WHAT ADVANTAGES DO THE EU LABELS BRING?

The PDO, PGI and TSG schemes link the use of a food designation (such as 'Munich beer' or 'Grana Padano') to precise criteria stipulating production and geographic origin, established through regulations known as 'production disciplinaries'. In this way, the product's name is conditioned by the fulfilment of regulations and passing specific tests.

When they work, the PDO, PGI and TSG schemes constitute systems of quality certification. Producers are granted the use of a particular name on their food labels that correlates to a label of quality (PDO, PGI and TSG), provided they respect specific rules governing production.

There are many advantages to these labels, both for producers and the consumer. The certainty that precise rules have been respected, ensured by the presence of one of these labels, is a guarantee for producers, because it avoids forms of unfair competition by other competing businesses and protects the brand's (the product's) good reputation. At the same time, by buying certified products, consumers can rely on quality control and the origin of raw materials, and choose according to consistent, guaranteed standards.

In other words, quality scheme labels play an important intermediary role, resolving the problem of a lack of direct communication between producers and consumers.

3.2 HOW ARE TYPICAL AND TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS REGISTERED?

Food producers, organised into consortia or associations, apply to register their own food speciality with the designated authorities of the member state (usually the Ministry for Agriculture). In this application, the applicant aims to demonstrate the connection between the food product and its geographical origin, providing evidence that demonstrates this connection and its historical standing.

Once the request has been considered and its viability established, it is the member state that forwards it to the European Union, which has just a few months (6 months for alcohol, 12 for all other products) to evaluate the request and decide whether or not to proceed to registration.

For a few years now it has also been possible for non-European producers to ask to register and certify their own **typical** and **traditional food** products. Once registration has been obtained, even non-member states can use the logos on their own food labels, meeting the standards and checks established by EU regulations.

3.3 PDO, PGI AND TSG: AN OVERVIEW

To date there are more than 3,300 **typical** and **traditional** products in the EU, and this number is constantly growing. Almost half of these are used for wines, whilst the rest are used by various food products (in particular fruit and vegetables, cereals, cheeses and cured meats), beers and liquors.

The member states that have embraced the scheme most wholeheartedly are those on the Mediterranean: Italy is the member state with the largest number of registered products (more than 800), followed closely by France (more than 700), Spain (more than 300) and Greece (more than 200).

Before we go on it is worth asking ourselves: what do the different labels mean and what is the difference between them?

As we see from this quality pyramid, different kinds of rules are applied depending on the kind of scheme adopted. It could be said that, as we move up the pyramid, the typical aspects associated with the product and recognised by each label intensify. Let's look at each one separately.

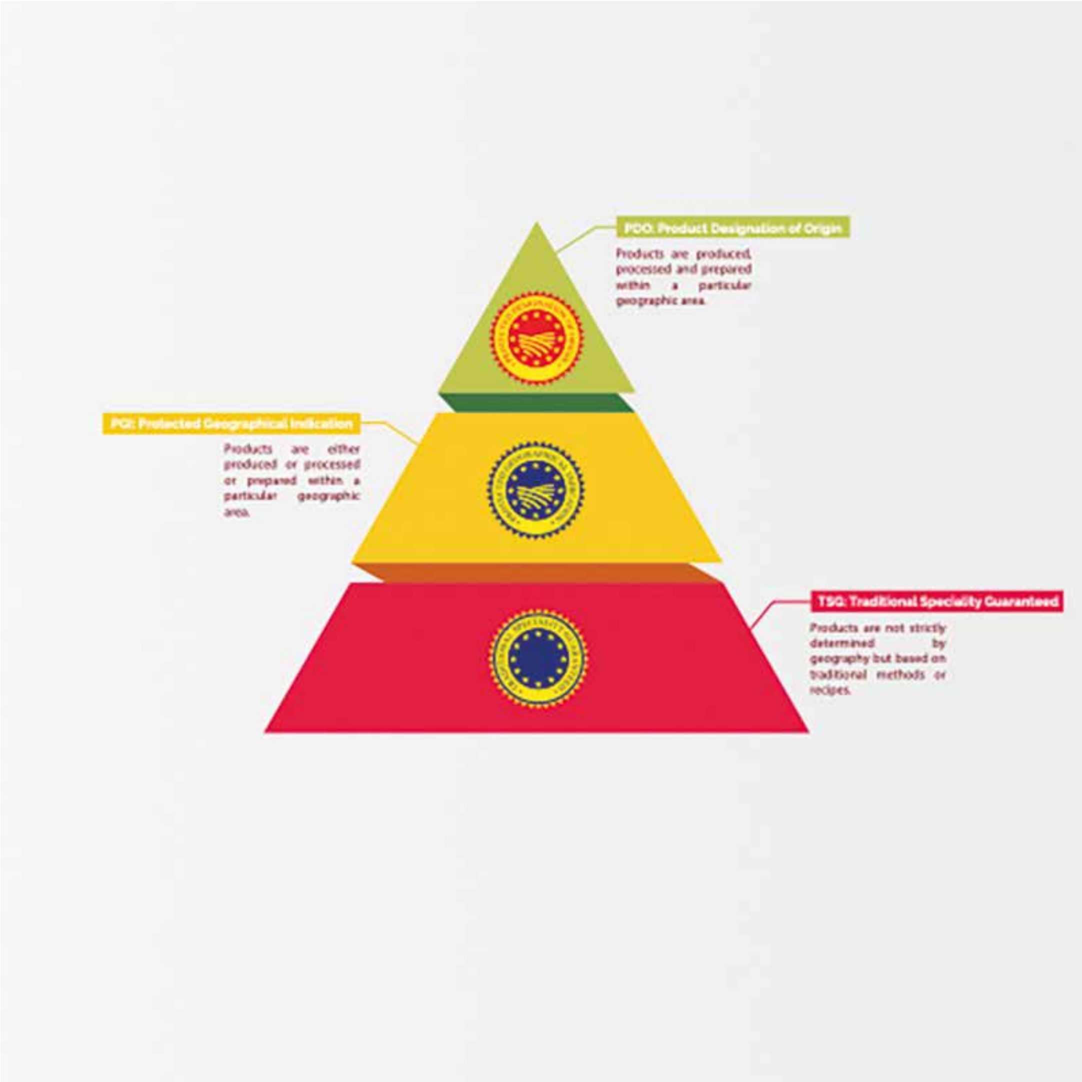


Fig. 2. The Quality Pyramid'.
In the image we find a synthesis of the principles that characterise each quality scheme. The PDO scheme, at the top of the pyramid, guarantees the consumer that the food product has the strongest possible connection to its area of origin. The PGI scheme ensures that at least one of the phases in the production chain can be traced back to the indicated geographic area. The TSG scheme, rather than protecting typical aspects of the product's geographic origin, protects the continued use of the product's preparation methods over time.

3.3.1. PDO: PROTECTED DENOMINATION OF ORIGIN

Products with the PDO label are those with the strongest connection to their area of production. In order for a product to use this label, it needs to be produced, processed and prepared in the geographic area defined by the denomination. This means that the entire production chain, from the cultivation of raw materials to packaging, must take place in an area indicated in the regulation governing the PDO product.

The inimitable qualities of these products can be directly traced back to the geographical area of provenance, and not only in a purely physical sense. The physical environment not only refers to the specific factors affecting climate and geography, but also human ones, such as the know-how passed between generations, or the historical and cultural aspects that have made the development of a particular method possible. Just think of all those food products born from the integration of different cultures at a particular time in history, or foods that have sprung up around religious festivals and particular rituals.

One example can be found in the thousands of PDO wines produced in Europe using 'autochthonous' grapes. Their unique characteristics are the result of centuries spent adapting the genetic traits of the grape, through trial and error and crossbreeding, to the area's specific climate, to local tastes and the commercial demands that have followed over the passing of the centuries. In this sense, not even genetics can be separated from the mark humankind leaves on the environment around them. The institution PDO scheme connects producers to the use of grape varieties and **traditional** production techniques in order for them to be able to use a specific denomination of origin.

3.3.2. PGI: Protected Geographical Indication

The PGI label is given to those foods that can be identified with a geographic area of origin because of a particular quality or characteristic of the finished product.

In order to achieve PGI status it is necessary for at least one phase in the production, processing and preparation of the product to take place in the area of origin indicated in its name.

Unlike the more restrictive PDO status, the PGI quality scheme is generally more relaxed about the origin of the raw materials used in production. Many PGI products allow the use of national or non-European raw materials, this is not the case with PDO. PGI status is therefore used when, for example, the provenance of the raw materials is not a determining factor in the product's success, as with many other cases, when local production of raw materials cannot satisfy demand for that product.

For example, take those cured meats or cheeses that are not produced exclusively with local meat and milk, but that are recognisable and traceable to a place because of a particular production method. In these cases, PGI status allows for the use of foreign ingredients, but links the processing phase to the geographic area from which the recipe originates.

In other cases, as often happens with cereals, fruit and vegetables, if cultivation and harvesting are connected to the area of origin displayed on the label, it is possible to process and package the product elsewhere.

Producers of PGI products must nevertheless adhere to the strict production rules established in the ('disciplinary') regulation and, as with PDO, submit themselves to inspections by an external body.

3.3.3. TSG: Traditional Specialty Guaranteed

The TSG scheme aims to protect the production method and/ or the composition that identifies the product.

Whilst the PDO and PGI schemes connect a product to a geographic area of origin, TSG products do not impose restrictive geographical ties, but require the fulfilment of established rules governing production, as set out in the regulations.

Despite there being no insistence on geographical origin, the TSG ('disciplinary') regulations, like those governing PDO and PGI, specify a denomination of the product, a chemical, physical and organoleptic description, as well as the production method, the reasons (including historical ones) for its unique nature, and the necessary measures required for certification.

We can therefore say that, rather than protecting the **typical** aspects of the protected foods, the TSG preserves their **traditional** aspects, the authenticity of their production method and their connection to the past. The product is protected in a temporal sense, rather than a geographical one.

FOCUS1

Three Famous Products with PDO, PGI and TSG Status

Fig. 3. Grana Padano PDO, the most popular PDO product in the world.

Grana Padano PDO is a cheese made from cow's milk in Northern Italy. It is the bestselling PDO product in the world. A quarter of Italy's entire milk production goes to the production of this famous hard cheese, an obligatory condiment for those iconic Italian dishes, such as pasta. All phases in the chain of production (the breeding and milking of the cows, the collection of the milk and its transformation into cheese, aging, its eventual grating) must take place in the provinces in the north of Italy as indicated in the production disciplinary. The aging period must, by law, be at least two months long, but the most common variants of Grana Padana are aged for at least 20 months. At the end of this aging period, each round weighs between 24 and 40 kilos exactly. Today, as tradition dictates, in the ninth month of aging, each round is checked by experts using a small hammer, a needle and a probe. These tools allow them to certify the consistency of the rounds and that the aging process has taken place successfully before the cheeses are cut. Only those considered suitable are then branded and sold with the denomination, 'Grana Padana PDO'.

Fig. 4. Münchener Bier PGI, the queen of Bavarian beer

Munich is the capital city of the federal state of Bavaria (Germany), and is famous for being among the top producers of quality beer. Just think, the first regulation for the protection of Munich beer production dates back to 1487, and each year the city hosts the largest public celebration in the world, 'Oktoberfest', attracting six million visitors in honour of its renowned beer. The only ingredients used in the production of this beer are water, malt, hops and yeast. However, variations in the methods of production (the level to which the malt is toasted or the temperature of the water) mean that dozens of different beers, known as 'beer styles', are made. Munich beer is produced using water extracted from the city's wells. This water is filtered through the layers of slate that formed millions of years ago and, together with the specific yeasts used for fermentation, is the distinctive element for Munich's beer. Although, as indicated by the denomination, the processing phase must take place in the city of Munich, the PGI disciplinary allows for the use of cereals from other regions.

Fig. 5. Jamón Serrano TSG, the Spanish ham *par excellence*.

Ham is a popular and widespread food in Spain, with the first accounts of this product dating back to the Roman era. Today the nation is the world's top ham producer, producing more than 40 million pieces a year and boasting a yearly consumption equivalent to 5 kilos per capita. 'Jamón Serrano TSG', is the most common variety of Spanish ham and has won over the taste buds of the entire world with its soft texture and its sweetness. These organoleptic qualities are achieved through the methods of salting and aging the meat stipulated by the disciplinaries: in order to allow for its preservation, the pig's rear thigh is salted for at least 110 days and then aged. Serrano ham is recognised by its delicate purplish colour, and is used in **typical** *Spanish dishes such as 'bocadillos', slices of bread with oil, tomatoes and jamón Serrano. The TSG quality scheme allows the quality of the Jamón Serrano to be protected, allowing its name and label to be used only when the* **traditional** *processing methods established by the regulation are followed. At the same time, as its production is not bound to a specific geographical area (unlike PDO and PGI), it can be produced anywhere in Spain.*

4. SHOPPING LOCALLY: THE TREND FOR SHORTENING THE SUPPLY CHAIN

The system of European quality schemes we have just looked at sustains local food production, attempting to reconcile the unique nature of local products with the demand they be made available to a mass market. This system, based on a certification mechanism, provides administrative regulation pre-production (the so-called 'disciplinaries that contain all the specific rules that must be complied with in the production of PDO, PGI and TSG products) and final checks on the producers, which ensure all necessary rules required for the use of the denomination and quality scheme have been followed.

Upon closer inspection, we see that the need for certifications exists precisely because of the modern transport systems, supply chains and distribution systems (like supermarkets), which allow goods to circulate and make a direct interaction between producer and consumer impossible.

As a result, labels attesting to the food's origin act as intermediaries in a process of communication: by creating a formal relationship based on trust, the physical and geographical distance between those selling and those buying is bridged. As such, PDO, PGI and TSG labels ensure the typical aspects of food products in a way that is compatible with modern ways of trading.

However, certification is not the only system that has arisen to meet the demand for typical and traditional foods. By relying heavily on typical aspects that focus on geographical traceability, European certifications neglect other aspects that for many consumers remain determining factors in the choice of a typical product: the traditional and family dimension, craftsmanship, a direct knowledge of the producers and authenticity.

As we have already seen, the growing demand for typical and traditional products has been driven by various issues, not just those affecting the food sector, but also economic, political and social reasons. In this sense, the demand for typical and traditional foods is often promoted as part of different cultural movements such as *Slow Food* [See Bankov chapter]. In this case, the mainstream food model becomes the object of broader criticism aimed at large-scale agribusiness, modern distribution networks and bad consumer habits.

In the wake of this new critical sensibility towards food, over recent years we have seen an attempt to return to forms of commerce that have long been replaced by large-scale distribution, often motivated by the will to recover direct contact between producers and consumers.

One example of this phenomenon is the rise of *farmers' markets*, found in all urban centres of different sizes. These markets, usually held on a weekly basis, do not give their space to traders but to the producers themselves, who sell the products they have produced themselves. Given the ethical stance that motivates this kind of trade, the producers who take part in farmers' markets are usually owners of small-scale agricultural business, often committed to sustainable agricultural practices, such as organic or biodynamic farming.

The food on offer varies between markets. In the smaller markets, the offering is generally limited to fruit and vegetables, whilst in the medium and large markets we can find bakers selling bread and cakes, farmers selling meat, milk, cured meats and cheeses, producers of beer, wine or other alcoholic beverages, and even beekeepers selling honey and other products derived from bees.

The antithesis of the predominantly homogenous food on offer in supermarkets, the availability of products at farmers' markets (bound to the place in which the market is held) is strongly conditioned by climate and the seasons, and varies from market to market. It is not uncommon to find, for example, collectors of local, autochthonous mushrooms and herbs, or producers of non-edible artisanal products such as soap, natural cosmetics and textiles.

There are many benefits shared by those who support and frequent these kinds of markets:

- Environmental, because the shortening of the **supply chain** drastically reduces the distances covered by the goods and the energy wastage caused by transportation, stockpiling and refrigeration. Furthermore, the goods on offer respect seasonal cycles and the variable nature of low-impact agricultural production, and, as we have already mentioned, it is very common for these producers to respect low-impact production standards, such as those found in organic farming;
- Economic, because, by eliminating the need for wholesalers and intermediaries, the trade at farmers' markets means fairer remuneration for small producers, and supports small, family-run businesses;
- Cultural and social, because the encounter between producers and consumers spreads knowledge of an area's **typical** products and improves the eating habits of the population, promoting the consumption of fresh, seasonal products that are minimally processed. Furthermore, trade at local markets reduces the distance between city and countryside, and between the citizens themselves, promoting interaction among inhabitants.

However, there is no lack in criticism from those who do not agree with farmers' markets and their basic principles, such as the reduction of **food miles**. We can divide the main criticisms into two groups:

Environmental and sanitation, because the certification of eco-friendly sustainability standards (such as those governing the use of pesticides) and those regarding health, is often informal. What's more, there are people who question the supposed impact reduction provided by local **supply chain**s, insofar as smaller producers have less production efficiency and a greater on-site use of vehicles;

Economic, with the reality of this model's universal application questioned for several reasons. Whilst large industrial food producers are able to make economies of scale, maximising their output and minimising production costs, small local producers generally require more manpower and resources per unit. Despite the absence of intermediaries, this often leads to higher prices than those found in industrial food production. For these reasons, the critics of the short **supply chain** maintain that the model is neither capable of satisfying the growing demand for food worldwide, nor able to offer food at prices that are accessible for the entire population.

5. IN SEARCH OF TYPICAL PRODUCTS: FOOD TOURISM

Until now we have discussed how, over recent years, the growing sensibility towards the origins of foods and their distinguishing qualities traced back to their area of production have led the push towards new forms of production, distribution and consumption, from European quality schemes to markets featuring local products.

However, buying products that are local, with labels that certify their origin and quality, is not the only way of experiencing an area's typical food and wine offerings.

Knowledge of local food culture is considered an increasingly important element, especially for those who travel. The discovery of local delicacies and the artisanship that revolves around food production is now the prerogative of more and more tourists, and can even play a major part in choosing a particular travel destination.

In other words, a holiday is increasingly viewed as an experience that unites the pleasure of experiencing new places with that of discovering local traditional flavours and products. We do not travel just to come into contact with the architecture, the works of art, the landscapes and the people of a particular place. Food can be the keystone that renders a destination unique, and enters fully into the forms of 'cultural tourism', sometimes becoming its deciding factor.

Increasingly, we hear people talk of 'food tourism' or 'wine tourism'.

This trend has pushed travellers to be more knowledgeable and demanding about their food experiences whilst travelling, choosing, for example, to inform themselves on the local food scene through websites, specialist blogs, guides or those familiar with local food, such as restaurants, wine producers, breweries, cheesemongers and delis.

At the same time, a significant effort is being made by producers, restaurateurs, shop owners and – on a collective level – by trade associations and tourist boards, to enhance the tourist offering in order to meet these new demands by travellers.

This has happened in various ways. One example is the small businesses, such as wine and cheese producers, who have introduced tasting areas, shops and guided tours for visitors. Another is those farms that have been converted into *agriturismi*, farming structures that offer spaces to sleep and stay. *Food tours* have sprung up in many historic town centres, with themed sections and dedicated guides. Similarly, in rural areas devoted to specific production, itineraries and cycle paths have been created, connecting natural attractions with local artisans and farmers, which have also become a point of attraction.

One widespread example of these itineraries are the 'wine routes' – there are more than two hundred throughout Europe –

connecting the wine producers of a particular area and allowing visitors to visit the area, stopping in the various wineries to explore the vineyards and taste the produce on site.

In the most successful cases, projects to re-launch certain rural areas devoted to agricultural as tourist destinations, has led to the creation of effective 'districts' of food and wine tourism, creating jobs and safeguarding isolated or mountainous areas with little interest for the more traditional flows of tourism.

This re-evaluation of areas through food has, sometimes, led to 'the invention of traditions', leading to the resurrection or invention of new festivals, popular celebrations and food rituals with an eye on marketing to tourists.

FOCUS 2

Two Different Examples of Food Destinations

Fig. 6. The "Route des Grands Crus", Discovering the wine 'climats' of Burgundy.

The 'Route des Grand Crus' is the oldest French wine route, opened in 1937, and 60 kilometres long, passing 33 villages in the Côte d'Or province of the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté department. Along the route it is possible to admire the extraordinary wine-growing landscapes of the Côte d'Or and taste the wine in thousands of wineries along the way. The main road unravels into a labyrinth of detours leading to *the 'climats', the small parcels of land used for growing vines, often marked out by stone walls and occupied by vineyards, wineries and splendid medieval castles. The main route intersects a network of alternative routes for bike tourism or trekking. In 2015, Burgundy's wine 'terroir' was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage list, which protects the 1,463 climats present throughout the area. The demarcation of the different climats dates back to the Middle Ages, and they are the best possible example of a typical wine-growing landscape. By integrating unique chemical, physical and climatic characteristics with the savoir-faire of local viticulture specialists, the subdivision of each 'climat' allows for the creation of wines that each have their own nuances, and as such are each identified with a different sub-denomination of PDO.*

Fig. 7. The Street Food Markets of Palermo.

Palermo is the capital of Sicily, a region of southern Italy and the largest island in the Mediterranean. The city's historic centre, whose monuments have recently been inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage list, and which has been shaped by the occupation by and integration of many different populations over thousands of years, still has extensive and colourful markets influenced by Arab cultures. Sicilian gastronomy is one of the most impressive. Thanks to its favourable climate and its position, halfway between Italy and North Africa, the island has accumulated an extraordinary variety of ingredients and dishes. In the markets and the city's streets, it is normal to find stalls and street traders selling street food of all kinds, which can be traced back to different geographic and cultural or-

> *igins, or to the religious festivals that take place during the year. Once prepared and consumed exclusively by men and eaten on foot, street food has become an attraction from tourists from all continents and is also consumed in small restaurants. One example is 'panelle', chickpea fritters similar to other variants, all Latin in origin and eaten as far away as Provence. Other typical dishes are offal-based ones, such as ox's spleen sandwiches, a food that is believed to have its roots in the large Jewish community that resided in one of the areas of the old town during the Middle Ages.*

6. FROM TERRITORY TO TERROIR

The emphasis on the concepts of typical food and of food origins has led, as we have seen, to an enrichment of the concept of *territory*. When it comes to food and wine, *territory* is now starting to include not just physical aspects, but human and social ones too. From this perspective, the territory's physical composition can be considered the result of a transformation that has taken place after centuries of it being in contact with humans.

We can see this change in meaning in many objects with which we come into daily contact, such as packaging, food marketing, tourism marketing and food texts such as guides and recipe books, not to mention the European regulations governing production that we looked at in part 3 (PDO, PGI and TSG). In this instance, rather than a starting condition, territory becomes an after-effect that can be perceived in the food's particular organoleptic traits and, above all, through the difference between one food and another.

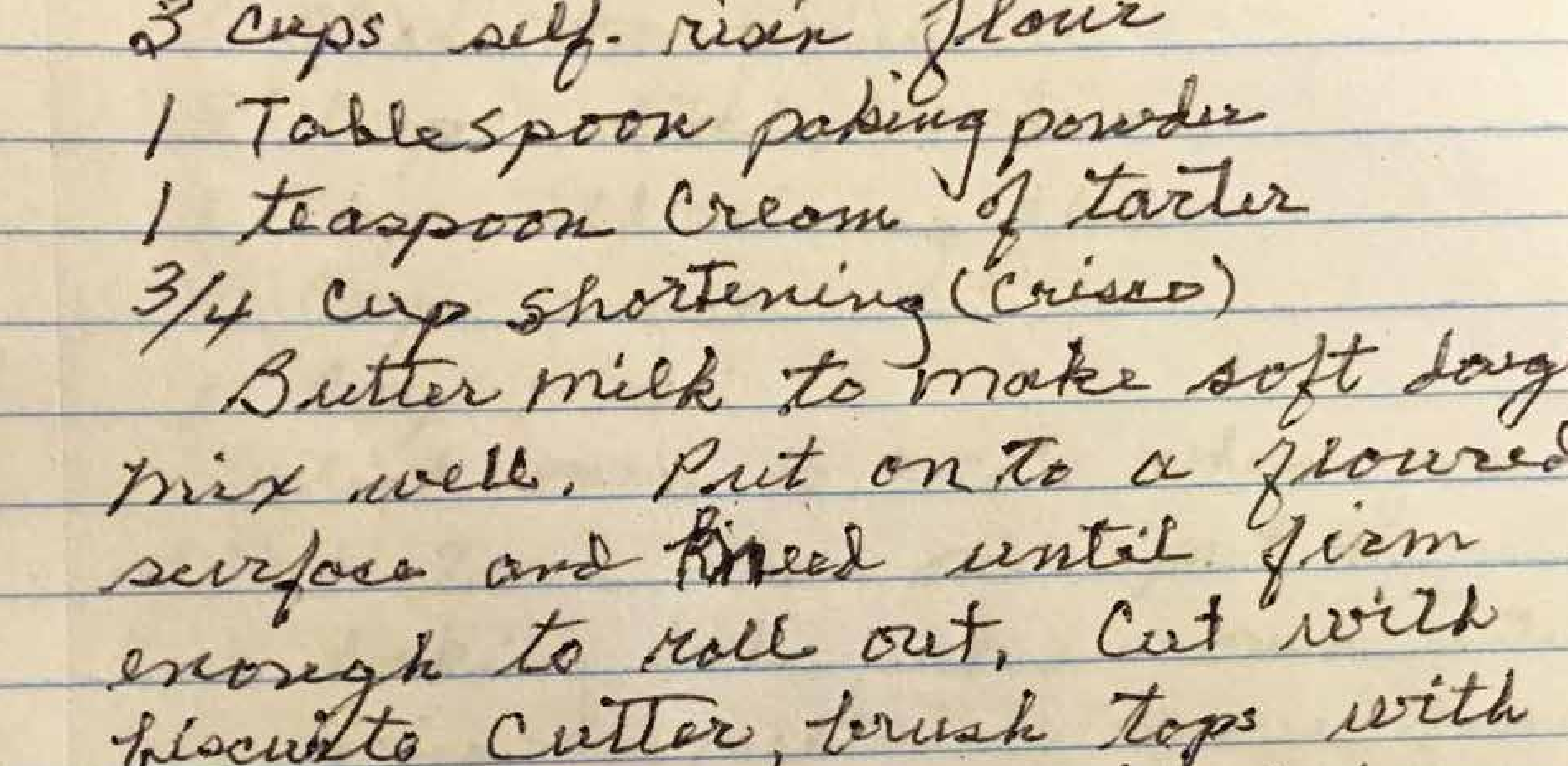
For this reason, in the worlds of food and, in particular, wine, we find a neologism, derived from the French, being used to indicate place of origin: 'terroir'. The use of the term in French, rather than it being translated, aims to emphasise those aspects of the word 'territory' or 'place' that are not strictly physical.

Indeed, according to a definition provided by UNESCO: "A Terroir is a geographical limited area where a human community generates and accumulates along its history a set of cultural distinctive features, knowledge and practices based on a system of interactions between biophysical and human factors. The combination of techniques involved in production reveals originality, confers typicity and leads to a reputation for goods originating from this geographical area, and therefore for its inhabitants. The terroirs are living and innovating spaces that cannot be reduced only to tradition." In conclusion, at the basis of the concept of typical food is the idea that a food product (much like a landscape or space) carries the distinctive, identifying mark of this unique interaction between community and environment, or rather, between human and non-human factors.

If, however, territory, when it comes to food and wine, is a space in constant evolution, this reasoning leads us to question the very meaning of the word 'tradition'. Whilst tradition is generally understood as a thread that leads us back to the past and our roots, its meaning as far as food and wine are concerned, increasingly leads us to view tradition as a process of continual transformation, rather than the mere conservation of the past. Enacting tradition is, in this sense, a work of adaptation rather than a resistance to change.

SECTION II

MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS


3 cups self-risin flour
1 Tablespoon baking powder
1 teaspoon Cream of tarter
3/4 cup shortening (Crisco)
Butter milk to make soft doug
mix well. Put onto a floure
surface and kneed until firm
enough to roll out. Cut with
biscuits cutter, brush tops with

Recipe Books and the Structure of Recipes

Gianfranco Marrone

1. LEARNING AND TEACHING TO COOK

Learning to cook is no easy task. It takes time and patience, hard work and plenty of passion. Sometimes it can take years and a certain predisposition is necessary. As a result, many give up and few are truly successful.

But teaching to cook is equally difficult.

In the kitchen, when the teacher and their apprentices are in direct contact working together, things are relatively simple. The teacher carefully demonstrates the various steps to follow when preparing a particular dish or stock or sauce. The apprentices listen and, most importantly, play close attention. Then, slowly, tasting as they go, and - most importantly - imitating the teacher's movements and gesture, they are able to attain the same results. A similar process happens in families and domestic settings where the mother, grandmother or the old aunt prepare the lunch and dinner every day; and where the children, especially the daughters, observe their actions and learn, by reproducing the steps, to cook too.

Often, in both a professional and a domestic setting, doing is more important than talking. If you ask your grandmother for explanations or advice, she will almost certainly struggle to respond, managing to answer only vaguely, imprecisely. This is certainly not because she does not know, but because she does not know how to explain that which she does very well. In the same way, it is not a given that an acclaimed chef has the necessary communicative skills to explain, using words, what they have created. In fact, the chef does not ask their staff to listen to them, but to watch them carefully whilst they work, in order to reproduce the gestures, the skills, the *savoir faire*.

This is because cooking is something that *is done* even before it is something that *is known*. The act of cooking is, in fact, more a practical *savoir faire* than a form of theoretical knowledge. Much like swimming, driving a car or riding a bike. These are all things that are not learned from books or lessons, but by doing, by putting them into practice with dedication, courage and persistence, until the body itself has learned the techniques and the rules. Of course, scientific and technical knowledge counts a great deal, as do history, culture and traditions. This entire book is dedicated to these very subjects. But when it comes to making fresh pasta, turning an omelette or kneading pizza dough (to limit ourselves to very basic techniques), what counts is manual skill, a careful eye and control over one's movements, perhaps even one's entire body. And no words will ever be able to fully communicate this.

2. THE HISTORY OF THE RECIPE

However, when all of this does have to be written down – drawing up a recipe illustrating the necessary ingredients and quantities for preparing a dish, as well as the series of actions needed to make and serve it – things are very different; more complex in some aspects, more simple in others. Writing a recipe is no easy task. It is not nearly as obvious or immediate as people often think. It requires great care to render those various steps clearly, placing them in order, explaining the reasons for their importance in achieving the final result. However, over time the technique for writing a recipe, and consequently for composing an entire recipe book, has not just been perfected, but has reached fairly stable standards that, when reproduced, make teaching others to cook using the written word a fairly common practice. The format for a recipe has been used for a long time and in many different countries.

2.1. A SERIES OF NOTES

What is the origin of the recipe? The answer to this question is lost in the sands of time. We can imagine that recipes were originally little more than a note to remind cooks how to prepare a particular dish, to remember the necessary ingredients and their quantities, and the order of the various preparatory steps. The great recipe books of aristocratic families were collections of notes made over time by the family cook in order to remind – themselves and, in particular, the person who took their place – how to satisfy their clients' taste buds. Indirectly, this constituted a taste map not just of a single household but an entire era. A map that allows to understand the rules of a social class and its transformations throughout history. Reading old recipe books today allows us to reconstruct how and what was eaten at a particular time, to discover which cooking techniques were used at that time, and which raw materials were most commonly used.

For example, the recipes from the English courts of the 17th and 18th centuries were very specific, and they could be considered a precursor to the current form of recipe books. It contained a quadruple inventory. On one side were a shopping list (which later became the list of ingredients needed to make the dish) and a list of tasks that the kitchen staff had to carry out to prepare a particular meal (which later became the recipe we now recognise). On the other side, were another two lists: the menu that the diner would find on the table when they sat down, and the series of ways of eating the food, which was also placed on the table to help that day's guest. In both cases, the recipe was not just a recipe but was part of a highly complex ritual. It represented a very different social ritual from that of traditional farming societies in which food – both its preparation and its consumption - was managed in a collective, shared manner, with profoundly different cultural forms.

2.2. ORALITY AND WRITING

Originally, recipes were not written down but passed down orally, from generation to generation, using only the spoken word and with no additional way of fixing its principle characteristics. Traditional farming communities maintained this tradition for a long time. The same dish, whilst keeping the same name, could use ingredients and methods of preparation that varied greatly, simply because there was not one single version and, most importantly, certified, written down. From which comes the great many ways in which the same dish can be prepared, and its continual transformation over time and distance. Without a written memory, there was no standardised way of preparing a dish, but only the uses that oral memory recreated in its own, unique way.

As recipe books slowly came into being, the ways of preparing various dishes became stable, and the world's various culinary traditions were able to lay claim to reference texts that were relatively long lasting. This is how real gastronomy, both local and national, came about: through the simple act of being written down, or rather, transcribed. At the same time, however, something is lost through the act of writing, caused by the unbridgeable gap between the persistent, knowing gestures in actual culinary operations, and the written word that attempts to communicate them and, as a result, impoverishes them. Recipes, when seen from this perspective, tend to fossilise the silent 'knowledge of the hand', which is never spoken because it is unspeakable, reducing it to the 'strictly necessary', to a few stereotypical features, to technical formulas that are always the same – rehydrate, soften, sauté, etc. – and that do not recognise what actually happens every day in home kitchens. This brings us to another difference, one between cooking as carried out by women, practised every day in families with a centuries-old continuity, and that carried out by men, which takes on an exceptional character (including the very idea of a chef) and requires recipe books in order to lay claim their role as authors and artists.

2.3. THE DOMESTIC COOKERY BOOK

The big step forward was made during the 1800s with the middle-class recipe book, which started to become part of the didactic literature linked to home economics, enabling the woman, or her staff, to run the household perfectly. These books might contain information on issues such as correct table etiquette, brushing teeth and the prudent use of gaslight. The recipe book presented itself as a guarantee of domestic bliss, as a metaphorical substitute for the most precious of all wedding gifts. In France in the 1500s, successful texts such as *Le Viandier* were already not just teaching culinary techniques, but the 'art of living', connecting collections of recipes to the old tradition of books on medicinal plants and, more generally, on pharmacopeia and dietetics. As such, the cookery book ended up becoming, alongside the saucepans and frying pans, knives and other various tools, a fundamental component in the domestic kitchen. Every family had their cookery book, at the end of which the publishing house wisely inserted a number of blank pages where the housewife could note down her own variations on the recipes, her own culinary 'inventions' - those enjoyed by her family members.

2.4. THE UPSURGE IN COOKERY BOOKS

Today, cookery books have transformed themselves significantly, both because they want to appeal to a very different reader (no longer just the housewife, but potentially anybody), and because they there is no longer simply the book, but a whole series of mass media, such as radio and television, print media and cinema, as well as new media, the Internet, social media and Youtube.

As such, collections of recipes tend to be particularly diverse. They had long been texts with the sole communicative aim of transmitting a precise *savoir-faire*, real instruction manuals, dispensing advice and suggestions on what to do, when and how to do it. So, for example, in France the book by Henri-Paul Pellaprat, *Modern French Culinary Art* (1935) has long dominated, and continues today to be the model for every professional recipe book. Similarly in Italy, the most obvious example of a *practical* recipe book is the *Talismano della felicità [Talisman of Happiness]* by Ada Boni (1927), the cookery book *par excellence*, which was a staple in the kitchens of Italian housewives in the 1950s and 1960s, a typical recipe book aimed at teaching women to cook so that they could serve their families good food every day. Its American counterpart, *The Joy of Cooking* by Irma

Rombauer (1931), is one of the bestselling middle-class recipe books of all time.

But things have slowly changed. Recipe books no longer have a purely practical* value. Their function is no longer to teach a way of cooking aimed at 'serving the table'. If we look at current trends in gastronomy, we can find other forms of valorisation* in culinary practice.

For example, there are recipe books that tend to be valorised in a critical* way, as in the case of those that promote so-called 'poor' cookery, the 'clever' ways of using leftovers or the quick preparation of delicious delicacies. In truth, the historical-literary nexus between recipe books and home economics manuals already existed. For example, it is well known that the book *L'arte di utilizzare gli avanzi [The Art of Using Leftovers]* by Olindo Guerrini (1918) was a kind of response, both low-cost and cunning, to the book *Scienza* by Artusi [See table]. There is also the recent *Good and Cheap: Eat Well on $4 a Day* by Leanne Brown, a great book of cheap recipes, which was successful because it is *cheap* both in name and deed: it can be downloaded for free in pdf.

We then have the utopian* valorisation of culinary practice. In this case, the recipe book plays no concrete role (to adequately 'serve' one's guests), but aims to construct the identity of the person who is cooking. For example, the recipe books that describe regional or local culinary traditions, like *Tasting Georgia* by Carla Capalbo, a food journalist from London with Italian roots, who, with this book, launched Georgia as a foodie destination. Or those that praise real culinary ideologies or dietetic regimes (vegetarianism, macrobiotic diets, etc.). The famous book by the Duke of Salaparuta, Enrico Alliata, *Cucina vegetariana e naturismo crudo [Vegetarian Cooking and Raw Naturism]* (1930), for example, paved the way for an entire genre of recipe books promoting this kind of dietetic trend, which later became fashionable, aimed at founding or reinforcing a value-based identity. In the Anglo-Saxon world we can cite the very famous case of the *Chez Panisse Menu Cookbook* by Alice Waters, the most famous 'slow food' cook in the world, whose restaurant, Chez Panisse, opened in San Francisco in the 1970s, was an antecedent of those restaurants serving purely 'local' food.

We then have ludic-aesthetic* recipe books that tend to glorify the art of gastronomy. Those who read them do not cook in order to serve food, but in order to have fun while perhaps showing off to friends and relatives. Think of all those books that reveal the secrets of Michelin-starred chefs or those who aspire to that status, as well as those protagonists of television cookery programmes, some because they are already stars of the kitchen (i.e. Jamie Oliver), others because they are established TV stars (Gordon Ramsay, for example). An excellent example of this genre is undoubtedly *A Day at elBulli. An Insight into the Ideas, Techniques and Creativity of Ferran Adrià*, written by Adrià himself alongside Juli Soler and Albert Adrià, and a key text for molecular cooking, the book is a triumph for its photography and various techniques.

Cookery is not, therefore, always cooking in the same way: food is not prepared with the single aim of feeding someone and perhaps impressing guests, but for many other reasons too.

2.5. THE MEDIATIZATION OF THE RECIPE

The promotion of recipes through other means of communication (as discussed in other chapters of this book) brings about various changes in the ways of communicating the art of cooking. The first is the introduction of images, which can be of great use to the reader in anticipating the dish they are trying to recreate. While a verbal text can only describe the dish and the steps necessary for its preparation, a magazine allows all this to be seen thanks to the pictures. On television and on the various tutorials available on the Internet, the recipe is rendered even more of a spectacle, allowing us to follow it step by step not just with our minds, but with our eyes.

On closer inspection, however, these changes are not as significant as is generally thought. Many of the prerogatives attributed to current cookery texts, and held up as a novelty, were already present in classical cookery books. For example, we know that, since the invention of the printing press, cookery books have been filled with images, with tables outside the text depicting the final result of the steps taken to prepare certain dishes, particularly sweet ones. Similarly, we should point out how the current trend towards the media glorification of cooks has ancient roots. Just think of how many photos of authors we find on the front pages or inside many books on cooking that end up creating a real cult of the personality and that we later find in the more contemporary star-chefs. Another significant aspect is the multiplication of media: the book was by no means the only one, because there were other paper media such as magazines, pamphlets, calendars, and so on, which worked for different audiences depending on their varying economic means, levels of education and culinary practice. It should also be pointed out how interactivity has been innate in very format of recipe books, well before Internet 2.0. There has never been any rivalry between the author's composition of a repertoire of recipes, and the individual writing down of domestic ways of preparing dishes collected in personal or family notebooks. Think of the periodical publication, from the 1800s onwards, of booklets filled with recipes to choose, cut out and stick into one's own notebook, or on the opposite side, those blank pages at the end of many cookery books, left for the user to write down their own variants of favourite dishes.

FOCUS 1

Pellegrino Artusi and Science in the Kitchen, and the Art of Eating Well

The Artusi cookery book is the most important recipe book in Italian cuisine, a reference point for housewives and cooks not just in Italy but the world over. It is the very definition of Italian cooking: a domestic, middle class way of cooking that is, most importantly, unanimous. Published at the author's expense in 1891, Science in the Kitchen met with unexpected success. The author would send it out by post to anyone who asked for it, housewives, estate managers and curious readers from all over Italy. In just twenty years 15 editions had been published, updated each time with new recipes, with the final edition from 1911 featuring 740. It is one of Italy's most famous books, beaten only by Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio.


PELLEGRINO ARTUSI

LA SCIENZA IN CUCINA

E

L'ARTE DI MANGIAR BENE

MANUALE PRATICO PER LE FAMIGLIE

Igiene - Economia - Buon gusto

IN FIRENZE

PEI TIPI DI SALVADORE LANDI

1891

Beyond its publishing success, the book's importance lies in two factors. The first is that it used a language that could be understood throughout Italy, something that was by no means a given in the late 1800s, just a few decades after the unification of Italy. The second was that it attempted to overcome the regionalism of Italian cuisine, collecting recipes from Piedmont to Campania, from Tuscany to Emilia, from the Veneto to Liguria, and so on. It could be said, therefore, that before Artusi, Italian cuisine did not actually exist. Prior to this there were dozens of local cuisines, but this book considered together culinary experiences and dishes from all over Italy. Most interest-

ingly, in his recipes Artusi managed to blend the Tuscan cuisine, which uses olive oil, with the North Italian use of butter, no longer opposing but, according to his tastes, entirely complementary.
Explaining the importance of Artusi's book to Italian culture, the author Giorgio Manganelli defined it thus: "the Artusi was a thing, not a person, perhaps it was not even a book. It was a domestic object, like a pan, a pot or a clay dish, though it was certainly not an electrical appliance. Like a pan, the domestic copies of Artusi were handled, tampered with, covered in notes, their spines broken by the aggressively affectionate hands of passionate housewives".

FOCUS 2

Julia Child, Mastering the Art of French Cooking

The American cook Julia Child (1912-2004) is a central figure in contemporary food culture. By bringing French cuisine to an American audience, she managed to eliminate the divide between refined European gastronomy and the coarse, offhand cuisine of the US. In order to do so she used two very important media tools. The first was the celebrated *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (1961-70), written with French colleagues Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle, in which she adapted 500 French recipes for an American market. The book met with great success and multiple editions

have been published; proof that the American public was, and still is, fascinated by refined tastes and elaborate cuisine. Julia Child then became even more famous thanks to her television cookery programmes [see the chapter xxx], in particular, *The French Chef*, first broadcast in 1963 and continued for many years, in which she presented recipes that used raw materials often cooked in rather bizarre ways. During her culinary presentations Child would change her tone of voice and talk directly, and rather amusingly, to the dishes. This had famously hilarious results, and gave rise to a great many parodies. Just to give a sense of her success, the television studio where her programmes were filmed is now on display at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington.
The story of Julia Child has been told in both her autobiography, and by the young author Julie Powell, in a novel entitled *Julie & Julia*, adapted into a film of the same name by Nora Ephron.

3.FORMATS AND USES OF RECIPES

One thing that characterises a recipe is that it is not a text to be read, but to be put into action. What is written is a condensed summary of what the reader must do if they want to prepare a particular dish. It is not therefore a description of the dish, but of how to prepare it, a description that the reader must follow carefully.

The recipe plays a similar role to a musical score or an architectural plan: it does not give all the information but provides advice, it gives indications as to what should be done and what not to do. The recipe does not offer rigid norms that have to be followed to the letter (the use of the imperative is a stylistic habit), but general rules to use as needed, to personalise as desired depending on the ingredients one has at one's disposal and depending on the patience one wishes to expend on preparing the dish. Some musical scores can be less restrictive, to the point of existing as abstract models of collective memory without having physically been written down on paper (as is the case with jazz). Similarly, the recipe can exist in both written and, as we have seen, oral forms in people's memory.

But the most important thing is that, like in music, it is acted upon, and this can be done more or less successfully. Essentially, the reader is left a margin of freedom in the dish's creation. So, faced with a recipe, and with their kitchen utensils in hand, the behaviour of the agent-cook can vary enormously. Some follow the recipe to the letter, step by step, doing exactly as they are told. This means starting by weighing all necessary ingredients, using every ingredient required and nothing more, and then using them in the stated order. On the contrary, there are those who use the recipe as a starting point to prepare what they want, can and know how to make, depending also on the ingredients to hand. The first model of following recipes is a kind of 'engineer': first they plan, then they find the necessary materials, then, finally, they build. The second example is a kind of 'bricoleur': they make what they can with the materials at their disposal, using them according to the potential inscribed in their inherent properties. Half-way between these two examples, ideals and opposites, there is the reality of cooking and the relationship with the recipe text. Recipes are open texts, ready to be accepted, and used, according to the reader/ agent's needs, without prescribing a rigid canon nor diminishing their creativity. Today, for example, the vast number of recipe books in a single home means they are consulted in parallel. The cook consults all texts, jumping from the most classic texts to the latest food blog, ending up constructing a kind of *patchwork* dish, whose taste is the result of the overlapping of multiple sources.

4.SKILLS

These differences in the way recipes are used are a result of the fact that the recipe, like every text giving a set of instructions, is also subject to the inevitable discrepancy between what the writer knows (and knows how to do) and what the reader knows (and knows how to do). We could say that the recipe attempts to negotiate between these two disparate levels of culinary competence*: that of the author, hyper-competent by their very nature, and that of the reader, who is minimally competent. The recipe is not aimed at those who have no idea how to cook, but at those who, despite not knowing how to cook to the same degree as the author, nevertheless have a vague idea of what to do in the kitchen. The negotiation is this: managing the relative knowledge of the two subjects involved, regulating the quality and quantity of those things that are unsaid, the implicit references and allusions that the recipe text is filled with. It is the well-known problem with *as required*, 'a pinch of salt or pepper', 'a cup of sugar' or 'a drizzle of oil'. Many recipes, or perhaps all of them in different ways, delegate a series of operations to the reader, the person who is there to learn. Hence expressions such as 'season as required', 'add herbs according to taste', or throwaway enunciations such as 'sauté the garlic', 'soften the onion', 'prepare a roux', '*tirate*'[1] the risotto', etc., encompass in just a few words complex culinary manoeuvres, series of multiple actions that presume advanced forms of culinary knowledge. On the other hand, linguistic expressions that at first sight seem to be self-explanatory – 'peel', 'leave to dry', 'fry', and so on – actually require a certain amount of previous skill.

In both cases, therefore, the perfect recipe, the one that should explain *everything* that is necessary for the prepara-

1 Translator's note: this is a term specific to the preparation of risotto and for which there is no English equivalent. It is the process of gradually adding boiling liquid to the rice, allowing it to be absorbed and then repeating these steps until the rice is cooked.

tion of a certain dish, does not exist, nor in fact can it. For example, the famous *food writer* Allan Bay has written a fitting recipe book with the title *Cuochi si diventa* (2003), in which he imagines an entirely incompetent reader, explaining with a *legend* created for the purpose, precisely what is meant by each vague 'as required'. But he too also comes up against previous knowledge, perhaps regarding things beyond the quantity of ingredients, which he references implicitly. In the *Encyclopedia della Cucina* (2010), which he edited, the problem seems to be resolved, with every term explained using corresponding definitions. If it says to 'emulsify oil with lemon juice', and you do not know what this means, under 'Emulsion' you will find an explanation of how to do it. It should be noted, however, that in the handbook found at the beginning of the volume, having meticulously explained what is meant by expressions such as 'a pinch' (=2.4g) or 'a drizzle of oil' (=20g), when it comes to 'a handful or small handful' he eventually admits 'this depends on the specific weight, use your common sense'.

If a meticulously detailed explanation of a recipe cannot be provided, it is not because of the descriptive ineptitude of the person writing, but for specifically communicative reasons linked to what I have said at the beginning of this chapter: there is always a discrepancy between culinary *savoir faire* and its verbal explanation, something that cannot be said. Nothing can be done about this, unless we follow the method that uses certain kitchen appliances [see the chapter on objects], whose recipe books tell us to follow a set of actions ('press the red button', 'hold down the green button for seven seconds') without explaining the reasons behind them. In this case it is the robot that is cooking, and we are reduced to servers. Every recipe book presupposes a different (tacit) 'contract' between the person writing and the person reading, subjects that negotiate what should be explained and what is evident, the explicit and the implicit. If the author takes various passages in the dish's preparation for granted- writing, for example, in the recipe for Greek Moussaka, 'make a roux' without explaining how – it is because they assume that the reader already knows how. If, in the preparation of *Stracotto al vino bianco*, the recipe explains that before putting it in the oven you must 'lard' the meat, without giving any more information, it is because it assumes that the reader knows what 'to lard' means. We can see, therefore, what makes a 'good' cookery book: a text in which the skills of both the author and the reader even each other out, so that the former states what they assume the latter does not know, and does not mention what they assume is already known. The reader, already in possession of previously acquired skills, (implicitly) asks the author to provide certain information, but to not mention what they already know.

In short, this is the great historical, geographical and cultural difference between the various cookery books. There are those that are more explicit, like those books that today proliferate in bookshops: they assume they have a reader who is only barely competent in the kitchen, almost entirely ignorant. Conversely, there are texts that explain the least, like many of those written in centuries past: they know that their reader is not ignorant in culinary matters but actually knows quite a lot about them. There are then all the intermediate examples.

FOCUS 3

Different Versions of the Recipe for Risotto alla Milanese

With this series of recipes for the same dish, it is easy to grasp the progressive expansion of the recipe's text, which goes from the few words used by Artusi (who wrote for a rather skilled audience, familiar with what was meant by '*tirare a cottura*', for example), to the use of images on the website giallozafferano.it, required to illustrate the various phases of the risotto's preparation, including the necessary colour changes of the onion and the rice.

Artusi, Risotto alla milanese II, Recipe no. 79

Rice, 500g
Butter, 80g
Beef bone marrow, 40g
Half an onion
Good white wine, two thirds of a glass
Saffron, as required
Parmesan, as required

Chop the onion and place it in the pan with the marrow and half of the butter. When it is golden, pour in the rice, and after a few minutes add the wine and '*tiratelo*' with the broth until it is cooked. Before removing it from the heat, blend it with the rest of the butter and the parmesan, and serve with extra parmesan on the side.

Pellaprat, p. 245 - Risotto alla milanese

For 6 people:
500 g Rice Vialone or Maratelli
80 g Parmesan
120 g butter
30 g beef bone marrow
2g saffron
20 g onion
around 8 di good quality broth, salted.

Cooking time: 15-18 minutes.
Chop the onion finely and fry it gently with 30 g of butter and the marrow, both sieved. When it has taken on a light golden colour, add

the rice and allow it to cook for a few minutes, stirring frequently. Add half of the boiling broth and add the saffron, which must be dissolved in a little broth beforehand. During cooking, gradually add the rest of the broth. A few minutes before the rice is cooked, add grated parmesan and the butter. Stir, ensuring that the risotto is well thickened.

Note: do not use any lard or pancetta, oil or white wine.
[Recipe officially codified by the Associazione Italiana Cuochi (Venice, May 1963)

Allan Bay, Cuochi si diventa – Alla milanese
(the phrases underlined refer to other parts of the recipe book, where they are explained separately)
Serves 4

Following the basic procedure, toast 360 g of Carnaroli rice and simmer with 1 glass of dry white wine until it is reduced, the alcohol will soften the taste of the marrow. Cook the rice using beef broth, which is particularly powerful, adding at the beginning 4 teaspoons of sautéed onion and 40g of finely chopped and sautéed marrow for 2 minutes in a small non-stick saucepan. When there is just 1 minute left for the rice, add salt and a generous amount of high-quality ground saffron (I do not like saffron threads, they never dissolve well), dissolved in a ladleful of broth. *Mantecare*[2] with 60g of butter and season with 40g of grated Parmigiano Reggiano, matured for at least 3 years. It must be rather dry: a spoon placed in the risotto should stand to attention.

Website giallozafferano.it

To prepare *risotto allo zafferano* begin by finely chopping the onion (1), then melt 80g butter on a low heat (2) taking care not to brown it, then add the finely chopped onion and allow it to soften and turn golden, stirring continuously with a wooden spoon (3-4).

2 Translator’s note: Again *mantecare* is a specific term that refers to the adding of butter and parmesan to render the risotto creamy

Add the rice (5) and toast it, allowing it to absorb the butter properly (6), after this turn the heat up and add liquid to the rice,

first the wine (7), which must be allowed to evaporate, and then 2 ladles of boiling broth (8); keep stirring and when this liquid is almost completely absorbed, add the same amount again (9). This operation must be repeated until the rice is cooked.

Halfway through cooking, dissolve the saffron in a little broth (10) and pour it into the rice (11) taking care to combine well (12) .

Once the rice is cooked, remove it from the heat and *mantecare* with the grated parmesan (13) and the rest of the butter (14). At this point, taste the rice and season accordingly. We advise you do this just before the rice is cooked, as the broth that is added to the rice is already salted, so it is best to check the flavour at the end to avoid any nasty surprises. Before serving, allow the *risotto alla milanese* to rest for a few moments (15) so that the flavours can develop further. Decorate by scattering saffron threads over the risotto on the serving plates.

5.STORIES

How are recipes structured? What order do they follow when describing a culinary procedure? Rather than a description, it would be better to call it a story, as like all stories recipes must also follow a sequence of actions, gestures and procedures that take place in order to achieve a final result – the dish. Such actions are carried out by different subjects: there is the cook, but also their kitchen hands (who usually deal with more lowly tasks, such as peeling potatoes or washing the vegetables), and even (if not most importantly) kitchen utensils, the tools and technology that play a significant role in the culinary procedures enacted to prepare a particular dish. When we read 'cook on a high heat for ten minutes', 'leave it to cool under running water', 'place in the freezer for fifteen minutes', or 'place in the oven at 180 degrees', it is clear that the cook is not directly carrying out the act of cooking but delegates it, as it were, to others: the hob, the tap, the freezer, the oven. Strictly speaking, these are things that, in some of the preparatory steps, do the cooking. The act of cooking is, therefore, always a collective practice, in which there are human subjects (the cook and their helpers), and non human subjects (the tools), which pass the baton of what needs to be done accordingly.

The recipes must organise all of this, supplying practical and efficient advice that leads to a good end result. The recipes provide order, distributing roles, abilities, operations and results. Most importantly, they must decide on the chronology of the single actions. What should be said first and what should come after? The response might be obvious: you first say what needs to be done first, then you say what needs to be done next. However, very often, there are things that can be done before or after; mentioning them first therefore also means deciding on which order to follow during the preparation. Furthermore, the real problem is that, very often, in the kitchen many things are done simultaneously: whilst the sauce is reducing, the meat is cut into slices, the final touches are made to the peas, the potatoes are removed from the oven. Given that many actions take place at the same time in the kitchen, the most common phrases found in recipes are those such as 'whilst', 'during', 'in the meantime' and so on. Beyond succession (one action after the other), the recipe must also be able to manage concurrent actions (actions that happen at the same time). From the reader's point of view, this means that a recipe should never be attempted one phrase at a time, slavishly following the various operations only as they arise, as there will inevitably come a moment when you find an instruction like, 'whilst the stew cooks, you will have had enough time to peel and cut the potatoes in order to add them halfway through cooking', 'pour in the sauce that you have already prepared', which inevitably force you to start over.

Time in recipes is fundamental, not just for its chronology but for its modulation (what to do at the beginning, at the end, during, repeatedly), and its rhythm (actions to carry out slowly or quickly, speeding up or slowing down). To 'tirare' the risotto means: stir it slowly, adding the broth little by little, repeatedly, until the liquid is absorbed. The action is a single one, it is the modulation of its time that varies greatly.

Beyond the problem of time, recipes must manage a second logic: the way in which the various actions, whatever point at which they may be carried out, must be connected to one another in order to attain the desired result. For example, if I have to cook sole with vegetables, I will prepare the fish and the vegetables. They are two different 'programmes' that only meet at the end, at the moment of plating up. This does not take away from the fact that, in the kitchen, the actions taken to prepare the sole (removing the skin and the bones, filleting, boiling) and those to prepare the vegetables (wash, peel, cut) can – or in some cases must – overlap. I put the water on to boil, I wash the courgettes, I remove the fish skin, I peel the potatoes. In recipes, however, it would be best to keep these steps separate, distinguishing as far as possible between the 'programme for the preparation of the sole', and the 'programme for the preparation of the vegetables'. Well written recipes do this, many others, however, do not follow this logic, rendering the reader an automaton who carries out the various operations without properly understanding how they serve to create one part of a dish (the spaghetti, for example) or another (the sauce). Keeping the various preparatory steps for the dish's individual components separate in the recipe's text not only helps the reader better understand what they have to do, but allows them to divide the dish down into its main parts, in order to put it back together as best they can at the end.

FOCUS 4

Analysis of a Recipe

Duck à l'alsacienne
Pellaprat, p. 531, Italian edition

Serves 8-10:
1 3 kg duck;
1 kg sausages;
2 kg sauerkraut;
1 kg smoked pancetta;
50 g butter or sunflower oil.

Cooking time: approx. 1 hour and 45 minutes.

Stuff the duck with the sausage, removing the sausagemeat from its casing. Place it in a large casserole dish and, with very little butter or oil, roast it in the oven, leaving it for at least an hour. When ¾ of the cooking time has passed, remove it from the oven, add the sauerkraut and the lard, which you should have already lightly sautéed together with a little butter. Place it back in the oven and cook for a further 30 minutes at least, ensuring the sauerkraut entirely covers the duck. Serve on a very hot serving plate, presenting all the ingredients together.

1. **Actions.** We can distinguish between *explicit actions* expressed by precise verbs (stuff, remove, place, roast, remove, add, sauté, ensure, cover, place, serve) and *implicit actions*, actions that are not expressed but that the text implies (prepare the duck to be stuffed [= clean it out], choose the size of the casserole dish, add oil or butter to it, wait, prepare the sauerkraut).
2. **Subjects.** Consequently, some subjects carry out the explicit actions (cook, casserole dish, oven, cook, sauerkraut, oven) and others carry out the implicit ones (butcher, cook, kitchen helper).
3. **Temporal organisation.** The sequence of actions present in the recipe, which does not correspond to the order in which they are spoken, is: clean out the duck → remove the casing from the sausages → stuff the duck → place it in the oven for ¾ of the time stipulated → sauté the sauerkraut → add the sauerkraut and the lard → put back in the oven for 30 minutes → serve.
4. **Programmes.** The recipe provides two autonomous programmes (clean out the duck, remove the sausagemeat from its casing) that come together in a third (stuffing the duck with the sausage). These programmes are then joined by another two (sautéing the sauerkraut, adding it to the duck), and the final programmes (place it all on the same plate, serve).

6. THE AUTHOR OF THE RECIPE

We have said that the recipe attempts to balance two different levels of culinary competency: that of the author (hyper-competent) and that of the reader (minimally competent). If the aim of the recipe is to increase the reader's expertise, then where does the author's great competence come from? The most obvious response is that they learned it in the field, in the kitchen, during their career as a cook. But, apart from the fact that not all recipe books are written by cooks but rather by 'amateurs' of a different type (just think of the great American cookery author Julia Child [see table]), very often in the recipe books themselves, or even in the text of a single recipe, the problem arises regarding how to highlight the author's skill in order to attract the reader's attention and maintain their trust. It is clear that in a recipe book, as with all didactic texts, the issue of the authority, and therefore the credibility, of the author is fundamental. It is as if the reader first asks themselves: "why should I do what this author is telling me to do?"; and at the same moment, the author is in turn asking themselves: "what can I do so my work will be read and listened to, to ensure that the reader does what I am suggesting?". Any recipe throws out, however ritualistically, a series of imperatives ("make", "slice", "crumble", "put on the boil"), therefore assuming some form of authority from the person writing. An authority that must be earned, on the one hand, and accepted, on the other. As such, the author must ensure they are trustworthy, constructing their own competency as that of someone who not only knows how to cook, but knows what is worth cooking. They know what they are saying, and must demonstrate it.

We often pay no attention to this aspect of the recipe, and yet it is fundamental. If a recipe must be followed, it is because, in the end, the author and the reader must share the same culinary values, the same interests, perhaps even the same culinary ideology, and most importantly, the same tastes. Taste is almost never mentioned in recipe books; it is taken for granted. But it is also something that, though it may remain implicit, must nevertheless be shared. This is where the author's need to be considered an authority figure comes from, someone who not only knows how to cook, but first and foremost, has taste, or at least, has the same taste as the reader.

In times such as ours, in which recipe books have become goods to be exchanged in the publishing market, objects to be sold, and therefore, of marketing, this aspect is even more important. And, in fact, it is emphasised in today's recipe books.

FOCUS 5

The Construction of Trust

Let's look at the following text:

The soupe au pistou is the most beautiful gem of Provençal cooking. It is a masterstroke that will leave you foodies dazed with admiration. A dish fit for the Gods. We said dish, yes, because it is much more than just a soup.
I have long believed that the soupe au pistou was of Genovese origin, and that the provençals, adopting it as their own, had just noticeably improved it. But my friend Fernand Pouillon explained to me that the soupe au pistou was the Iranian national dish! It matters very little: as every person in Provence came to appreciate it, it became naturalised as their own.
Just to be clear, there is no single recipe for soupe au pistou, no definitive recipe used by people in Provence. I could cite at least a dozen and have tried them all. My favourite by a long shot is the one I am audacious enough to call 'my' soupe au pistou. It is with great shame that I confess that I did not invent the recipe. I was given it by a friend from Provence at whose home I enjoyed an extraordinary soupe au pistou for the first time, the same one I will share with you.

These are the lines that introduce for the recipe for soupe a la provençal, or soupe au pistou in Henri Philippon's recipe book, La cuisine provençale. It is apparently a text that presents the dish whose recipe is about to be given, sharing a few pleasantries about it, almost as if to anticipate its discussion by the diners when it is served at the table. But there is much more to it. There is a very strong valorisation of the dish itself ('fit for the Gods'), about which an imaginary story is constructed as if to justify the fact that this is one of the most typical identitary dishes of the South of France. By praising it, the author praises the regional cuisine to which it belongs in its entirety. But on closer inspection we can also see how the author's knowledge is called into play, his knowledge of Provençal cuisine in general, and the soupe au pistou in particular. It is no coincidence that in just a few lines we have met some unidentified characters – Fernand Pouillon and the anonymous Provençal cook – both of whom are friends of the author who provide him with two essential pieces of knowledge: the first tells him about the correct historic origin of the dish, whilst the second provides the steps required for its preparation. The author knows what he is talking about because he has been informed by experts in the field. Here we have a short implicit chain of enunciations that sounds more or less like this: 'someone told me what I am telling you, so believe me just as I believed them'. The aim of this chain of enunciations is, precisely, to achieve credibility by circulating expertise.

Visual representations of food

Maria Laura Agnello

1. SIGHT AND TASTE

How do you render taste visually? And why? How has the way in which we represent food and everything that goes with it – from the raw materials to the kitchen and its tools, to the sharing of food at the table and its appreciation - in the visual arts (from paintings to tapestries, from photography to the most up-to-date smart technology found on smartphones and the like) changed over time? To what extent is this representation the artists' aim? And which meanings has it been able to transmit? Food has a great significance in all cultures in which it is produced and consumed. This much we know. However, the moment in which it becomes part of a work - of art, for example – it is symbolically enriched, the art conferring ulterior meanings upon it that must be understood and analysed.

In this chapter we will discuss all of this, focussing in particular on a fundamental problem: that which distances whilst at the same time intimately binding, two highly diverse senses from the human perceptive apparatus. On the one hand we have taste, which, as we know, receives, processes and sends to the brain all information linked to the consumption of food. These are not just flavours but other sensations also, such as those linked with the sense of smell (odours) or touch (the consistency or temperature of the substances) and even with an act of judgement (pleasure/ displeasure). On the other hand we have sight, an entirely different sensory channel that deals with the management of an entirely different kind of stimulus, such as the reception of light and darkness, the shapes of figures, colours, the measurements distance and position of objects beyond us. While taste is a sense that moves from outside the body to inside it, introjecting substances and processing them, sight carries out the opposite movement: it moves from the inside to the outside, as if leading the human subject to project themselves beyond their physical person. For this reason, as we are well aware, Western culture from Ancient Greece onwards has considered sight to be a more important sense than taste. It has been said that sight is closer to the mind, whilst taste is closer to the body; sight moves toward the intellect, taste towards the flesh; sight tends toward the sacred, taste is rather more human.

Though these hierarchies have varied greatly over various historic periods and in diverse human cultures, and though today we tend very much to scale them back almost to the point of denying them any value at all, they have, nevertheless, had an impact on those faced with the problem of visually rendering a flavour, or rather, of having to represent food through the visual arts. Such a representation, it has often been said, is very difficult, very limitative, if not downright impossible. It is believed that colours and flavours, shapes and consistencies, lights and materials are sensations that cannot be related to one another without significantly deforming their very essence. And yet, despite this conviction, and the objective difficulties it has brought artists and photographers, the history of the visual arts (but also that, for example, of advertising) is filled with works that represent taste, that visually render diverse aspects of food, from the raw materials to their culinary transformations, from delights at the table to conviviality. It is enough to recall the many paintings of the *Last Supper*, a religious theme that has within it a great many reproductions of food and drink, convivial forms and even examples of table service. Or think of the artistic genre of *still life*, in which in various ways nothing more is done than visually rendering the flavours of foods, in their natural state (fruit, vegetables, meat), or processed (cheeses, bread, meals, tables laden with food). Let's not forget the food photography that we find, for example, on restaurant menus. As well as illustrating the dishes, they also try to make them look appetising, often with disappointing results. Then we have the modern phenomenon, extremely common the world over, of photographing dishes in restaurants and sharing the images on various social networks. So, even if the visual representation of taste is problematic *in principle*, the various visual arts have *in fact* always found a great many ways in which to overcome this difficulty, often inventing aesthetic solutions of great value, making, as the saying goes, a virtue of necessity. It is therefore possible to move from one sense to another utilising a procedure that we must study — *synaesthesia*. Something which, as we will see, is much more than a simple procedure, as it is fundamental to matters concerning taste.

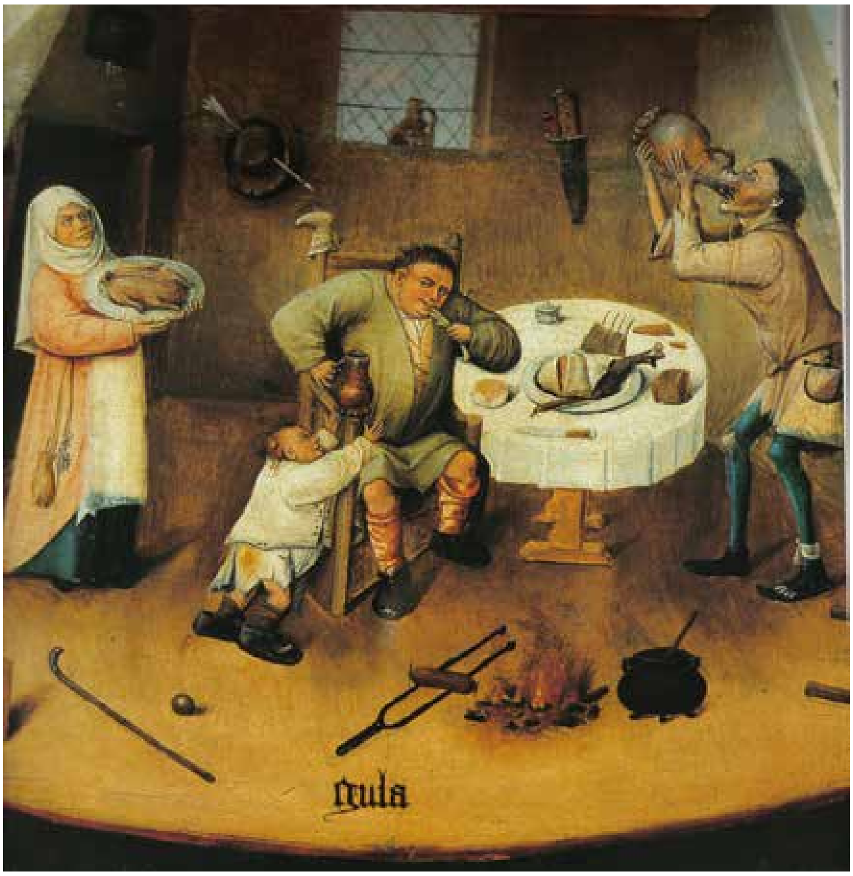


Fig. 1.A. Hieronymus Bosch, *The Seven Deadly Sins: Gluttony*, 1500-1525, Museo del Prado, Madrid.
Fig. 1.B. Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Land of Cockaigne*, 1567, Alte Pinakotek, Munich.

In ancient times they would say that if sin lies in surpassing a sense of measure, be it towards excess or insufficiency, then gluttony appears to be the sin par excellence, the one from which all the others seem to spring forth: lust, pride, sloth, and so on. It is, without doubt, exaggeration, binging, debauchery, but also an obsession that generates lack, such as the loss of lucidity and any meaning of life, that painters such as Bosch and Bruegel depicted so very well in their allegories of Gluttony and Cockaigne, in which obscenely splayed-out spherical figures are accompanied by the thin bodies of habitual drunkards.

As such, art has set aside the relation between food and nutrition, between the need to eat and the daily consumption of food (a natural and physiological phenomenon), in order to attribute other, purely cultural values and meanings to food. For instance, the sharing of food at the table, the emotional atmosphere in the kitchen, the search for pleasure in whatever we are eating, that same hierarchy of the five senses, the philosophical problem of the nexus between appearances and reality, the tendency to construct actual classifications of things and beings through their alimentary reappropriation, their culinary transformation and consequent incorporation. Sometimes paintings bear a moral lesson, such as that which reminds us not to overindulge in our food consumption on pain of falling into the 'mortal sin' of gluttony, or religious sentiments, starting with the representation of the theological 'mystery' of the Eucharist. At other times, painting instead aims to render a sense of ugliness, disgust, the obscene, sin, and it does so by depicting decomposing food, rotting meat, all kinds of wastefulness. As regards the current trend of photographing food dishes, it is clear that this also assigns different meanings to each one, depending on how indulgent they are, how exclusive and how much they cost.

2. PAINTING AND FOOD

However, we must immediately question what the visual arts are talking about when they depict the various cultural elements and the social phenomena involved with food? We can start by saying that the history of Western art has seemingly never paid a great deal of attention to food, considering it – according to an old idealist idea dating back to at least the Greek philosopher Plato – a 'low' phenomenon of little importance because it has to do with the body and is therefore far removed from spirituality, religious or otherwise. However, despite this sort of prejudicial judgment, food appears in paintings all over the place. It provides an opportunity for vital and essential definition of the human and social experience, and is also present simply as a decorative element in both sacred paintings (think of the numerous convivial scenes found in the Holy Scriptures, from the aforementioned Last Supper to the Marriage in Cana, from the Feeding of the 4,000 to Supper at Emmaus), and in the secular, such as those that depict kitchens or marketplaces, scenes depicting hunts or landscapes, dishes or mealtimes (just think of Manet's *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*). In the history of art, we find, albeit rarely, each of the principal moments involving food: the raw materials and their production, first agricultural then industrial, those moments involving their culinary transformation, the spaces dedicated to this and the tools used in this process; the moments of its consumption and its rituals, of appreciation of the dishes; and those bound to their eventual re-use or their expenditure. From ancient to medieval art, from the great humanist-renaissance age to the time of Dutch realism, all the way through classicism to romanticism, *verismo* and the great avant-garde experimentation of the twentieth century, food is depicted in all of its forms and environments. Looking at these paintings it is as if we find reflected in them the main cultural attitudes linked to food over each particular time and place: who or what is in the kitchen, where and how people eat (standing, sitting, alone or in company, at a table, in a Triclinium, and so on), what are the typical practices for the cook or those sharing the table, how and where do servants appear and so on. Let's take the example of the famous painting by Diego Velasquez, *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* (1620). The painting is divided into two parts. In the foreground is a young woman, probably Martha, intent on crushing something with her pestle and mortar. From the ingredients on the table next to her (egg, garlic, chilli pepper), we can assume she is preparing an aioli sauce, a kind of mayonnaise eaten with fish. Behind her we find the scene that gives the painting its title. Christ is talking with two other women, one of whom is probably Mary. It is a situation whose importance is marked out by the second woman in the foreground, an old woman who points to those talking as if to tell the spectator which part of the painting is the most significant, the sacred part, the part to which the spectator must pay attention. It is as if this second scene were reflected in a mirror, showing us that which Martha is looking at. As a result there is just one environment, an environment in which, whilst Christ preaches to one of the two sisters, the other is preparing a common dish for their meal. Created here is a social hierarchy between the two young women – Mary is receiving the Word of the Lord, the other limits herself to participating in this prayerful scene from afar as she cooks. And so here there is a kind of recipe represented within a painting that is sacred but also secular. From this painting we learn a great deal about food, cooking, domestic environments and so on. Last but not least we have the four fishes at the very front of the painting, an evangelical symbol onto which a bright light falls, highlighting their patent freshness and piquing the appetite.

Fig. 2. Diego Velasquez, *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* (1620), National Gallery, London.

We find a very different scene, one that is no longer culinary but convivial, depicted in the painting *Déjeuner d'huitres* (Dinner with oysters, 1735) by Jean-François de Troy, a French eighteenth century painter. Here we have an aristocratic ambiance that is male and celebratory. A dinner of oysters, a particularly tasty food with aphrodisiac properties, prepared with salt, garlic and butter, showered with well-chilled Champagne – we know this because it is held in the cooler in the foreground. Here we have a refined men-only gathering, all of whom are clearly in a state of inebriation, celebrating among the porcelain, crystal and glass, their greedy and disorderly consumption of a food considered erotic. They are all looking up at a fresco featuring scenes of love. The food here is in no way sacred, but secular, with its connection to physical love and festivities. The painting, destined for the dining hall of the private apartments of the King of France in Versailles, is therefore an invitation to live in a carefree, jovial way, much like life in the King's court. It depicts an eating habit, a very particular, indulgent and arrogant way of enjoying food that was typical of French nobility just before the Revolution in 1789.

Fig. 3. Jean-François de Troy, *Déjeuner d'huitres* (1735), Musée Condé, Chantilly.

We find an entirely different kind of conviviality in the popular celebration depicted in *The Peasant Wedding* by Bruegel (1568). Here, a peasant couple are celebrating their wedding feast at an enormous table laid out in a barn. Those sharing the table are wearing clothes typical of the era. We can recognise the bride from the crown she is wearing on her head and the dark drape hung behind her. The bridegroom, as tradition dictates, is serving the table and probably the figure on the extreme left of the painting who is pouring beer into a jug. The meal is a simple one, polenta for all (of different colours and, therefore, provenance), served on a simple board, a door perhaps. It is the triumph of the details of daily life that make this painting a feted masterpiece.

Fig. 4. Pieter Bruegel, *The Peasant Wedding* (1568), Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

3. VISUAL LANGUAGES

But returning to this chapter's initial quandary of trying to understand how to visually render a taste sensation, and how the social meanings of food are more generally transmitted through the visual arts, we must get to know the tools that enable this to occur. In other words, we must understand how visual language works. Just as verbal languages exist (Italian, English, Spanish, etc.), so those belonging to images exist in much the same way. On the one hand, this makes them very powerful because they are capable not only of representing things but of also speaking to the world, or rather expressing different kinds of meaning. On the other, however, it renders them more fragile because they are subject to precise codes that must be understood in order to understand them. Just as in order to understand a language we must learn its rules, so in order to understand the meaning of an image we must be familiar with the codes it employs. We find proof of this when we look at an image. I may not understand its meaning, so I limit myself to seeing that which it represents without grasping its more profound significance. In order to represent things, and in order to be able to convey meaning, images use particular codes. It is often said that images 'imitate' reality, that they 'look like' it to such an extent that, by looking at them, we see the world that they represent. But in order to do this, we must first possess and use precise linguistic rules. First and foremost are those of a **figurative** nature linked to the mechanisms of imitation. These are followed by those that are **plastic** and linked to mechanisms such as colour and form, and are therefore purely visual.

Let's look at an example. Here is a painting by Vincenzo Campi, an artist from the Veneto who painted 'market paintings'. This is a genre developed between Holland and Northern Italy in the latter half of the eleventh century, when food became to all intents and purposes the main subject of artistic representation. Food is exhibited in the foreground as if laid out on a market stall, with a series of connections binding them that recapture and partially modify their symbolic value. Not only, therefore, do the various fruits find a new meaning, but they end up speaking about something else, providing the spectator with a sort of discourse on ethics and human life in general.

Fig. 5. Vincenzo Campi, *Fruttivendola* (1580), Frugger Collection, Kirchheim Castle.

This painting entitled *La fruttivendola* (The Greengrocer, 1580) depicts a scene in which a young woman – elegantly dressed despite her job – is peeling an apple as she displays her abundant wares, whilst in the background peasants collect fruit from the trees. From the producer to the consumer? In some ways, yes. On one sense we find ourselves faced with a realistic scene, in which every detail of the single elements present in the painting have been depicted with the utmost care: the cabbages, the cherries, the asparagus, the pumpkin, the peaches, and so on, are painted with very fine brushstrokes which make them seem absolutely real. However, there is a series of clues that leads us in the opposite direction towards a painting of extreme complexity and calculated structure that imposes a moralising discourse on the spectator. The woman, as we have already commented, is wearing a dress that seems entirely out of place given her job. In fact, it seems to wholly contradict her role, as she appears as an aristocratic lady delighting in being surrounded by particular splendid and appetising fruit. Not at all like a greengrocer. Upon careful consideration, we notice that the fruits laid out at the market, though very fresh, grow in different seasons, something that would be impossible at a real market. Furthermore, the scene is not set in an urban context, where markets are generally found, but in a rather non-descript countryside, the very place where the fruit is usually harvested (as is happening in the painting's background) but not sold (as seems to be the case in the foreground). Lastly, consider that enormous lily protruding from a basket of apples and aubergines. Not only is it out of proportion with the other elements in the painting, but it is also somewhat out of place. What is a lily doing in a market stall fruit display?

So, the first thing to consider in a painting is that which does not fit in, that which betrays the spectator's expectations, expectations that the painting's title, for example, helps to create. Are we really looking at a greengrocer? Not exactly, or at least, not just that. Firstly, we must note that this painting belongs to a cycle of various paintings destined for the dining hall of the rich German banker Hans Fugger, a fervent catholic. The others depict people selling poultry and fish. It is, therefore, a cycle of paintings that revisits the fundamental elements of nature that, in the ancient Greek tradition, are water (fish), air (birds) and the earth (fruit). This painting speaks of the earth and its fruits in all of their variety and singularity. This explains the presence of fruit from different times of the year in the same display. The painting does not depict a market but the fruits of the earth, the wealth and abundance that nature provides for humankind. Far from a realistic representation, Campi's painting speaks to us about the correct usage of this abundance. So there are peaches, cherries, pears, aubergines, blackberries and melons for the summer, nuts, almonds, apples and grapes for the autumn, asparagus, beans, artichokes for the spring, and white cabbage for the winter. The fact they are all present in one single market tells us of the human's eternal struggle with time and natural spaces when it comes to food. Though nature imposes its seasonal rituals and climatic changes, we have people (also a matter of cuisine) attempting to eat fruit out of season, perhaps inventing specific techniques for their production and conservation.

This is what the painting depicts. However, other, predominantly visual communicative mechanisms are used here, producing additional meanings. Take for example the way in which the fruit is displayed throughout the space on the canvas. At the lowest part of the painting are the most lowly plants, those that produce an edible bulb below ground: onions, garlic, shallots. These are flanked by the plants whose roots we eat, such as radishes, and those whose leaves we consume, such as cabbage. Higher up, inside baskets, we have beans; and balanced on top are asparagus and artichokes, vegetables that grow above the earth. Lastly, in the highest part, we find on display the most refined group, fruit, which grows far from the earth: cherries, blackberries, pears, almonds, hazelnuts, figs, apples, melons, peaches and apricots. So there is a precise logic in placement, moving from low to high and reproducing within the element of earth, a precise hierarchy for that which it produces. If you think about it, there is no reason to place the positive at the top and the negative at the bottom. The painter is the one who has decided to do so simply by laying out the fruit and vegetables on his canvas, and creating that which we call a semi-symbolism*, a kind of equivalence in which both "high : low = better : worse", and which can also be read as "high : better = low : worse". On reflection, we see that this is an equivalence that has nothing realistic about it. It is the painter who has created this system and made it signify. The only exception are the cherries, placed in two containers near the bottom, next to the vegetables; and the aubergines, which should be lower down but are placed high up. Yet another peculiarity. If we connect all of this with the case of the lily, an oversized flower that emerges as if 'on its feet', without any support, from the basket of aubergines and apples. The lily - a known symbol of nascent Christ (it is almost always present in depictions of the Annunciation) and therefore wholesomeness and purity – faces upwards, in parallel with the bunch of grapes to its left (another oversized element) in an entirely unnatural way. It distances itself as much as possible from the aubergines (*malum insanum*), a vegetable long considered harmful and cursed, and placed by no means coincidentally in a basket alongside worm-eaten apples. Here we have another semi-symbolism*: "lily : aubergine = purity : danger".

The positioning of various elements in the painting becomes significant both in their reciprocal relationship and in their placement in particular areas of the painting. What lies at the very centre of the canvas? On close inspection we find the woman's right hand, intent on peeling an apple, a famously ambivalent symbol (vitality, but also sin). Intent, that is, on separating that which is dirty (the peel is sinuous, like a serpent) from that which is clean. This gesture is not only at the centre of the painting but is emphasised by the fact that the greengrocer is looking the spectator in the eyes as if singling them out, as if saying to them: “look what I am doing, you do it too”. Here we find the painting’s message: in order to enjoy the fruits of nature you must be able to distinguish between them, know them, weigh up their ethical and spiritual value before their nutritional worth. This is taste: the capacity for judgement, knowing how to distinguish before being able to appreciate.

And we could continue, as this painting is abundant with dispositifs of meaning. On one hand there are dispositifs linked to depiction, to the codes of visual representation in the world: an aubergine is represented by its purple colour in order to be recognised, just as the cabbage must have its wrinkles and the pumpkin must be displayed cut in half so that we can see its seeds. On the other hand, the dimensions of the objects we see can also become significant (think of the lily), as can their abstract form (the sinuous nature of the peel) and their colour. The greengrocer’s cheeks are the same colour as the peaches in her lap, whilst the red of the cherries, distributed throughout various points in the painting, is reflected in her coral necklace. The analysis aims to locate the **figurative** *language* present in the painting (modes of representation, difference between solid objects and abstract geometric figures, and so on), as well as its **plastic** *language* (shapes, colours, positions). By making the dispositifs set in motion by these two languages relevant, the various meanings present in the painting can emerge.

4. ON SYNAESTHESIA

There is, however, another form of visuality used to produce meaning, which is of great importance particularly when it comes to depicting food. It is a mechanism I have already cited: that of synaesthesia. What is this exactly? It is those mechanisms used to evoke one sensation through another – in our case, a sensation of taste through sight. A rather well-known example is that used to produce the sensation of a cold drink by presenting it inside a container whose outside is covered in little bubbles or clouded, or even standing in ice. Advertising has often played with this strategy, which despite being rather simple and somewhat banal, is nevertheless very effective. Similarly, the sense of lightness evoked by certain diet foods is represented the wind, even by bodies flying. The aim is efficacy: the image does not exist in order to represent, but to provoke sensations and perceptions, to set in motion the perception of the body in its entirety, to pique the appetite and get our mouths watering. This is also used, particularly in modern art (see Eat Art by Daniel Spoerri), to achieve the opposite effect, to provoke sensations of refusal or disgust. The issue with synaesthesia is not therefore to transmit messages but to ‘make us experience’ precise, calculated physical sensations.

Fig. 6. A.B. Beer Adverts.

Another very common way of doing this, both in painting and photography (advertising or otherwise) is that of creating images in which the spectator's gaze is brought significantly closer so that what emerges is their materiality, the different consistency of the substances rather than the form of the objects or dishes. This happens frequently with still life, as we find in the famous paintings by Francisco Goya depicting slices of salmon, works that are so well known that they have more recently been recreated photographically. The image is brought so very close, their perfect details, the colours clearly laid out, the light properly directed, that it seems you can almost feel their tender flesh, their fibres. It is almost as if you can touch them, smell them, taste them between your teeth.

Fig. 7. Francisco Goya, *Still Life with Slices of Salmon* (1808-1812), Oskar Reinhart Sammlung am Roemerholz, Winterthur.

Although very different both in the way they are made and in their intentions, the photographs of some foods aim almost as a matter of course to restore their consistency. This happens with chocolate, whose viscosity is communicated by once more bringing the gaze much closer to the product in order to create the perception of it being almost tactile and, therefore, also one of taste. What's more, the chocolate's semi-liquid nature allows the substance to be played with in order to create various shapes.

Fig. 8. A.B. Chocolate adverts.

The same thing often occurs in adverts for milk, in which this becomes a substance that can take any form, a liquid that progressively learns how to create different objects and figures from our world. And so, overflowing from glasses or cartons, we find milk storms, closed fists, towers of Pisa, athletes' bodies, hearts, even drops of milk that become amiable anthropomorphic characters.

Fig. 9. A. B.C. Milk adverts.

Returning to still life, the technique used in this genre of painting often consists of being able to render the different materiality of the foodstuffs and the objects accompanying them on the table. For example, showing reflective materials such as glass bottles or glasses, or crystal goblets, side by side is an inspired method achieved by knowing how to use light effectively. Where some substances shine, others such as the cheeses or peaches absorb the light. This contrast between reflection and absorption has become a rule in still life as we see in the depiction of pheasants, whose feathers partially absorb and partially reflect the light. Celebrated in these cases is the texture of things, the rough, the smooth, crispness, foaming, their viscosity, but also the softness of a cake, its being more or less fluffy, as in this photograph in which the material opposition between the panettone's soft sponge and the harder and brightly coloured candied fruits is celebrated.

Fig. 10. A.B.C.. Manca Didascalia

As emerges rather clearly from many of these images, synaesthesia is essentially intrinsic to the act of eating and drinking. In the sensorial process of taste each of the other senses play a role (such as smell and touch), so the synesthetic image has more routes to take. It is not only a case of visually rendering taste, but of managing the presence of multiple sensations and evoking them in the image. This is the great lesson that art teaches to those who want to speak about taste with a little more awareness. Furthermore, sight is also an integral part of the tasting process. As a result, as we will see, today thanks to smart technology we tend to give excessive importance to images of dishes, and it is indisputable that their visual component contributes to the construction of a taste judgement, or one of disgust. Vision, so to speak, anticipates taste; it directs it, even substituting it. There are certain types of cuisine, such as Japanese, in which the visual, particularly the chromatic, component is fundamental, and others in which this is less important, such as modern western cuisine, though the visual is by no means absent here. The food industry plays a great deal on this, tending to amplify it for commercial reasons. Lastly, we should remember that sight even contributes to the creation of the plates through synaesthesia during the cooking process. It is well known that the colour of foods during cooking indicates their progressive transformation. For example, a golden tone is a sign of crunchiness and, more generally, of the various textures and consistencies. So even the preparation of food is inherently synesthetic.

5. FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography has a notable specialisation when it comes to the depiction of food. There is no recipe book today that is not accompanied by photographs of the finished dish and the phases of its preparation. The photograph of the dish, as well providing a model to aim for, acts to tempt the reader to purchase the manual and then make the recipe. These are images that must *show* the food and must make us *desire* it, delight in it, urging us to first taste it with our eyes. It is a complex message that uses its own language, one that does not limit itself to *reproducing* reality, showing it exactly as it is, but that fills reality with meanings.

As regards food preparation, the value of the photograph comes from that which we could call its 'informative potential'. It is not easy to verbally describe the different phases involved in preparing a dish. Saying 'finely chop' an onion, for example, does not help us understand exactly how small those pieces should be, nor does it show us exactly what a 'well-browned' piece of meat looks like. All this information is easily communicated using the photographic language that we have the increasingly common habit of using to create visual recipes, in which words are incidental, if not entirely absent. One example of this is *The Family Meal* from a man long considered the best chef in the world, Ferran Adrià. Photography has a representative capability well beyond verbal language.

However, the very elements that at first sight seem to be enormous advantages, and that have authorised the success of food photography, can, however, become limitations. Firstly because there are often patent differences between the dishes made and those idealised in photography, even when they are prepared industrially. Every so often, for example, the Internet provides us with comparisons between the photographs of hamburgers that appear in the advertising of well-known fast-food outlets and those taken by consumers of the product bought at their restaurant. In the former, the hamburger is monumental: perfectly golden bread, brilliantly green lettuce that looks fresh and crisp, the visible layer of sauce that is perfectly contained within the structure of the product, and so on. In the latter, however, the bread is pale, soggy like the salad inside it, with sauce dripping out all over the place. Not only is the second image less pleasant to look at, it even seems smaller and is undeniably less appetising.

Another limit is imposed by that very representative capability discussed earlier. The details transmitted by any one photograph are so numerous that it is difficult to predict which one will grab the spectator's attention. They might, for example, focus on the kind of onion that is depicted and erroneously believe that the recipe can only be made with that particular kind. They then find that is impossible to purchase where they currently are and they assume that without that particular onion they will not be possible to cook that dish, when in fact any onion would do. This is why photographs are often accompanied by captions that describe what is being demonstrated, guiding the spectator's gaze so that they do not only notice those details that they hold to be effectively necessary or suitable.

From what we have already seen, it seems clear that *food photography* is one of the most complex of photographic genres. That effect of the lettuce's crispness mentioned earlier depends on the way in which the light hits the salad, making its slightly moist surface shine a little, rendering the green brilliant. But it is also the use of focus, which presents the edges of the leaves in a perfectly vivid way whilst the parts inside the sandwich are slightly obscured. This means that the dish must be prepared using devices that have nothing to do with food. The dark lines left by the grill on a piece of meat are not, for example, made during cooking but after, using a red-hot skewer so that they are perfectly in parallel with one another and the meat is not excessively burned. Even the moisture of the lettuce is simulated by spraying on miniscule drops of water and even chemical products, making the food being photographed inedible. The food that looks perfect ends up being unfit for human consumption.

Fig. 11. Food offers an extraordinary selection of shapes and colours for the visual arts to draw on. While we can see ice creams in this picture, we do not think of them as a more or less appetising food, but of the overall aesthetic effect that plays on contrasts between shapes and colours. One of the great masters of photography in the 1930s, Edward Weston, used to photograph mushrooms, lettuce leaves and other vegetables in black and white, making them seem like pieces of fabric or even lunar landscapes. All sense of what the subjects of the photographs originally were would be lost.

Fig. 12. *Risotto oro e zafferano*, risotto with saffron and gold, one of the most famous dishes of one of the best known chefs in the world, Gualtiero Marchesi, seems to have been created in order to be photographed rather than eaten. The perfectly square shining gold leaf contrasts with the perfectly round black plate, making a traditional dish such as risotto alla milanese something new, something for social media if nothing else.

Fig. 13. Here we have another *risotto alla Milanese*, albeit with an unexpected addition of prawns. Here, however, the photograph produces an entirely different meaning. More than the consistency of the rice or the beauty of the plate, what counts is the story that this kind of *mise-en-scène* implies. The two glasses, the pieces of parmesan (an ingredient used in the dish), even the fork that has taken a few mouthfuls from the saucepan before being laid down on the table, still laden with food, seem to suggest a story of seduction, one of a couple who have made this delicious delicacy, which did not make it to the table.

These photographic techniques, however, must also bear in mind that food is a product that already carries many meanings with it, it has its own *imaginary* connected to each culture, and so each time it is photographed, that very act is adding messages to something that already has them in abundance.

6. FOOD PORN

The modern phenomenon of 'food porn' is the exclusive predilection for the visual aspects of food to the detriment of those other sensory channels that, in principle, should be more important, such as taste, smell or touch. A great many restaurants at all levels – from humble *trattorias* to those with Michelin stars – seem to favour the appearance on the plate over flavour, the dish's aesthetic aspects to those regarding taste. So, simultaneously, a great many people today photograph food rather than eating it, in order to share the photographic image on the Internet, but in doing so they deny a moment of real conviviality. Food porn is the photographic image of the dish taken to nth degree.

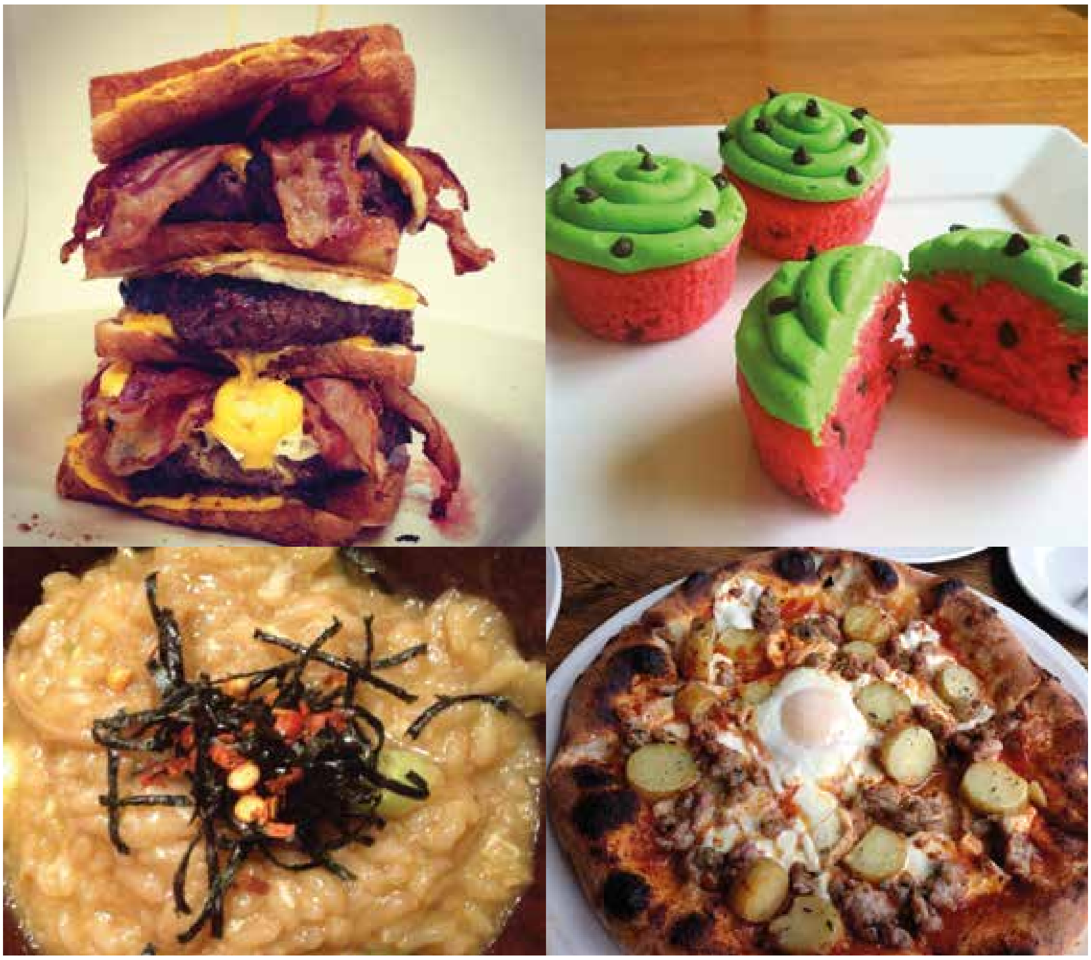


Fig. 14. A.B.C.D. A few examples of Food Porn, from millions of possible images.

Furthermore, with food porn there are no specialist photos or professional photographers, but amateurs, normal people. The communicative aim of these photos is rather evident: to stimulate the appetite, to predict the taste, to give an idea of a flavour. To take the synesthetic work to the nth degree, by removing any artistic value or cultural weight.

What's more, in the majority of these photos we see no one. No one is eating, there is no one with the person taking the photograph eating, chatting or doing anything else. Not only is conviviality missing, so is the very act of ingesting, least of all savouring. It is not just people that are absent, there is nothing else in shot. The dish is alone, with no context, no environment, no laid table. If sometimes, rarely, we catch a glimpse of a wine glass or a fork, their appearance in these photos is clearly pure coincidence. They are in the background, in partial view, out of focus. Dominant is the modern myth of media cuisine, the maximum and minimum unit of culinary signification that is neither immeasurable nor measurable: the dish without a meal, without any textuality. Where paintings showed us overflowing tables, joviality, still life, pornographic culinary photography excludes and isolates, it hypostatizes.

But what kinds of dishes does food porn use most? It tends to favour traditional, everyday dishes that are in no way refined. At first glance, the most popular seems to be pizza, and not its vast number of national or international variants but its most banal, albeit extraordinarily appetising and (most importantly) eternally stringy incarnation with tomato and mozzarella. Hot on its heels is a series of filled sandwiches, then meat, whilst fish, pasta and risotto are less common. But the winner is without doubt desserts, sweets of all shapes and sizes that best lend themselves to that deeply attractive universe that is food porn. Pies, meringues, *babas*, patisserie, cream puffs and doughnuts, biscuits - the more the merrier!

Enticing the photographer's gaze are not the foods in themselves but their chromatic combinations, often bold if not incongruous. As such, sandwiches are displayed whilst open so we can glimpse their fillings, and rigorously rare hamburgers are covered in sauces and other multi-coloured garnishes. In biscuits what counts is the ratio between dough and chocolate chips; the fillet steak is surrounded by orange slices, the topside is accompanied by emerald-green vegetables and pink potatoes, whilst the patisserie oozes with a brilliant white cream and spaghetti drips with tomato sauce.

If those dishes most favoured by food porn are simple and everyday, the artificiality comes from the eye that looks at it, and therefore the formal composition of the photographic text, its merely visual aspect. It would seem that greatest attention is paid to the chromatic dimension and more generally to light. The hues are saturated and uniform, with very few shading disparities, reflections, or see-through areas.

Sometimes pastels dominate (baby blue, light pink, light green), whilst at others it is the *chiaroscuro* contrast that is rendered more intense. Exposure to light is very high, something that creates a stereotypical Caravaggio-esque play on areas that are entirely in shadow and others that are lit to provide perspective. The aim is to highlight within the unit of each dish those gastronomic features that are held to be essential, or those features that are considered to be indicative of added flavour. Although the object is often centralised, the object's form goes beyond the implied frame, the borders of the camera's lens, for the simple reason that the gaze looking at material details and their contrasts is in extreme close up. We could describe this gaze as *haptic*, tactile, synesthetically capable of causing the emergence of the supposedly 'pure' material of the food, thanks to this hypertrophy of the visual.

It must be said, however, that this tendency is changing somewhat to make way for that which is usually referred to as 'food style', in which the dish is no longer pictured alone but tends to be inserted within a wider context. Progressively, it is as if the camera were slowly moving backwards, broadening its visual field and introducing more and more elements to it; from those present on the table to an entire landscape. In this way the food finds its own setting without ever managing to move away from those stereotypes that reduce it to a pure sign of itself. Now, the stereotype is no longer simply the substantiality of the food but the context in which it is consumed, if it is even consumed at all. Rather, food becomes part of the mise-en-scène as a decorative element within a broader environment in which it loses all gastronomic value. It now signals an 'atmosphere', a 'mood', a personality, a vague emotion.

Fig. 15. A.B. Examples of food styling.

Fig. 16. A.B. Dishes with a view

FOCUS 1

The Last Supper

If the history of Western art is abundant with paintings depicting the Last Supper it is because it deals with one of the central moments in the Evangelical story, captured, as we know, in the ritual of the Mass by Consecration and Communion. It is the mystery *par excellence* of the Catholic faith: the transformation of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ (known as transubstantiation, the changing of substances) that leads the good Christian not only to blindly believe but also to preach the word of God starting with this act ("Do this in memory of me"). This is where the sacred value of this pictorial motif comes from. The religious significance of this precise moment in the story of Jesus, rivalled only by the Crucifixion, has meant that painters (followed by photographers and artists of all kinds) have considered it a motif to repeat over and over.
Now, as is always the case when moving from a written **text** to its visual incarnation, something inevitable happens: we must consider the issue of rendering in the painting that which is present in the **text** and of adding something to the painting that perhaps is not present in the **text**. In our case we know that when it comes to food, the Evangelical **text** barely mentions bread and wine (substances destined, by faith, to become sacred). There is no mention whatsoever of any other dish, or of how the protagonists were distributed at the table, or the setting, or the presence of anyone other than Jesus and the twelve apostles. The painter is therefore forced to expand upon the scene, deciding for instance where to set it, how to distribute the characters over the canvas, how to lay the table and, lastly, what to give Jesus and his disciples to eat on that Maundy Thursday eve.

Fig. 17. Leonardo, *The Last Supper* (1495-1498), Santa Maria delle Grazie, Milan.

This is what interests us about this motif: the imagination the painters have used to depict the Last Supper that goes beyond its sacred value, often inserting into it elements that are not described in the Gospel, from the dishes eaten to the table manners of those enjoying the meal, the architectural context in which they find themselves and so on. Here at the sacred table we find so many variations. If the most important painting in this long series is undoubtedly the fresco by Leonardo da Vinci in Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan - in rather poor condition but still entirely representative (just look at the number of imitations and parodies on the internet) -, an example in which we see very little of the food, there are many others in which the dishes served at the table are highly visible and feature shrimp, fish, suckling pig, chestnuts and so on. It would appear to be fairly evident that, if in those ages or for those artists most concerned with poverty the scene of the Supper is simple, frugal (few dishes, very little table dressing, no other characters), in those times and for those artists who were more inclined towards luxury, wealth or even simply the sumptuous decoration of the setting, the Supper is filled with many more details and flashes of artistic inspiration. We can also assume, albeit without any philological certainty, that foods from the sea would be present in towns by the sea, whilst those inland would be more inclined towards meat. It seems that with the passing of time, depictions of the Last Supper grow increasingly complex in terms of the sheer number of details present in them, and richer when it comes to quality of the elements found on the table. Let’s consider a few examples.

One of the first representations of this motif can be found in a mosaic in Ravenna, in which Christ is not seated at the centre of the image, as we are used to seeing him, but to the right-hand side, which acts as the head of the table. This is a sign of how the place of honour at the table changes according to the era and culture. The table here is covered by a white tablecloth with many folds and some decorations that seem to be oriental. On the table are a few loaves of bread and two enormous fish that are entirely out of proportion for the scene. There is no wine. Rather than depicting a realistic situation, the image seems to refer above all to the divine nature of Christ and his miracle, the only one in all four Gospels, of the multiplication of

Fig. 18. Maestranze ravennate, *Last Supper*, Sant'Apollinare nuovo, Ravenna.

the loaves and fishes.

In the celebrated *Last Supper* by Duccio da Boninsegna, Jesus and the disciples are instead eating a suckling pig (a cinta senese perhaps?). Again we have a white tablecloth and a sparse table setting. There are no liquid foods, so no spoons. The knives, each with a squared off blade, are carefully distributed one per three or four people. The crockery is in a simple ceramic, and in the clear glasses red wine can be seen. The only food accompanying the pork is the bread, in round forms, which the apostle without a beard on the left is trying to cut. The scene is well framed architecturally, and the characters are well distributed throughout it: five in the foreground, almost with their backs to us, and two groups of three on the other side of the table with Christ in the middle, on whom the youngest apostle is leaning.

Fig. 19. Duccio da Boninsegna, *Last Supper* (1308-1311), Museo dell'Opera del Duomo, Siena.

Fig. 20. Giovanni Canavesio, *Last Supper* (1491), Notre Dame des Fontaines, La Brigue.

It almost seems as if, whilst the most lauded artists such as Giotto or Leonardo were fairly uninterested in the food on the table during the Last Supper, for those middle-range artists things were very different. For example, the table depicted by Giovanni Canavesio is abundant, filled with food of all kinds. On an elegantly decorated white tablecloth

we find bread rolls scattered in threes over the table, two salt cellars, glasses and jugs of wine in which we can see red wine, wooden plates and, in the centre, a large dish from which what seems to be a leg of lamb protrudes.
No less abundant and with much more movement, is the Last Supper by Jacopo Bassano, filled with various iconographic elements as well as a dog in the extreme foreground. On the table are a bottle and one single glass, both half full, a large loaf of bread, an orange, an open pomegranate, and a metal place carrying a lamb's head and a pair of hooves.

Fig. 21. Jacopo Bassano, *Last Supper* (1542), Galleria Borghese, Rome. The visual solutions are far more varied, and from each of these we learn the habits relating to food and table manners of the various eras and countries.

FOCUS 2

Disgust

While throughout the history of art the aim has been to exalt the positive visual aspects (the 'beauty') of food, as we have seen in particular with still life, there has also been an opposite trend- that of depicting the negative aspects of food, such as its ugliness, dissonance, monstrosity, degradation, often caused by the deterioration of the food itself, by rotting meat, by decay. This tendency reached its peak with contemporary art where we also find a clear critique of the system for the production and consumption of food within industrial society, from battery farms to the large-scale consumption of fast food. From the pleasure of the senses, magnified for centuries, we move to the 'truth' of the senses, or rather a 360 degree perception of food, encompassing both its positive and its negative aspects. Beyond the images linked to taste we now have numerous images that provoke disgust. If food brings life, in other ways it can also be death, if not even carry it.

A celebrated work communicating just this is *Slaughtered Ox* (1655) by Rembrandt, which can still be categorised as still life. In this painting the only subject present is the ox's carcass that almost completely fills the artistic space, and which, thanks to the darkness surrounding it, seems to almost pour out of the painting invading the spectator's space. In the darkness of the basement we can however make out the figure of a woman who is facing the flayed animal, looking at it with horror. If on one hand the artist is using this painting to demonstrate his impressive techniques with clearly visible brushstrokes that realistically depict the different shapes formed by the animal's fat, tendons, muscles and blood, on the other the overwhelming sense it communicates is one of the horror of death. What we eat is the result of a living thing being

Fig. 22. Rembrandt Harmenszoon Van Rijn, Slaughtered Ox (1655), Musée du Louvre, Paris.

killed. This is, in short, the exhibit of a *sacrifice*, with clear allusions to the crucifixion of Jesus, the very definition of a sacrificial being.

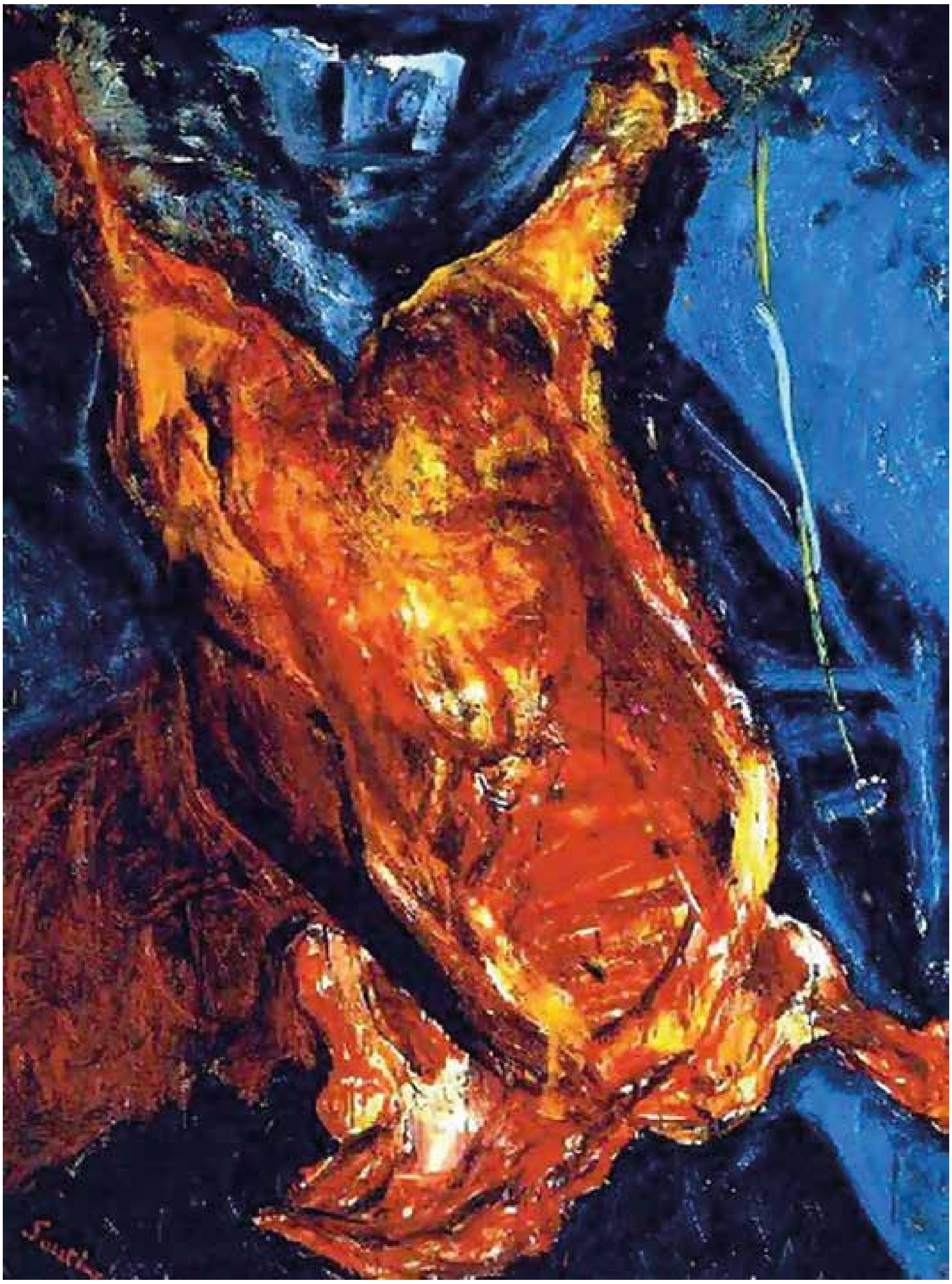


Fig. 23. Chaim Soutine, *Carcass of Beef* (1912), Musée des Beaux Arts, Grenoble.

Rembrandt's painting is so famous that it has been taken up many times by other painters and photographers with almost analogous meanings. Among these, the works by Lithuanian painter Chaim Soutine stand out. Painting in the 1920s, he created some fifteen works entitled *Carcass of Beef* using very bright, almost unnatural colours. Whilst Rembrandt aimed for realism, Soutine pushes the depiction of the animal's cadaver to such a point that he removes any naturalness from it. It is said that the artist had the habit of bringing an animal carcass to his studio in order to paint it in its various phases of decomposition, and when the meat turned grey, he would spread blood on it to give it its colour back. The animal fills the entire space of the painting; there is nothing in it but the carcass. The materiality of the carcass is rendered brilliantly by the materiality of the oil colours applied in such a way as to cause them to thicken on the painting's surface, giving it a certain depth. Bestowed with an almost three-dimensionality, the figure seems to extend beyond the canvas and touch whoever is looking at it. But this is not a figure deformed simply by its being anomalous in its state of decomposition, but also by its entirely unrealistic rendering in the painting: the vivid red and blue dominate, in **contrast** with the blackish background. The sense of death is heightened by its multiplication: why so many quasi-identical works? This series of paintings does not tend to represent a specific object but its progressive multiplication. It does not therefore refer to that single carcass before the painter, but to all the carcasses that, in the slaughterhouse, meet the same end. Death here is not an event that inexorably arrives, like destiny, but a planned end, transformed into a routine with the aim of providing food for human beings. The sense of sacrifice that was present in Rembrandt's ox 'on the cross' is entirely lost here: the beast is not sacrificial but pure animal substance destined to produce a meal for the masses. A substance that, however, is destined to decompose, putrefy, decay. Life and death pass back and forth in a perverse fascination with blood, the obscenity of a figure that loses its original form in order to decompose, to become a simple substance with no identity or aim. A sense of inevitability, tragedy and desperation prevails.

Big and Small Screens

Alice Giannitrapani, Francesco Mangiapane

Food is not only what we eat, whether it is savoured or gulped down, but also what is described in novels, songs, magazines, and also obviously, by films and television programmes. Ingredients and recipes, restaurants and food issues, sociable dinners and problems that take food as a starting point from which to address debates on inter-culturality, are themes that are increasingly prevalent on both the big and the small screen. As such, it becomes of fundamental importance for us to reflect on these bonds between food and the audiovisual, to understand some of the dynamics that drive this interesting and composite part of contemporary gastromania.

1. FOOD ON TV

If you turn on the television at any time, day or night, you will inevitably find programmes which feature food as their undisputed protagonist, helped in no small part by the huge proliferation of **thematic** channels devoted to the subject. Gigantic cakes, chocolates of all kinds, traditional dishes, exotic recipes, but also cooks who help rescue all manner of restaurants from the brink of failure, normal people who aspire to become great chefs, great chefs who challenge normal people in the kitchen, and even obese people who submit themselves to extremely strict diets, extravagant characters who play at stuffing themselves with excessive quantities of food, extreme travellers who try dishes that appear revolting at first sight, and battle-ready housewives demonstrating their winning formulas in the kitchen.

And yet, jumping between the talent and talk shows, between documentaries and game shows, we are struck by the fact that no matter the explosion of nonchalant kitchen antics, of spectacular flambées, and disastrous attempts at frying in front of the cameras, this is never balanced out by an action of tasting. On TV everyone cooks, but nobody eats. Or rather, they try, they pass judgement, they nibble, they pick, but they never give in to that great gastronomic pleasure of tasting, of savouring, of the slow encounter between food and the body. This is probably due to the demands of television, as here the viewer's attention must be engaged at all times, and as such the rhythm of the story becomes fundamental: long pauses or drawn-out tastings risk being flat and monotonous, tempting the viewer to turn over, and must therefore be avoided at all costs.

Instead, it is the challenges thrown down in the kitchen that win out. In first place we have *Masterchef*, but there is also *Hell's Kitchen*, *The Great British Bake Off*, and so forth. Despite this proliferation of food on television being heavily criticised by gastronomes and renowned chefs, with some describing it as 'food porn' and others highlighting how this way of staging the cook's work simplifies the long, hard slog and dedication required by those who truly want to become a competent chef, the fact remains that viewers favour this kind of television, which is accompanied by in-depth coverage on social media, the consequences of which go well beyond television programmes. It would seem, for example, that the sharp rise in enrolments in hospitality institutes over recent years can, in part, be attributed to the widespread presence of food on television.

1.1 HISTORY

The presence of food on television is not, in fact, a new phenomenon, but dates back to the dawn of the small screen. Here we will look at its main stages and its evolution.

1.1.1. The Beginning (1940s – 1960s)

TV is born and takes root in various countries according to different modalities, modalities that play a determining role in establishing a certain kind of programming and a certain way of making television. Essentially, we can locate two large models of development in television: the American model and the European one. In America, the networks are run privately, earning money through advertising investment by large companies (the commercial television model). In Europe, television channels are generally controlled by the State and financed, for the most part, by a licence fee paid by users (the public service model). As a consequence, in commercial TV the aim is to maximise viewers (the more people watch a given programme, the more financial investment is attracted, the more the network earns), with the genre of entertainment, with its aim to amuse the viewer, becoming fundamental. With public television, the service role assigned to the small screen is of the utmost importance, aiming – according to the BBC model – to inform, entertain and educate the public.

If we look specifically at food, in commercial TV the genre of *instructional* programming takes root, in which the viewer is presented recipes they can replicate. A fundamental role is played here by the sponsors. Food products and kitchen objects are displayed during each episode and essentially dictate the rules of the programme. In the space of a few years, this genre becomes increasingly attractive, moving from simple, starkly illustrated recipes to more elaborate dishes explained by increasingly 'television-friendly' faces, which attempt to accompany the simple 'illustration' with a more captivating narration that can involve the viewers (as James Beard does in *I Love to Eat!*, from 1946).

In public service television, all programmes of this type are void of sponsorship, and the steps required to prepare the dish are accompanied by information that aims to educate viewers, concentrating, for example, on cooking methods and on more general discourses surrounding cookery and food (as Philip Harben does on the BBC with his *Cookery Lesson* from 1960). Furthermore, in European television we find food documentaries that tell the story of journeys in search of local traditions and dishes, as happens in Italy in the 1957 programme, *Viaggio nella valle del Po alla ricerca dei cibi genuini*, by Mario Soldati. The role played by this genre of programming is doubly important. It elevates the wine or food product to the level of 'star' worthy of becoming a part of media reality, whilst describing how unique it is, linking the discovery of local delicacies to culture and, in other ways, to tourism. The happy connection between the discourse of food and that of holidays finds fertile ground, leading to a current that, through various experiments of varying levels of success, has recently come back into fashion (for example, with *A Cook's Tour* presented by Anthony Bourdain).

1.1.2. Developments (1960s-1990s)

At this later stage, we see the European model and the American model moving closer together. In many countries that had adopted a model of public service broadcasting, the monopoly is broken and commercial television channels enter the market, taking the inspiration for their programming from the United States. While public television continues in part to make the idea of public service broadcasting its own, with the illustration of recipes that are 'useful' to the viewer, and in which information on food continues to be of central importance (take

Delia Smith's Cookery Course from 1978, where the programme's pedagogical intentions are clear, not least from the name), it is also true that the logic of competition forces even the public networks to adapt to the 'Americanisation' of private ones. Entertainment and amusement take on a greater importance, the determination to keep the viewer glued to the screen leads to the so-called 'TV flow', based on an attempt to blur the boundaries between the various programmes so as to evade the nightmare of channel hopping, made even easier by the introduction of the remote control. The American style of illustrating recipes with food sponsors in plain sight becomes widespread in Europe, marrying commercial logic with a utility component, and illustrating in each episode simple recipes within the reach of the increasingly busy modern woman now working outside the home.

At the same time, the United States, strengthened by their experience, acquire greater familiarity with the language of television, employing faces that will become real icons of the connection between food and television thanks to their on-screen presence, their mannerisms and the kinds of recipes (increasingly elaborate and international) they suggest. This is what happens with *The French Chef* by Julia Child (cfr. Cap.??). First broadcast in 1963 and continuing for a decade, the programme aimed to consolidate the most 'noble' French recipes within the American panorama. The rhythm of the tale becomes more lively, and the kitchen used is increasingly constructed specifically for the TV cameras.

With time, television genres lose their defined boundaries and all programmes begin to be filtered, a move that is most noticeable with entertainment, which is aimed precisely at entertaining and maintaining viewers. They begin to experiment with new formulas that go beyond the simple proposition of recipes. In the 1990s, for example, *Kitchen* is broadcast in Italy and Germany on MTV, in which each episode features the young presenter making a recipe with a famous guest, chatting in the meantime about their work and private life. Food therefore becomes a pretext to speak about other things, and the pressing rhythm, the attention to music, the broadcaster all begin to demonstrate how the attractive potential of culinary programming is not something solely for housewives, nor limited to morning time slots. Different genres and audiences suddenly become a possibility.

1.1.3. Contemporary Outcomes (From 2000 to Today)

The new millennium brings a further development. The consolidation and spread of thematic television channels allows the concept of heterogeneous and variable programming based on various times of day and days of the week to be abandoned, instead proposing homogeneous programming that concentrates on a single theme, and that is aimed at a much less generalised* audience, one that is increasingly niche. Entire networks dedicated to cooking allow fans to find recipes alongside documentaries, reality programmes and talk shows dedicated to food at any time.

This leads to the success of channels such as the Food Network or Good Food Channel, which offer programmes dedicated to food 24 hours a day.

It is since 2000 that a new sub-genre of entertainment has started to dominate scheduling: reality shows. These programmes aim, to some extent, to cannibalise all genres, playing on the viewer's curiosity about the private lives of everyday people. As we will see, this becomes fundamental also for culinary broadcasting. At the same time there is a proliferation of formats that can be sold with minor differences in different countries, on a television market that is increasingly global. The format defines the programme's concept, its basic rules, the set, the typical sequence followed in each episode, and so on. From *Masterchef* to *Hell's Kitchen*, through *Kitchen Nightmares* and *Bake Off*, formats abound when it comes to culinary programming too. What's more, *ready-made* formats – original programmes from various countries, either dubbed or subtitled (*Masterchef USA, Cake Boss*) – start to be aired globally, in such a way that international television schedules end up partially overlapping.

Finally, another contemporary trend is that in which programmes tend to develop according to the logic of the *multi platform*. There is not, therefore, simply the classic television programme, but often also an app, a Facebook page, a Twitter account dedicated to the programme. There is a logic here that is based on the convergence of numerous communication tools, ensuring that content is developed in tandem with various media: contestants can be voted off using Facebook, the app provides you with more information on the programme, with social media notifying the public in advance about the themes that will be tackled on the show, and so on. In this way, television becomes one of the intersections (often the most important) from which the programme's identity can be constructed, which is in turn promoted and publicised through various channels.

1.2. TV GENRES

Television genres, like those for literature and cinema, are simply ways of classifying products with the same characteristics. Talent shows, for example, are programmes characterised by challenges between competitors with different levels of competency in a certain field, be it cooking (*Masterchef*), photography (*Master of Photography*) or singing (*X Factor*). Knowing which genre a particular transmission belongs to allows the viewer to cultivate a number of expectations about it. If, for example, I know I am about to start watching a documentary, I expect it to teach me something. Genres evolve over time in response to changes in society, productivity, media and so forth. It is clear, for example, that a text we find funny today is nothing like a comic text from a few decades ago, in the way a TV series from the 2000s has very different traits to a TV series from the 1950s. Reality shows did not exist in the past and since their arrival on our screens, much has changed, not least their articulation into various sub-genres (talent shows, those with famous contestants, those that place particular importance on emotions or *emotainment*, etc.).

The four macro-genres under which television programmes can be grouped are: information, education, fiction, entertainment. It should be pointed out that television programmes, not least to attract a wider audience, increasingly tend to blend, or to put it in a more technical way, *hybridise* different genres. *Obese: A Year to Save My Life* is, for example, a reality show but it borders on the educational. Indeed, its episodes not only show different human cases in which an excess of food has become a pathological condition, but also carry an underlying educational warning with the enormous sacrifices the protagonists are forced to undergo in order to regain their physical health.

1.2.1. Information

Information is the genre that, as the name suggests, informs the public about what is happening in the world. The speaker (presenter, journalist) must by definition be credible and transfer 'knowledge' to the public. What is unique about the programmes that make up this category is that they establish a communicative pact* based on an expectance of truth. For example, a TV news programme (one of the most representative programmes in the Information macro-genre) must, by definition, tell the truth in order to be able to call itself news. As such there is a whole series of communicative strategies for informative programmes aimed at creating an Reality-effect*: they look to validate what they say as true. For example, the live broadcast with a correspondent in the place the news is taking place, often adds nothing to the story but does help create an effect of presence, a closeness to the facts, and therefore acts as a sort of guarantee of credibility regarding what has been said. In the same way, their serious and often impersonal tone of narration contributes to providing the news with an official air. The same can be said of the citing of sources: the inclusion of these elements in the news – be they statistics, or references to authorities and institutions – will, by themselves, help lend reliability to the text.

There are many programmes that provide news about food, some are specific (many news programmes have weekly features on food), others are programmes of generic information that sometimes dedicate the odd programme to the subject of food: for example, the reportages and investigations that discuss issues regarding food certification, counterfeiting, production and consumption processes. Generally, the tone used here is official, serious, whilst the audience's main motivation for watching it is the opportunity to broaden their own knowledge.

1.2.2. Fiction

Fictional TV series are programmes based on a narration that, in perfect opposition to what happens with information, assumes a communicative pact in which any expectation of the truth is suspended. A fiction, by definition, creates no expectation of a truthful tale, but the hope of being immersed in a (more or less credible) world organised according to its own rules.

The increasingly widespread mania for food has given rise to entire fiction series with a culinary theme: in *Feed the Beast* we hear of the vicissitudes of a chef and a sommelier who want to open a restaurant; the protagonist of *The Baker and The Beauty* works in a bakery; *Benvenuti a tavola* (*Gourmet Wars*) tells the tale of two family restaurants.

In other cases, food, despite not being one of the series' main themes, is a recurring theme that helps to distinguish a character's identity. So, in *Inspector Montalbano*, the inspector's investigative work can always be slowed down or suspended for a succulent *arancino*. The protagonist is a *gourmet*, a real food lover, and for him mealtimes are a priority to be focused on, nothing else matters for him in those moments. Food becomes the focus and main objective of many of his actions. Montalbano detests anyone interrupting him during his meal, preferring to eat alone and in silence in order to be able to fully savour this central moment. While for the inspector a meal means tasting slowly, progressive assimilation and a growing satisfaction on which to concentrate one's efforts, for *Dexter*, food is mere nutrition, something to eat only when it can no longer be done without. Eating for him is a hasty practice subordinate to other, more important activities: Dexter gobbles down a sandwich in his car whilst in search of a potential victim, he abandons his meal without finishing it when he receives a work phone call, he consumes quick dishes in lots of different places. Again, in *The Sopranos*, dishes function to effectively emphasise the provenance of the Italo-American mafia family around which the story revolves. Here the characters often eat strictly Italian dishes, they go to Italian restaurants, they prepare Italian food and regularly praise the cuisine of their ancestors. But most importantly, they eat all the time: the protagonist is almost uninterruptedly looking for some juice or a slice of ham, continuously opening and closing the fridge door, with a ritualistic gesture that punctuates his actions, and the rhythm of the episode.

1.2.3. Entertainment

Entertainment is the genre that aims to entertain its audience, to allow them to spend time watching the television in a laid-back way. Here we find very diverse kinds of programmes: from game shows (which centre on the mechanism of competition and gambling) to talk shows (centred on dialogue between guests in the studio). It is also the main genre in which we find food, particularly within that sub-genre that is reality shows, a kind of programme based on the broadcasting of pieces of 'reality' from people's lives, famous or otherwise. It must be said that this is clearly a reality created through television, one that takes place within television studios or, in any case, with the presence of TV cameras. The viewer who likes this kind of programme is curious about and attracted to seeing how people behave in particular contexts, when faced with particular tests, and so on.

From the moment that reality shows became so popular as to become the dominant television genre, indeed the only genre on certain thematic channels (such as *Real Time*), they became specialised, taking different forms. As a result, we have talent shows (such as *Masterchef* or *Hell's Kitchen*) that are a new take on the old game shows and based on competition between people who want to display their talent. The episodes involve a series of tests and elimination rounds, the 'best' in the competition receives some sort of prize that, in our case, regards the kitchen and allows them to launch their professional career as a cook (by writing a recipe book, or running a prestigious restaurant for a season, etc.) There are then makeover programmes, those in which each episode sees a positive transformation of a person or business. This is what happens in *Kitchen Nightmares* (*Bar Rescue* follows the same formula), with a chef/ presenter who visits a different restaurant in crisis every episode, observes the dynamics and helps the team to improve by proposing changes to the menu, the management of the dining area and the kitchen, and the space's aesthetics. But there is also *Obese: A Year to Save My Life* (and all the programmes like it) in which we see a physical and character transformation in the subject who has decided to get back into shape and modify their approach to food and life. Finally, we have *factual* shows based on an account of 'facts' where the episodes follow the life of people involved in some form of business. Factual culinary programming tells the stories of patissiers and confectioners trying to keep up with the demands of their clients, as with *Cake Boss* or *Il re del cioccolato*. These programmes show us the accidents that can occur and the ways in which they can be remedied, whilst inevitably allowing us to get to know certain aspects of the protagonists' private lives alongside their work.

1.2.4. Culture/Education

This is the genre that embodies one of the main objectives of public television since its outset. Programmes of this kind could have risked being phased out, considered too niche and overly serious, if they had not been able to innovate, carving out their own share of the audience. Today there are numerous culinary programmes of this kind, in which, taking inspiration from the idea of public service broadcasting, the objective is to educate, instruct about and raise awareness of aspects of wine and food in both a practical and a cultural way.

The contemporary adaptation of the first cookery shows, with their tutorial formula, falls into this category. There are entire channels and a great many broadcasts centred around illustrating recipes of varying difficulty, cost and speed. This kind of programme undoubtedly has a utility component and a practical function (to teach the public to cook), but it also contains a number of opportunities for entertainment (for example, many programmes feature guests the hosts can chat with). Recipes often follow the latest culinary trends (new cooking techniques, fashionable ingredients) or show how to utilise the kitchen in a way that meets the needs of daily life (as with quick recipes for busy women, both wives and workers, that we find in the Italian case of Benedetta Parodi and the British Nigella Lawson, who has become an icon of femininity in the kitchen). The presenting style has steadily grown less formal and more friendly, with the audience spoken to directly in a colloquial way that is both immediate and relaxed (take, for example, Jamie Oliver). From this genre we have seen the rise of true stars, cult personalities from the world of cooking (professional chefs) or simple fans who know how to inextricably link their own names to the kitchen.

There is then a whole series of programmes (whose story is linked to the origins of television) that have a predominantly documentary slant and aim to tell the story of a particular food, the life of a famous chef, or the culinary traditions of a country. These programmes have become increasingly attractive and are impressively well made, with cinematic shots and a well thought out narrative structure. The narrative often links to the theme of travel and tourism. This works in both directions: there can be documentaries that are firmly rooted in the region, which aim for the rediscovery of their country's food heritage, traditions and so forth, and those centred instead on the discovery of worlds, atmospheres and exotic, alternative cuisines that may even appear 'disgusting' to us. This is the case with *Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmer*, where in each episode the presenter shows us a place's typical foods, extreme foods that are, at first sight, revolting, and that often reveal themselves to be delicious: the programme's basic idea is to approach food without prejudice, attempting to understand other cultures with food as the starting point.

FOCUS 1

Masterchef

Masterchef is probably the best known, and most widely distributed and syndicated culinary talent show in the world. It is broadcast in a huge number of countries with numerous local variations on the format, and it has also given rise to several **spin offs** - *Celebrity Masterchef*, with famous people as contestants; *Junior Masterchef*, where the protagonists are children; *Masterchef All Stars*, a competition between the best competitors of previous editions. It is a television programme that lacks the figure of a presenter, the narration is instead provided by a voiceover. The aspiring Masterchef contestants battle one another during a series of culinary tests, the dishes are evaluated by a group of judges (food experts, chefs) who, according

to a classic mechanism of progressive elimination, decide who can stay in the competition and who must 'leave the kitchen'.
At the centre of the television studio is a large space set up as a kitchen, a store cupboard stocked with products used by contestants (the ideal place for **product placement**), a stage (where the dishes are taken to be scrutinised by the judges), and a balcony area (for the contestants who are not taking part in the competition at that moment). These are complemented by spaces outside the studio where on-location challenges take place, in which the contestants are divided into two teams to prepare a menu for a set number of people.
Each challenge has a rigid time limit, and the editing of the images, the shots, the words of encouragement used by the judges highlight a growing tension within the task that must be finished within the established deadline. When it comes to the judging, however, there is a deceleration in editing speed and music, creating a strong sense of suspense for the viewer at home.
The contestants are generally presented as very ambitious (they all say they want to become Masterchef, that they have everything it takes, that they will not be eliminated), and when they talk, they are introduced with an on screen table listing their name, age and profession. We know very little about their private lives, though we learn some of their character traits as the series develops (there is one who is always happy, one who tends to argue with the others, one who is emotional, one who is cold and detached, and so on). The contestants must demonstrate skill, creativity, and grace under pressure; they must be able to create all kinds of dishes, and be familiar with the ingredients and cooking techniques. They must have passion, but they must all be able strategists: the aspiring Masterchef who is at an advantage during the Invention test because, having won the Mystery box, they can choose the ingredient that all contestants must prepare, does not decide purely according to their own propensities and ability, but also (and perhaps most importantly) according to the weak points of those they consider their most feared adversaries. The judges are upstanding, their competence is never questioned, they use technical language and are capable of instinctively finding the dishes' strong points and shortcomings, sometimes with little more than a glance, and providing the reasons for these errors.
Cooking is generally considered to be an exact science, and the dishes are the result of a combination of technique, strategy and passion. The real Masterchef is the one who is able to find equilibrium between these elements. They must be a skilled cook, know their adversaries, allow themselves to be guided by passion in the kitchen and never be overwhelmed by panic, never overdo it, never show

excessive arrogance, and never give in. It is the rhetoric of hard work, of being continuously put to the test, of falling into errors and learning to correct them without help: this, the programme tells us, is what the hard slog of being a chef is all about.

2. FILM AND FOOD

2.1. COOKING *VS* EATING

As we have seen, television is dominated by cookery, which is placed centre stage, dramatized in many different ways. Culinary competitions, games for prizes, quizzes, talent shows all contribute to the spectacularization of the moment in which food is prepared, with an aim to highlight the participants' *competence** and their familiarity with basic techniques of culinary art, which are regularly commented on by those judges called to pass judgement on the participants' work. Film, however, takes a different approach when it chooses to focus on food. Of all the complex processes surrounding food, film chooses to highlight a different moment, one that reflects the act of cooking: *eating*. In film it is not as important to depict the preparation of food as it is the moment when, sitting at the table, the food that has been cooked is consumed by a varying number of diners, people who have gathered together for the occasion. The aim is not, therefore, to test the cooks' technical abilities, but the ability to describe, through their food, an environment or social group, to offer a cross section of the relationships between characters, to evoke the transformative value that an unforgettable lunch or dinner can have for those eating.

FOCUS 2

Le Repas de bébé

Fig. 1. A scene from Le Repas de bébé (1895) featuring two parents with their child as they eat their breakfast in the garden of a country house.

One of the first films in the history of cinema, shot in 1895 by the Lumière brothers, takes a gastronomic scene as its subject. Here, a couple feed their young baby as they eat their breakfast.
The film, available on YouTube[1], lasts just forty seconds, during which time very little happens. We see a middle aged couple sitting at a table outside – presumably in the garden of a country house – looking after a young baby. The man attempts to feed the baby, whilst the woman drinks her coffee. At a certain point, a biscuit is introduced, which the child offers the camera operator before his father gets back to feed him once more. This is extent of the film. What can we learn from this brief scene? What role does food play in it? We begin to notice that this film, which had an enormously successful first screening at Paris' *Salon indien du Grand Café*, exists midway between the private and the public. It takes a very specific family scene, made up of Auguste Lumière (who is also director of the film with his brother Louis), his wife and their child, as its subject. This setup allows us to classify the film as a kind of 'family album', the first in history to be recorded on video, nothing more than an amateur film recording a moment of intimate affection and allegedly of little interest beyond the tight family circle. However, the very fact it was publicly screened causes it to take on an entirely different role. First, it is necessary to underline how this may appear as a *marvellous* film, nothing like it had ever been seen before. Cinema and moving pictures were invented by the Lumière brothers, who were destined to leave their indelible mark upon twentieth century history. And so this private scene, banal and entirely quotidian (eating is a decidedly everyday act!), now recounted using a brand new language, becomes so interesting that it merits being presented in public. This leads the film to lose its individual dimension, recasting its characters within a more general frame in which they are no longer easily identified people (the family of Auguste Lumière) but unintentional witnesses to their own social identity. For the many spectators who, throughout the twentieth century to now, have been won over by the film, these are human types, a wealthy middle-class family at the turn of the century with their own self-assured affluence, represented by the country garden, the table and its silverware, and their clothes - casual (the father's unbuttoned shirt) yet elegant (the mother's striped dress). There are then the gender roles, for once overturned, with the father feeding the child whilst the mother drinks her coffee. There also are the tenderness evoked by these roles and the sight of the middle class family, the child's reactions and playfulness, the father's care of his own little one. Finally, we have the

1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QP0oz5gEQ34

biscuit, offered by the father once the last spoonful of food has been finished, and instantly capturing the child's attention. He isn't interested in eating it, as his father lovingly suggests, instead spontaneously attempting to offer it to the those present. Such a desire, unforeseen by the directors, involuntarily reveals a fundamental aspect of the cinematic language. The child, with its innocent gesture, points the biscuit towards the camera, seemingly offering it to his uncle. This has the (albeit momentary) effect of throwing the theatrical model on which the scene is built into chaos, breaking the '**fourth wall**', the fic-

Fig. 2. The child offers the camera operator his biscuit, revealing the boundaries of the 'fourth wall'.

tional frontier that separates the represented space from the space of representation.
By attempting to offer his biscuit to the camera operator, the child causes the emergence of the constructive side of the cinematic text, revealing the artificial nature of the scene when presented with the illusion of reality, of which cinema at that time made itself the standard bearer.

2.2 FOOD AS A SIGN OF THE TIMES

It should be clear by now that, since the inception of the moving picture, eating in the company of others has been considered a social occasion worthy of being immortalised, of being brought to the big screen in order to delve into the rituals surrounding it. Food, in film as in life - and unlike what we see in television programmes on cookery -, never comes alone, instead finding its place in a close network of relationships between humans and things, food and drink. This is why it is important to pay attention to details, as, more than it might seem at first sight, they reveal social belonging and hierarchies, cultural identities and emotional relationships, connecting the individual's behaviour to broader collective scenes. In short, they constitute a pretext for reconstructing social roles and the relationships between the characters who are represented and the culture to which they belong.

Take an old film starring the Italian comic actor Totò, *Miseria e Nobiltà* (*Poverty and Nobility*,1954). This film, adapted from a play by Neapolitan playwright Eduardo Scarpetta, is a farce set in the late 1800s. At the centre of the story are two friends, the scribe Felice Sciosciammocca and his friend Pasquale, an itinerant photographer. The two are forced, out of necessity, to live in the same apartment with their respective families, leading a life of hardship, marked by hunger. Their condition of extreme discomfort is revealed precisely by the absence of food: they literally do not have a morsel to eat. At a certain point, Pasquale decides to sell the coat he wore on his wedding day in order to scrape together enough money to buy something to eat. To do so, he packages it up and gives it to his faithful friend, Felice. This gives rise to a comic scene in which Pasquale pulls out a sumptuous list of long yearned-for foods to buy with the money from the coat: a kilo and a half of spaghetti, a nice *buatta* (tin) of tomatoes, a kilo of sausages (freshly minced), ten fresh eggs, half a kilo of mozzarella di Aversa, nuts, 2 litres of Gragnano wine and two cigars. Don Felice wastes no time in replying to such an excessive list with a joke: "Is this Napoleon's *paletot* in here? […] This *paletot* will get me nothing but a kick in the backside!" The film's turning point arrives when a young Marquis, Eugenio Favetti, asks Pasquale to pretend to be his father, and for his friends to play other members of his family in a meeting with his fiancée's family. The fiancée is a ballerina from a humble background, the daughter of a cook who has become rich after inheriting from his employer. The two friends accept the offer and, following the tradition of the best Italian comedies, the encounter proves rife with hilarity. Just before this meeting, however, Felice and Pasquale receive a welcome surprise from another character: the brother of the Marquis's fiancée, who is in love with Pasquale's daughter. He undertakes to pay off all of Pasquale's debts and organises, in the house of the poverty-stricken protagonists, a sumptuous lunch made by a cook he has brought in especially in order to ingratiate himself. What is striking about this lunch is the clash between the elegance of the flatware used and the triviality of the food served. There is one stand-out scene in which a disproportionate quantity of pasta and sauce pours out of an elegant soup tureen. The reference to pasta – an unsurprising choice for a popular national dish precisely because it is affordable, easy to come by and prepare, and last but not least, capable to revive the hungry masses with very little – is a distinguishing feature that allows us to recognise the *social status* of the guests despite their appearances. It is no coincidence that this dish, in its blasphemous pairing with the stylish soup tureen, unites the tastes of the newly-rich cook, the ballerina and her brother's father, and that of the cheapskates Pasquale and Felice. Faced with such abundance the pair are unable to control themselves, so much so that, in a memorable gag, their families, gathered around the table, throw themselves head first into the spaghetti, not just devouring it but also filling their pockets with handfuls of the stuff, as if to save as much as possible for later, regardless of the fact the tomato sauce would stain their clothes.

Fig. 3. The spaghetti scene in Miseria e Nobiltà (1954). Note how a simple, everyday dish like pasta, just by being served in an elegant soup tureen, highlights the vulgar and unrefined nature of the characters.

From its title we can understand that *Miseria e Nobiltà* adopts the reference to food in order to evoke a particular socio-anthropological scenario and a particular existential condition. In some ways the film is a timeless tale, bringing together universal characters, the rich and the poor, the aristocracy and the lowly, and causing them to interact in order to provoke moments of great comic effect. It is true, however, that despite being set in the late 19^{th} century, the film seems to want to sketch out a discourse of its own time. The 1950s were, for Italian film, a moment of great openness to the social realities and economic hardship of the population, whose existence had been long denied by the Fascist regime.

As a result, social issues take the foreground in a number of feature length films that have made film history. Just think of films such as *Rome, Open City* (1945) and *Bicycle Thieves* (1948), made under the banner of Neorealism, the movement driven by such excellent directors as Roberto Rossellini and Vittorio De Sica, considered pioneers of the film world. The vision shown by *Miseria e Nobiltà* allows us to recognise these same moments as a farcical cross-section, at once poetic and ironic, of the social hardship and poverty that still engulfed large swathes of the Italian population in the 1950s. Food in film functions, as we have already seen, as a sign of the times, making itself a banner for the common experience, be it political, social or more general, at a particular historic moment. *Miseria e Nobiltà* is a good example of this.

2.3 COOKING AND FAMILY

However, the gastronomic dimension can also recognise more specific dynamics, regarding family or group co-habitation. Family gatherings, perhaps linked to the holidays, centre precisely on the tension between coming together and falling apart. The obligatory holidays, for example, are a moment of celebration belonging to a group or a family unit. Film often takes an interest in these kinds of gatherings, discussing them and raising, for example, the question of whether the acceptance of their ritualistic nature by those taking part is sincere or simulated. Taking part in a family meal can be a gesture of spontaneous participation or a forced choice. There are many films that view family meals as a real **object of value**, a far-off and coveted destination to be reached at all costs. The stories used in this kind of films tell the adventures embarked upon by one or more characters in order to take part in such a meal, in the name of a genuine adhesion to the values inherent in that meal. This is the case for a light-hearted film starring John Candy and Steve Martin, 'Planes, Trains and Automobiles', from 1987. The film tells the story of the hilarious adventure embarked on by Neal Page (Steve Martin), a serious, introverted advertising executive from New York who decides to go back to see his family in Chicago on Thanksgiving. Soon, however, he meets Del Griffith (played by John Candy), an eccentric shower curtain ring salesman, who inadvertently takes the taxi that Neal had ordered to take him to the airport. The two men are destined to meet once more, finding themselves on the same aeroplane. And when, by another trick of fate, the aeroplane in which they are travelling is diverted to Wichita because of a snowstorm, the film becomes a **road movie**, centred on the two protagonists' unlucky return trip to Chicago by land. It is unnecessary to point out that this journey is filled with catastrophic yet exhilarating adventures. It is, however, their arrival at their destination that marks the film's real turning point.

Once the journey has come to an end, the two unwilling travelling companions must say their goodbyes. It is only in that moment that Neal and Del, who up until that point had each been so intolerant of the other, realise their deep understanding. It is, therefore, no coincidence that Neil, having discovered that the gauche shower curtain ring salesman would have no one to spend Thanksgiving with, decides, in a touching gesture at the end of the film, to invite him to his house to spend the day with his family. Continuity with tradition has been maintained, the family unit has been completed and the values of Thanksgiving (integration and openness to alterity) have been realised.

However, there are many other films that make the most of moments of family togetherness to shine a light on the face of hypocrisy, empty rituals, the ceremonial screen that hides indifference and crisis in relationships between members of the group. One amusing example is an Italian film from 1992, *Parenti serpenti [Dearest Relatives, Poisonous Relations]*, directed by Mario Monicelli. Once more, the occasion is provided by a family meal, this time at Christmas. Here, a couple of elderly parents gather together their children's families at their own home in order to celebrate the holidays, as tradition dictates. Right in the middle of Christmas dinner comes the announcement that the elderly couple no longer want to live on their own and ask one of their guests to take them to live with them. Of course, this decision unleashes panic on the four family units present, leading the whole family to fall apart until the decision is taken, by all the children in unison, terrified at the thought that one of their parents could move into their own house, to murder the elderly couple, dressing it up as a domestic accident. The universe Monicelli describes is utterly without hope.

2.4 *GOURMAND* FILMS

If in the *family meals* we see on film, the emphasis is on the symbolic value of the meeting of people bound by emotional or blood ties, other films explore the question of taste itself, or rather, how what is eaten at a particular banquet manages to reconfigure the way in which a particular character or group relates to others; how it manages, in short, to reconfigure identity. According to this kind of movies, one dish can change the life of the person who prepares it thanks to the **aesthetic experience** it evokes. We have an **aesthetic experience** when something captures our attention, producing in us, in an entirely inexplicable and unexpected way, multiple emotions and states of mind. Such a sensation comes from the deviation of something – be it an artefact, a living being, or, as in our case, a particular dish – with regards to the ordinary, the norm. It is precisely the perception of this difference that changes our perspective, as if we were finding ourselves before that something for the first time. It causes us to abandon our routine, to reactivate our imagination and transform our relationship with the world, renewing our life in general. This is what happens to many characters in a new cinematic genre known as *culinary cinema*, which has, in conjunction with the rediscovered centrality that the question of food has found in our daily lives, met with great success, encouraging production houses to serve up more and more films of this kind. These films tend to tell the stories of characters who, thanks to the extraordinary experience of a lunch or dinner, are inspired to change their lives, transforming the way they eat. The protagonists in culinary films are characterised by the fact they live within a socially oppressive community context that denies any legitimacy to bodily reason, to the pleasure found in sitting at a table and eating, in the name of the primacy of abstract thought, linked to reasons of social organisation (work, money!) or religion. In these kind of contexts, therefore, food is understood as mere fuel and never an end in itself. These are films that place at the centre of their stories characters with a strong connection to habit, characters inured to a particular way of eating to such a degree that they think it natural. If we think about it, such an attitude of attachment to our way of relating to food is more than understandable: eating is a physical necessity, we eat, we feed ourselves, even before we are born, our eating habits are rooted in our communities, they are a part of our family heritage and we can trace them back to the dawn of time, to such an extent that we do not even realise how every single act of eating is the result of a construction, that it takes on meaning thanks to our cultural identity. As a result, we can understand why these films choose to bring *outsiders* into their stories, characters that breach consolidated 'gastronomic' communities by eating (or cooking) in a different way. The simple act of exhibiting different food habits causes upset, scandalises, 'relativises' the way in which the community sees itself, confronting it with alterity and therefore, calling for a reaction. What should we do with the foreigner and their strange eating habits? *Assimilate them*, induce them to conform to the eating habits of the group into which they are asking to be welcomed? *Exclude them*, mark out a clear boundary regarding co-existence so as not to mix eating habits (you live together but eat in different ways)? *Admit them* to the group despite their eccentricity? Or *ghettoise them*, allowing them to manifest their *other* identity as long as this only occurs in a restricted, autonomous portion of shared space? Let's look at Lasse Hallström's 2000 film, *Chocolat*. It is 1959 and in the peaceful French village of Lansquenet-sur-Tannes life is lived under the sign of *tranquillité*. It is monotonous and insignificant, until a stranger arrives. Her name is Vianne, a young confectioner who decides to open a chocolate shop in the village. This immediately grabs the attention of the villagers who, thanks to the aphrodisiac and inebriating qualities of the chocolate, are led to reconsider the meaning of their lives, recognising the real value of pleasure. Such an eventuality predictably stirs up first suspicion then open hostility from the village's political authorities, wholly consumed by religious thought. These figures, particularly the mayor, try all possible ways of closing down the chocolate shop and chasing away the dangerous *outsider*, accused of having upset the social order with her food! It is only when the mayor breaks into the shop in order to set fire to it, and finds himself inquisitively tasting a little of the chocolate, that things change. The mayor is able to experience the pleasure the chocolate brings, finding himself overwhelmed by it. This leads him not only to halt his criminal activity, but to promote the integration of the foreigner Vianne into the small community at Lansquanet-sur-Tannes, welcoming her culinary message of openness towards the pleasures of food. Vianne's integration into the village marks not only her own realisation, but a possible response to the holier-than-thou attitude, and the evolution of the entire community in this small French village.

2.5 TASTE AND FLAVOURSOME

The film *Babette's Feast* (1987) tells the story of another migrant heroine, Babette Hersant, a revolutionary active during the uprising in the Paris commune, who is forced to flee her country and take refuge in Denmark, on the Jutland peninsula in a small, far-flung village where the only aim is to live modestly in prayer. She finds refuge in the home of two sisters who lead the local religious community. Babette remains at their service for some 14 years. At a certain point, however, our heroine discovers she has won a large amount of money on the lottery. Shaken by this *anecdote of destiny*[2], Babette asks the two sisters who have taken her in for permission to organise a French dinner in honour of their former Deacon, the sisters' defunct father, for all members of the religious community. Only later will they discover that the money she has won has been entirely spent on holding the unforgettable banquet. The eating habits of the austere Danish community had been characterised by the denial of any bodily pleasure in name of a total devotion to prayer and the divine. It is the foreigner Babette and her culinary arts (in France she was a famous chef) that bring good sense and harmony to the community, giving shape, with her famous meal, to a radically different way of understanding food: one founded on the satisfaction of the senses and conviviality. Once more, a *foreigner* manages to radically transform the way in which an entire community views food. But the film is interesting for another reason too. During the lunch, we can discern two *languages* of food in action. At Babette's table sit two distinct groups of diners: on one side is there the protestant community of the village that has gathered to commemorate the deacon, on the other, an elderly general of the Norwegian court who has returned to Jutland because of a long-standing friendship with the sisters. This general is unaware of the fact that in the kitchen is an experienced cook like Babette, and he cannot understand how such an articulate meal filled with such good taste, such as the one he has just been served, could be produced in a far-flung, rural corner of Europe, far from the splendour of the capital cities. The way in which the two groups prepare to eat is rather unusual. Faced with the magnificence of the courses that are progressively served, the general reveals himself to be astonished, and yet he makes an effort to recognise the dishes, searching for an impossible understanding with his fellow diners. He attempts to use food as a *status symbol*, making a show of his ability to distinguish and appreciate the dishes served in order to

2 This is the title of the collection of short stories by the excellent Danish author Karen Blixen, which also includes the short story that inspired the film.

cultivate an image of himself as a cosmopolitan, high-ranking person. We can call this language, which is linked to **figurative** recognition of the dishes: the regime of tasty. Conversely, the poor members of the protestant community are unable to flaunt such a knowledge of the dishes cooked by Babette, and this is the reason why they proceed through their dinner allowing themselves to be led by a second culinary logic, bound to the world of flavours, textures and smells. These elements contrast with one another. For example, the dessert is characterised through its difference to the savoury courses. One understands how a dish can take on its own meaning at a banquet precisely because of how it articulates this contrast. It is well know, in fact, that in the serving tradition known as **service à la russe**, the savoury dishes constitute the central part of the meal, whilst the desserts follow at the end. The savoury/sweet expressive contrast thus corresponds to its precise position within the flow of courses during a meal. This reasoning, however, can also be found in the composition of a single dish. We can, for example, easily think of a dish that uses the textural contrasts of crunchy/ soft, in order to achieve particular effects of meaning: a *supplì* that fails to be crunchy on the outside and soft inside cannot be considered a good one. We will call this logic that articulates contrasts in the expressive character by placing them in relation to contrasts of content, a regime of flavourful. In the film these two culinary logics, the two languages of food that are usually both at work when we eat are, however, separated: on one hand, the general, as we have said, allows the dimension of *taste* to emerge in his approach to the food served during the meal, trying to use his culinary *expertise* – bound in particular to his talent for recognising the haute cuisine dishes that are gradually served – in order to socialise with other guests, trying to involve them. The members of the pious community who have been called to Babette's feast, who do not boast a knowledge comparable with that of the General, are forced to guide themselves in a different way, calling upon the profound logic that we have named the regime of *flavourful*, in order to give meaning to their experience, allowing themselves to be won over by the knowing games of contrast set in motion by Babette. It is an experience that will change their lives, causing them to reconsider their relationship with the world and others, with a view to giving more space to the reason of aesthetics and the body in their daily lives. This is the happy message that culinary cinema aims to convey, against any attempt to reduce food to a mere source of energy, indifferent to pleasure and flavour.

FOCUS 3

Ratatouille

Pixar’s famous film Ratatouille, can be read as an exemplary tale on alterity. Its story invokes the irreducible deviation between two irreconcilable universes: that of humans and that belonging to rats. When a human sees a rat they go for their gun: this is the harsh reality to which the viewer is exposed from the beginning of the film, and which is experienced by the two impossible cooks / friends: the rat Rémy and the dishwasher Linguini. In order to avoid the fate reserved for beings like him, and to be able to cook like the other cooks in Chef Gusteau’s restaurant, the almost-human rat has no other option than to hide under his friend’s chef’s hat.

We can see how the main conflict employed by the film falls between two models of political affiliation. On the one hand we have the human world that attributes great value to descendence (though Linguini does not know how to cook, he can aspire to inherit the restaurant that belonged to his father, Chef Gusteau, on the basis of blood ties). On the other hand, we have the rat, Rémy, who despite having no pedigree to fall back on, has the talent needed to work in the kitchen. The film dramatizes the conflict between these two forms of logic, one based on descendence and the other on talent. The rat will manage to assert his right to cook, first being enrolled in Gusteau’s restaurant – whose motto was, tellingly, ‘anyone can cook’ – and, later, by opening his own. He then makes himself be admitted to society, despite his obvious difference. Rémy’s way of cooking, as an outsider, the carrier of a cultural baggage that is alternative to the dominant one, adds something to French gastronomy: the effect is one of rejuvenation, and a break with the canons of tradition.

Try and compare traditional ratatouille with the recipe used in the film (created by famous American chef Thomas Keller) to see for yourselves.

Culinary blogs and social networks

Francesco Mangiapane

1. ONLINE CHATTER

The culinary **megatrend** we are currently witnessing owes a great deal to the Internet. The fact that food today is once more the protagonist of our daily life, a main topic of conversation both in bars and on social networks, in offices, schools and most of our social spheres, is perhaps thanks to the chatter on the subject that has informally proliferated online with the technological development of Web 2.0*. The one thing the users involved all have in common is their interest in food, whether linked to contingent reasons (finding a recipe that can save dinnertime), a passion for a certain style of cooking (Middle Eastern, Chinese, Italian?), or motivated by adherence to a particular food sub-culture, such as religious diets, lifestyles such as vegetarianism or veganism, and so on. Whatever their reason for choosing to discuss food online, what mattered was that so many people were doing it and that these conversations, unlike those held over coffee and destined to disappear the minute the cup was empty, would leave some trace of themselves online, generating multiple texts (video, written texts, images, audio recordings). The texts created in this way would, thanks to search engines, be easily found by other online users, contributing to the creation of a gigantic archive of texts on food that would be available, organised (by the search engines themselves) and perennially open to the next contribution.

At the beginning of the phenomenon in the early 2000s, these new interactions were characterised above all by the fact they were performed by a particular kind of person, *outsiders*, typified by the fact they did not belong to the world of experts entitled to talk about food. They were best described as *amateurs*, nothing more than unknown enthusiasts. They were – and still tend to be – users who, having become casually involved in some online conversation, had been enthralled by it to such an extent that they had developed a taste for it and decided to get involved themselves. It really would take very little for these users to learn how to interact in their virtual communities, transforming themselves into *authors* of blogs and Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or Snapchat pages, thus further enriching the enormous archive of conversations mentioned above.

The very act of 'establishing' their writing within a precise framework with equally precise rules of interaction (a blog, a Facebook page, what are these if not *editorial formats*?) means that these users begin to think of themselves as real *authors*, constantly developing their knowledge of the object of their passion with a view to creating more articles and **posts**.

But what is new about the writing by these *amateur* social media authors? In answer to such a question we can highlight how in their culinary pilgrimages these new writers tend to search for a correspondence between life-time and story-time, using their posts to progressively create a sort of *bildungsroman** about their own lives in the kitchen, a culinary autobiography. Each significant evolution in the gastronomic adventures of the latest blogger[1]– the first recipe, the blog's anniversary, the first interest shown in the blog by journalists, the successful execution of a difficult recipe – ends up the object of a story that develops over a series of small victories (the successful dish) and defeats (the burnt cupcakes) that constantly push the limit of **glorifying proof** and, subsequently, the end of the story.

If we look closely, however, these new authors whose identikit we have quickly outlined are also asked to take on a new role, that of *editor*, which sees them called upon to plan the logos and graphic *design* of their pages, the columns, its title, quickly organising ways of directing readers to their blogs, securing *friendships* and forging alliances in the name of their own success.

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1 We use this term to refer not only to those who write blogs, but all of those other writing identities present on social media, regardless of the platform they use (be it Facebook, Instagram or anything else), as when it comes to the communicative dynamics studied in this chapter, the tools for their analysis are interchangeable.

FROM AUTHOR TO AUTHOR-PUBLISHER

The key to understanding the great transformation that the diverse galaxy of online writing has brought about in the world of publishing is closely linked to the way in which they view their own activity as Internet users. Historically, *publisher* and *author* have always been two separate figures. The publisher's role consists of selecting authors, curating the publication of and the form taken by their works. Authors, on the other hand, have the task of producing original works considered worthy of publication by an publisher. With *social media*, the possibility of taking on those tasks demanded by the role of publisher/editor becomes a very real one: the economic costs of publication are almost eliminated, anyone can afford the online infrastructure necessary for publishing texts and **hypertexts** online, doing away with the economic and technological obligations these usually entail. The fact that anyone can become their own publisher, however, does not imply that the role of the editor is no longer needed, as a certain rhetorical stance may have us believe. All it means is that the online users are required to combine the roles of *publisher/editor* and *author* in everything, from the creation of their **avatars** and the management of their social media pages, to those texts that require more structured editorial formats (blogs or online newspapers), presenting themselves as both the creators of texts (authors) and the architects of their selection, the shaping of content and its publication for public consumption (publishers/editors). On closer inspection we see that these dynamics end up modifying the structures of power in public discourse, giving the social media user an unprecedented level of control over their writing. This is precisely because it is the user, acting as their own publishers/editors, who decides whether their texts are worthy of being published, and it is they who, once this judgement has been passed, goes on to prepare them for publication. It will always be the user who promotes initiatives (*giveaways* and *contests*, which we will discuss later) aimed at *activating* their own texts, promoting their circulation on the blogs and feeds of other users. Lastly, it will always be the user who moderates the community as it builds progressively around their writing, admonishing those who behave badly and even going so far as to remove those comments deemed, by their own unquestionable judgement, to be offensive or inappropriate.

This new power wielded by social media has consequences that can, in some ways, appear counter-intuitive. The rhetoric that drives online discourse often focuses on the fact that social media sites promote an open, more democratic world, a quality people associate with the idea that, with the advent of the *great online conversation*, anyone can give their opinion online on any issue, intervening without anyone else's mediation in a landscape regulated by horizontal relationships in which everyone is equal. Actual practice in online communities demonstrates how this rhetoric could, in part, be criticised if it is indeed true that the very difference we have just mentioned in the power between the historic role played by the author in the world of traditional publishing (which required them to run the gauntlet imposed by the publisher) and that of social media authors (who absorb that role) leads to the creation of new hierarchies based on the prestige garnered online by bloggers harnessing their own 'augmented' power within networks of **followers** who actively engage with their writing. The **blogstar** phenomenon – those bloggers given this title by adoring communities – and the current phenomenon of **social influencers** can be viewed in these terms.

It is clear how such an opportunity for prestige could, more often than not, be embraced by subjects who, in their first experience of publishing, make the most of the internet in order to ensure their own personal success, publishing their *stream*, the flow of thoughts and words somehow connected to their personality. Moving in this direction, opening a social *channel* on food or any other subject, allows them to construct a real community of users around their own writing that, if well cultivated, can grow disproportionately (unlike with traditional publishing, *online* publishing has no circulation limits). The breadth of this writing, used as a measure of publishing success, will be useful in the blogger's eventual transition into the world of traditional publishing.

Let's give an example. Whenever a user decides out of the blue to open a cookery blog, they can do so (from a technological point of view) in very little time and with minimal, if not zero costs. As the process of opening a blog on any platform requires the user (who initially considered themselves an *author*, so as having something to say) to carry make choices traditionally reserved for the publishing house – naming the blog, taking charge of its graphic design and its publishing plan. However, the problems do not end once the blog has been launched and the first posts published. This page needs to be seen by someone who chooses to visit it and read its contributions. It is necessary therefore that the user-*publisher* find (as soon as possible) a strategy that ensures what is written by its *author* (who happens to be the same person as the user-*publisher*) 'counts' in the public discussion of a particular subject. Most probably, the user-editor will do just that, announcing their blog on their *Facebook* profile, channelling their own (pre-existing) community of readers towards their new publishing project. By doing so, they establish the hard core of their community of blog readers. However, as time passes, if our user (in their double role of *publisher/editor* and *author*) has done their work properly, the community will grow exponentially, attracting more and more readers. The blog's success will therefore be measured by its ability to ensure it and its author are being talked about by the most diverse range of media, thanks to the capital provided by their online *reputation*.

Let's give another example. Let's imagine a world before social media, in which a cookery fan has their own recipe book sitting in a kitchen drawer waiting for some editor to take an interest in potentially publishing it. Once the right publisher has been identified, it would be their job to promote the book to its **target audience**. The publisher would have to 'plan' the book's audience, imagining who it would be composed of (gastronomes? enthusiasts? beginners?), then informing them of its forthcoming publication, enticing and convincing them to buy the book with the right marketing tools. Now let's try to imagine the same situation today, in which the only difference lies in the fact that the author of the book in the drawer, whilst writing the hard copy, had at the same time created and maintained a cookery blog. In this case, whether they were aware of it or not, their online writing meant the author was progressively creating and consolidating a community of *followers* brought together by their appreciation of the author as a *leader* in their specialist field. This community would have been the perfect fit the instant the possibility of publishing a hard copy recipe book had arisen, thus opening the doors to the publishing world and perhaps even leading to other opportunities, such as TV appearances to discuss the blog and the book, cookery columns in newspapers and so on. Why? For the simple fact that such a community of *followers* guarantees an audience and therefore a publishing market (for the book, but also for television programmes and newspapers). The evidence of this drastically reduces the business risks linked to book publishing, guaranteeing the publisher a start value, a 'hard core' of online users bound to the identity of the *leader*.

FOCUS 1

Cooking with *giallozafferano*

GialloZafferano is an Italian website and blog platform founded in 2006 by Sonia Peronaci. The project was the result of an idea by its founder, who had a simple *concept* that had never before been tried online: "a recipe a day every day" that must be "easy and easy to repeat, demonstrated and photographed at every step". The experiment met with enormous success, reaching two million new users a month by 2011, and more than four million in 2013. The portal GialloZafferano.it is currently believed to average 6.8 million new users a month, with more than 2 million daily users. Every month more than 4,500 comments are added to the site and another 20,000 are made on Facebook, where the portal has more than 6 million followers. It is without doubt the most popular and most successful Italian online food project ever.
The story of GialloZafferano's stratospheric success exemplifies how the Internet and the blogging world have renewed the discourse on gastronomy, establishing themselves as new ways impacting the *public sphere* and earning consensus in a given social scenario. The site, as with most culinary blogs, began in an almost amateur way. Precisely because

of the scarce economic investment required to begin an online publishing business, Sonia Peronaci began her online adventure, together with her partner, without ever having worked in food communication. She was, however, incredibly skilled in the kitchen thanks to her long career as a cook in the family restaurant, which began at the age of 6. The 'unknown' Sonia Peronaci began her online business as an *outsider*, rapidly earning consensus thanks to the clarity of her model (one recipe a day, explained step by step), the fact that it appealed to a particularly broad spectrum of users (not to the meddlesome and decidedly elitist world of haute cuisine but to the much broader, if not more prosaic world of everyday cooking), and to the fact that she was a pioneer in the *blogosphere** which, in 2006 - the year GialloZafferano was launched - was still virgin territory for initiatives of this kind.
Sonia Peronaci's career and her project moved so quickly that by 2010 they had already caught the eye of one of Italy's most important social media agencies, which bought the site and invested heavily in it. Thanks to these funds, a working group for the project was established and expanded, becoming increasingly precise and professional. At the same time, there was an increase of traffic, which as we have said had reached millions of new users a month, attracting advertisers who had initially been reticent to invest in the site. This was the case with Granarolo, a famous Italian dairy brand, who chose to sponsor Giallo-Zaferano, commissioning a number of sponsored recipes using their mascarpone. This kind of collaboration multiplied until it became the norm, constituting the project's main source of income. The founder's popularity grew alongside this, something we can measure (as mentioned previously) through her ability to 'leave the Internet' and be successful in other media. Sonia Peronaci has become an intermedial* heroine thanks to the publication of various cookery books, which quickly became bestsellers, a television programme (*Cooking Class*) that she presents on FoxLife, her work as an advertising testimonial for popular brands such as Philadelphia cheese, as well as extensive work in cookery writing and consultancy for food communication. Even the GialloZafferano brand now straddles various forms of media securing prestigious collaborations, the most recent being with McDonald's, which created an entire menu in collaboration with the site.

2. FROM *AMATEUR* TO *PROFESSIONAL* AND BACK AGAIN

But how does one move from amateur blogging into a professional publishing career? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to remember that despite the chance nature of the motives that lead a user to open a blog, the very fact of writing online reveals itself to be a highly socialising practice. We have all seen this. A user who opens a blog is immediately informed by their peers about the iron-clad rules regulating the online community. Once they have joined this world, they will discover how there are classifications and hierarchies that can be incredibly stringent. Lists are periodically compiled of the most influential blogs by varyingly prominent publications that travel the world to take a snapshot of the competitors that will then be used a fundamental tool for advertising investment and the eventual acquisition of the blogs themselves by large corporations, guaranteeing their authors the success we have referred to. But there are also tools in the *blogosphere** that are used in the not-so-subtle pursuit of marking out a hierarchy between bloggers, such as the numerous giveaways and contests used in the online culinary world. The former are nothing but mini-competitions bloggers promote to their readers, aimed at awarding the speed at which followers comment on a post or respond to a new recipe, rather than being a task of any significant difficulty. More than anything, giveaways benefit those promoting them, who can demonstrate to both their rival blogger-colleagues and the general public, both the excellent relationship they enjoy with their followers and the contractual power they wield (measured by the number of products offered as prizes) with the sponsors providing those prizes, which tend to be *lovemarks** (such as *Kitchenaid* or *Le Creuset*) for food enthusiasts. The giveaways allow those promoting them to flaunt their professional network, affirming their own prestige with competitors as if to say, “Look! I’m such an influential blogger that I have caught the attention of prestigious brands such as Le Creuset!”. Even more interesting are the culinary contests, which consist of a competition open to all bloggers that are announced by a food blogger, with a simple excuse such as the blog’s ‘birthday’, who publishes the reasons for the contest and its rules in one of their posts. These contests generally involve the collection of themed recipes, destined to become a real recipe book (perhaps downloadable as a PDF) based on the blog pages that came up with the idea. Contests offer an excellent opportunity to evaluate the bloggers’ publishing talent, in particular those bloggers who promote themselves in this way. The final PDF embodies a fundamental transformation in blog writing as it allows the writer to move from serial tales (typical of the diary structures of blogs) to a *finished* text in a clearly defined format (the PDF).

FOCUS 2

Mastering the Art of Blogging

There is a film that clearly explains what it means to be a blogger. It is called *Julie&Julia* (2009), and is written and directed by the great culinary author Nora Ephron. The film recounts the parallel lives of two very different characters. On the one hand we have Julia Child, an icon of

American cooking who became famous thanks to her 1961 recipe book, *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. On the other we have Julie Powell, an unknown 29 year old who works at the *Lower Manhattan Development Corporation* on the reconstruction of the site of the September 11 attacks. Their paths cross almost by accident. Julie Powell is frustrated at work and cannot find a way out of the monotony until her husband suggests, only half seriously, that she start writing a blog. Julie had never considered this opportunity, let alone considered what its theme or focus would be. That is until her passion for food, and recipe books in particular, comes to mind. She decides to dedicate her blog to a bizarre competition with herself, requiring her to make all the recipes (524 of them!) in her all-time hero Julia Child's book in just one year. It is interesting how, before this moment, she had never entertained the idea of writing a blog, and even less so that of dedicating herself to cooking. Her choice is made without any kind of plan, emerging as a way of carving out a space for something different and exciting in her life, a hobby capable of compensating for the dissatisfaction of her professional life, one that focuses on her playfulness and spontaneity. At the beginning, Julie's blog is merely a pretext for escaping the existential dead end in which she finds herself, a hobby that would help change her life for the better. And this is precisely what happens. Firstly, this project keeps her occupied. The blog has an incredibly intense work schedule: to make 524 recipes in 365 days is no mean feat; it means cooking at least two dishes a day. However, this demanding mission forces her to deepen her knowledge of the art of cooking, following the recipes leads to a fortification of skills such as choosing the best ingredients, mastering the more complicated culinary techniques, managing cooking times and so on. Our blogger, driven by her unusual hobby, becomes increasingly competent. Day by day, Julie recounts all this on her blog in miniscule detail, progressively updating it with her failures and successes. It is understood that by continuing along this path, her stream becomes an actual *autobiography* in which the recipes become a metaphor for life and the changes that this has caused her to make. On the other hand, however, as the project goes on, a kind of magic happens. The blog reveals itself as a communications tool, filling with the comments of curious readers and fans of the 'mission', quickly elevating her to a major reference point for online gastronomic discussion. The consolidation of the community of followers around Julie Powell's blog ensures that her leadership is progressively recognised, leading her towards the publishing world. Indeed, the blog's activity catches the attention of the New York Times, and subsequently other newspapers, literary and publishing agents, allowing her to carve out a coveted career as a writer.

> When she is cooking, Julie sees Julia Child as an unattainable legend bound to the exceptional heights that her work had reached in US food culture, without realising how close her work is to that of the more famous Julia.
> Nora Ephron's film wants to document precisely this similarity and does so by juxtaposing the stories of the two characters. Both Julie Powell and Julia Child are *amateurs* who joined the world of gastronomy almost by accident, yet both make a living from their personal passion, using media to reconfigure their own discourse (Julia Child on television, Julie Powell online) and make it increasingly popular. The sign of Julia Powell's success, just like that of her forerunner Julia Child, seems to be precisely this, spreading her own discourse using media, embodying a third way for gastronomic storytelling that surpasses the sterile dichotomy between the unfathomable discourse of *experts* and the over-simplification by *popularizers*.
> This is the positive role embodied today by the *amateur* discourse on food, driven by social media.

At the end of this excursus we can ask ourselves what talent the bloggers themselves want to demonstrate to their community of peers. The answer is something we might call 'the competence of the curator'. The downloadable PDF is the precursor to the printed recipe book every blogger dreams of publishing. As such, it is important to have an appropriate plan for the contest format and its accompanying communications strategy (choice of theme, name, possible sponsors, prizes, invitations to take part, design of associated banners for the blogs taking part, etc.), as well as the skills related to promotion of the finished product (editing and publication of the PDF, its possible print publication and so on).

The construction of an authorial identity that is recognised and does not require additional adjectives is, then, the existential and professional aim of online writing.

SECTION III

AROUND FOOD

Objects, Design, Technology

Dario Mangano

1. MATERIAL CULTURE

In the beginning was the knife. Let's try to imagine a world in which cooking does not exist, and humans eat only what they can gather with their hands, teeth, eyes, ears, legs, etc., as if they were animals. Back then, humans had to behave like wolves or apes: they took what they found, sniffed it, tried it and swallowed it, all the while hoping it was not poisonous. They had neither the strength nor the sharp teeth of the wolf, nor their particularly refined senses of sight and smell. Perhaps they behaved like hyenas or vultures, living off the remnants left by the great predators. When did cooking come about? Many would say it started with fire, and the ability to cook, which must have involved suspending the food over an open flame. However, this happened at a more advanced stage, not only because of the difficulty posed by lighting a fire, but also due to the imagination required to think that a natural product could be improved upon by using heat.

It only takes a moment's consideration to understand that the idea of cooking must have come much earlier. The real problem was not a practical one like lighting the fire or finding a way of not burning oneself, but one of perception linked to the way the natural substances that surrounded our ancestors were viewed. In order to imagine a steak, it was first necessary to look at the calf from which it came in an entirely new light, to consider it not simply as dead but subdivided into parts so that it can be transported, preserved, cooked and finally savoured.

Careful: this is not only the case with animals. The plant world also allows for a whole host of transformations. A simple fruit is made up of different parts: the external part (its skin), the internal part (the pulp), as well as others such as the seeds or stem. Taste, and therefore cooking, came about in the very moment we begin to think of everything nature has to offer as something to transform, an object made up of parts that do not all have the same value. We choose to keep the pineapple's pulp but not its skin because it is too hard. But this is the first step, because it is only by having imagined the possibility of deconstructing the object that one can imagine something even more complex, such as *piecing back together* parts from different natural products. This is where the idea of the *ingredient* comes from, without which cooking (understood as the process of working and combining natural products) would not exist. Only when human beings are able to (a) sub-divide that which nature offers, and (b) think of new combinations, is it possible to detach from the state of nature and enter a state of culture.

There are two important results that act as a starting point for this chapter. The first is that cooking comes from the capacity to imagine rather than the capacity to do. The second, almost paradoxically, is that this ability to consider transformations develops when it is possible to conceive of a blade that intervenes on the material. The object-knife is both a tool useful for *making* things, and a necessary dispositif for *thinking* in a different way. It is thanks to this dual nature of objects, in part material and in part abstract, that we can talk about material culture. By this we refer not only to the value objects assume in a particular community, but the way in which their configuration helps culture itself take shape. As such, not only is there no cooking without objects, but there is no gastronomy without them, if by gastronomy we mean that system of tastes and distastes that are at the basis of any dish. The tools we use to prepare so very many dishes are not simply tools but active participants: without them, the cook would not exist.

2. THE CHEF'S KNIFE

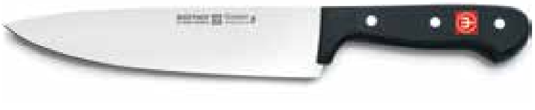


Fig. 1. European chef's knife (this is a German version).

Fig. 2. A Japanese *yanagi*.

Fig. 3. A Japanese *santoku*.

Fig. 4. A Chinese *tou*.

In a cuisine like that found in Japan, we can see this clearly. Just think of sushi and sashimi* in particular. In both of these typical dishes the main transformation undergone by the food is not produced through exposure to heat but by being cut. Sashimi is a piece of raw fish. But as any Japanese knows, this does not mean that it has not been 'cooked'. The chef must be entirely familiar with the different fish, know how to clean them, and obviously be able to carve perfectly formed mouthfuls from their flesh with a flavoursome consistency. It is an operation made possible by a knife that, in Japan, is considered the chef's knife par excellence, and it is different from that used in the West.

The expression 'Chef's knife' is an interesting one. It refers to the kind of knife that is indispensable when cooking, that which no cook or chef can do without. And yet it is enough to travel around a bit to discover that the shape of this knife changes depending on the country in which one finds themselves. In the majority of Western countries, the chef's knife is similar to that depicted in fig. 1, a design that originated in medieval times in France or Germany. For those that use it on a daily basis, it is a generic tool capable of cutting a large number of ingredients in different ways. However, it only appears to be infinitely versatile, as demonstrated when it is compared with Japanese chef's knives. In Japan there are two tools that are fundamental when it comes to cutting: the *yanagi** and the santoku. The first is a pointed knife that is fairly long (though shorter models do exist) with a slight curve (fig. 2) and a one-sided blade that allows for a more precise, neat cut. This makes it particularly well suited to slicing soft materials such as raw fish, much more so than a European knife. As such it is considered the gold standard in sashimi knives. Its shorter versions are also incredibly useful for cleaning and filleting. It is not just the blade that is important but also the short, thin handle made from bamboo, which, as it is smaller than the average hand, forces the fingers to slip forward onto the blade with the wrist resting on the handle (table 1). When this happens, it changes movement that causes the cut. It no longer originates from the wrist, as happens with the western knife (which, in fact, has a wider handle on which all fingers can easily rest), but from the forearm and elbow. This simple change makes a significant difference when it comes to controlling the blade, as the movements it is forced to make are produced by joints larger than the wrist, thus making them more precise and controlled. This is exactly what is required in order to achieve those cuts that are indispensible for transforming fish into sashimi.

The *santoku*, which has recently become very popular in the west (fig. 3), takes its name from the 'three uses' it has: slicing, dicing and mincing. Here the blade is wide and rather square, whilst the curvature of the blade is minimal. However, the handle is broad and so the control comes from the wrist like with the western knife. Its uses are very different to the *yanagi*, and in a certain sense, complementary. It is not used for fish, but for the other significant ingredient in Japanese cuisine: vegetables. They are used in many dishes, often presented in the form of thin leaves or strips, or as elegant mouthfuls. The Japanese use of vegetables is shared with their neighbours in China, which dedicates its own chef's knife to this very ingredient, called the *tou* (fig. 4). On close inspection we see this model shares many characteristics with the *santoku* whilst exaggerating them. Much wider and heavier than the latter, the tou has a blade with a much less pronounced curvature, seeming almost straight. But most significantly it has a different handle that is somewhat reminiscent of the *yanagi* in both its dimension and the way in which it forces the user to hold the knife with their fingers on the blade. Once again this causes the wrist to become rigid and the movement to originate at the elbow, giving not just greater control and excellent precision, but also the possibility to lower the knife quickly and thus make multiple, rapid cuts in a short space of time.

When it comes to knives, it is not just the original shape of the raw material (a fish, a courgette, meat, etc.) that counts, but the shape it is required to take on (a mouthful of sashimi, chopped vegetables or a succulent rib-eye steak). These are actions that we can reconstruct in detail by analysing the object's two interfaces. The first is that between the knife and the human user, which refers to the hold and the way in which the action will be carried out; the second, which I will refer to instead as the knife's interface* for the material, refers to the ingredients and takes note of their mechanical properties. A table here will help us summarise the effects produced by the structure of the different interfaces found in these four knives (table 1).

We are yet to discover the precise origins of the shape of the western chef's knife. Its medieval origins are linked to meat eating, perhaps that of an animal roasted whole which then have had to be divided up in front of those about to eat it. In this case a knife with a pointed end would have indeed been necessary, especially one capable of inflicting a certain force (thanks to the curvature of the blade its progressive thickening from the sharp blade to its blunt top), but with which they could also cut much thicker slices than those found in oriental cuisine. This required rather unrefined movements that did not require the repetition typical of slicing vegetables, for which wrist control was more than sufficient.

	Yanagi (Japan)	**Santoku** (Japan)	**Tou** (China)	**Chef's Knife** (Europe)
				
Interface* for the human user	Handle: short and thin, not contoured Finger position: index finger and thumb on the blade, the handle knocks against the wrist Movement: lengthways Actuator of movement: with the wrist now rigid, the movement comes from the forearm and shoulder, making it more stable and precise	Handle: standard dimensions, lightly contoured Finger position: Fingers slide onto the blade, as such its height causes it to maintain a certain distance from what it is slicing. Movement: percussive/lengthways Actuator of movement: forearm with some play in the wrist	Handle: very short, not contoured Finger position: between the blade and the handle Movement: percussive Actuator of movement: forearm	Handle: standard, contoured Finger position: on the handle with the possibility of lengthening out over the blade Movement: lengthways Actuator of movement: wrist and forearm
Ideal cutting position				
Interface for the material	Blade shape: thin and elongated Blade: only sharp on one side Curvature: minimal Most efficient: cutting lengthways	Blade shape: wide and not very long Blade: sharp on both sides Curvature: minimal Most efficient: a combination of percussive and lengthways cutting	Blade shape: very wide Blade: sharp on both sides Curvature: none Most efficient: percussive cutting	Blade shape: elongated, becoming gradually thinner Blade: sharp on both sides Curvature: Pronounced Most efficient: cutting lengthways
	↓	↓	↓	↓
	Ideal for slicing soft materials, such as fish, with precision. This is the knife typically used for sashimi	A versatile knife, particularly good for percussive cutting and good control. It is an ideal tool for making precise, repeated cuts such as those necessary when preparing vegetables.	Despite being used in China for a vast range of cutting techniques, its characteristics make it most suited to repetitive, percussive chopping. It is perfect for chopping vegetables in a uniform way, managing to cut them into even very small pieces. The thickness of the blade helps to keep the vegetable steady between each cut	Despite being suited to a range of uses, on closer inspection its suitability for cutting meat becomes clear, as not only can it slice the meat effectively, but thanks to its pointed end it can also cut, separate and so on. It is also fine for chopping vegetables, though it is less constant in its precision compared with knives with a wider blade

3. FROM THE KNIFE TO THE TABLE

As we have seen, the knife is not solely a tool that allows cooking skills to be developed. It also has a great deal to do with another fundamental element of gastronomy that is also heavily linked to the use of objects: consumption. This does not only involve the table, the way it is set and conceived as a space created to host as many people as things, but also other ways of consuming food, such as eating in the street using disposable containers and different forms of cutlery. In this sense, Japanese culture is emblematic, given the very way the food itself is worked into a mouthful understood as a unit of taste that, once at the table, requires no further intervention. Hence the reason there are no blades to be found on a Japanese table, with food being picked up using chopsticks, much like artificial fingers that touch the food instead of us. It is precisely this physical contact (or its absence) with food that constitutes the central point of our investigation into food consumption. As such, we must take into consideration a tool that allows us to carry out this very function* whilst taking it for granted: the fork.

It is always surprising to note how those objects we hold to be indispensable, and whose form* seems to us to be so simple and obvious that they become entirely necessary, are in fact the result of choices that were anything but simple or obvious. It is particularly surprising to discover they have not always been used in the way we think. The fork is usually made of metal (though in the past it was also made from wood, and today new materials are being used to replace those in plastic), it is made up of two parts - the prongs required to skewer the food, and the handle in order to hold it. Again we have two interfaces: one for the non-human (the food) and the other for humans. With regards to the first (the prongs), today we increasingly find those with four rather than three, whilst those with two prongs, though common in cutlery during the 1700s, are today no longer found on the table but in the kitchen, in a larger format as carving forks. Needless to say, there are numerous variants to be found throughout history, in which the materials, the length of the prongs and the kind of handle all vary. But despite being interesting, this is not our focus here. Our interest lies in the fork itself and its uses. Indeed, there is nothing obvious about using such a tool to manage our contact with food.

In Europe, people ate with their hands until at least the Middle Ages and no one thought anything of it. In the 1600s, scholar Vincenzo Nolfi wrote a treaty on etiquette in which he described the fork as a tool destined to be quickly forgotten because, he said, it was disgusting to imagine placing a piece of metal in one's mouth that could also alter the food's taste. Gentlemen and women needed only to take care over which part of the hand they used to bring food to their mouths. Using the whole hand, perhaps licking and sucking food remnants off it, was boorish, but limiting oneself to using just three fingers, and not licking them after touching the food, was considered exemplary behaviour. But most importantly it was correct with regards to the food. It was taken as read that touching the food was an intrinsic part of savouring it, a knowledge that we have lost with all foods save a few, such as bread, cheese and cured meats which we continue to eat with our fingers. It is no coincidence therefore that the first forks had three prongs, reflecting those three fingers etiquette considered advisable. As for bread, its status is interesting. It is a food to be touched, in fact it is almost obligatory to appreciate its consistency and texture using touch. It is also a tool used to help food onto the fork without using one's fingers, or even as a container for the food itself, as with kebabs which are wrapped in a thin layer of bread. So, a food to touch but also a food with which to touch. Indeed, the idea of making edible plates is by no means an invention of contemporary food designers.

But when did we start to use the fork, and with which foods? It is impossible to say with any certainty, but the first accounts of this tool date back to 1361 in a list of goods smuggled to a merchant, in which reference is made to 14 dozen forks 'ad comendum macherones', for eating pasta. In the Middle Ages, forks were used only when eating pasta, which at the time was seasoned only with butter and cheese and eaten hot, something that made it difficult to handle. It is no coincidence that Italy was one of the first countries in which, at the end of the Middle Ages, the use of the fork that today we consider indispensable began to be widespread.

The history of another protagonist of the dinner table, the spoon, is very different as it is the only device that our body is unable to substitute. Fingers are able to grasp food and teeth are able to break it up as a knife would do, but we have nothing that can imitate the spoon. As such, examples of spoons can be found in the most remote historical periods, as they were indispensable for consuming any food with a liquid consistency. This led to the possibility of preparing dishes of this kind and therefore to the invention of the saucepan, whose arrival somehow does much more than simply take the preparation of raw materials to another level as from that moment there would be an explosion of differentiation and specialisation, a journey whose origins we easily forget, losing sight of its arbitrary nature. Tradition is nothing more than a successful invention and not the product of necessity, therefore every solution, no matter how logical it may appear, is always only ever one of many alternative possibilities. The point is, if anything, that no solution ever appears out of nowhere.

4. THE INVENTION OF THE COOKING POT

Today we view the cooking pot as the most simple tool in the kitchen. I am not referring to any type or shape of pot in particular, but a generic container that is resistant to heat and capable of holding both solid and liquid substances. And yet this invention arrived very late in human history. To create such an object requires a material with two characteristics: the first is the malleability needed to give it a shape that allows it to act as a container, and the second is resistance, indispensable as it must withstand the heat of a flame. The problem is that in nature no such material exists. Wood is malleable but cannot withstand a naked flame, something that stone could do though it is incredibly difficult to mould. It took thousands of years to resolve this problem using terracotta. Its invention must have been an accident, probably with a fire set in the evening next to a deposit of the material, which had turned solid the next morning to the surprise of our ancestors. We are taking about a time that coincides approximately with the Upper-Palaeolithic era, which began around 40,000 years ago, when humans lived in small, nomadic communities of hunter-gatherers and knew nothing of agriculture, which in turn only began to develop 10,000 years ago in the Neolithic period along with an enormous number of innovations including the use of terracotta.

It should be said that when humans discovered this material they did not use it to make cooking pots or pans, or any other kind of container. At that time they ate whatever nature had to offer and moved continuously, both to find new food and to escape predators. They had little, therefore, to preserve. Furthermore, and this is something we struggle to comprehend, they did not even consider cooking methods such as boiling. Our ancestors knew the effects heat had on meat and probably on vegetables too, but the relationship between these materials and the flame was direct, carried out by suspending fragments of food over the heat source. So what did they do with terracotta? They did not, as we might expect, use it to make useful objects, but for artefacts with a purely symbolic value, such as small statues for use in rituals. Its primary function* was not material but symbolic.

In order to find the first terracotta containers used for cooking food we would have to wait until 10,000 BCE and travel to the Japanese coast, where the Jomon people began to use cylindrical objects to cook the mussels that grew in abundance in the nearby seas. The first recipe for which it was used, therefore, seems to have been a mussel soup. It was very basic, of course, as our ancestors were only interested in getting the shells to open without burning the mollusc inside. However, by doing so, they ended up also preserving the water held within the shells, changing the taste of the seafood. However, the container's symbolic value is not lost in this case either, as the first cooking pots in history were not rough objects clumsily thrown together. Rather they had a surprisingly regular shape if we consider that the potter's wheel was not yet known to them, and were finely decorated by wrapping the fresh terracotta in a plaited cord that left a pattern on the vessel. Indeed, the word Jomon means 'cord'.

At this point, we might think that the passage from roasting to boiling was merely an issue of spreading the word of this invention, but once more things are not as we may think. It is true that the technique for working with terracotta quickly spread from its few places of origin (one of which is Japan), refined enormously by the potter's wheel, but it is also true that the habit of using these objects for cooking initially remained extremely limited. Containers of all kinds became incredibly useful when agriculture began to take shape and human communities stopped roaming, beginning instead to build houses and fill them with objects. But once again the passage from the potential function* of cooking to its actual realisation is in no way obvious. It is known, for example, that the enormous ceramics finds in the *Franchti* cave in the Peloponnese (thought to be one of the oldest examples of agriculture in Greece, with artefacts dating between 6,000 and 3,000 BCE), despite being fit for use on an open flame, were not used in this way, at least not on a daily basis. Those small pieces that showed signs of having been exposed to a flame were made in a way that would suggest only occasional use, and contained traces of food substances that were not part of the local people's daily diet. Archaeologists believe that these tools, as before, were used in rituals that required the consumption of food. This is a very real possibility if we consider contemporary rituals and the role played by the ingestion of substances.

5. COMPARING CULTURES: WOKS AND THE SALTAPASTA

Fig. 5. A *saltapasta*

Fig. 6. A traditional Chinese *wok*

Fig. 7. The traditional way of serving spaghetti with tomato, adding the sauce to the pasta once it has been placed on the plate.

Fig. 8. A plate of spaghetti al pomodoro served in the modern way, with the pasta and sauce perfectly combined thanks to the use of a saltapasta, a deep frying pan.

While the first cooking pot was undoubtedly made of terracotta, with the discovery of metals all kitchen utensils and cookware changed profoundly. As well as becoming stronger, they cooked the food in a different way due to the physical characteristics of this new material. Whereas earthenware is useful for slow cooking (because it is a poor heat conductor, the heat accumulates and is slowly released), iron heats rapidly, providing the full transformative force of the flame. However, what we have already said about terracotta is also true for the use of metal, that its potential for technical innovation does not necessary revolve around the kitchen, especially not straight away. Rather, the tools and needs, the former ideally being a response to the latter, actually came about at the same time, as the evolution of a culinary thought that held together the dishes and the way in which to create them.

A good example of this can be found in Italian gastronomy, which relatively recently adopted into its 'standard' set a pan that had never before existed within it. It is a kind of *wok* or deep frying pan that, in the land of pasta, has been named *saltapasta* (meaning to 'toss the pasta'). Before continuing, it is worth mentioning the value of such a change. Italian cuisine is without doubt one of the best known and most imitated in the world, blessed with an enormous variety of dishes, particularly if you consider the country's relatively contained geographical dimensions. Its long, thin shape makes it host to different climates and ecosystems (marine, hill, lake, etc.) and therefore a broad range of ingredients and ways in which they can be prepared. Among these pasta holds an important position, not just because of the international popularity it shares with pizza, but because of the great variations it allows. There are thousands of possible sauces or dressings, shapes the dough made from water and flour can take, and transformations it can undergo. All this means it can adapt to (and foster) the traditions of the various regions whilst maintaining its recognisability and, therefore, its uniting power. Furthermore, we know that cuisine played an important role in uniting Italy as a single country in the second half of the 1800s. A role so important that it has made the preparation of pasta in Italy an authentic ritual that, equal to religious ones, must be carefully followed in order to be effective. And like every ritual it requires a series of objects, among which, however, there has never been a *saltapasta*. The reason for this is very simple: traditionally pasta was not mixed with the sauce. The *pastasciutta* (as pasta was called until around fifty years ago in order to differentiate it from *minestra* in which the sauce and pasta are cooked together) was first boiled and then the sauce added once it had been served on the plate (some regions call it *minestra secca*). The diner would be faced with a mountain of spaghetti with the sauce sitting on its summit (fig. 7). The first gesture commensal would then make would be to mix the pasta and the sauce, combining the two components as they wished, thus contributing to the definition of the dish. As a result, the standard range of pans found in an Italian kitchen comprised of tall pots in a classic cylindrical form, perfect for boiling long pieces of spaghetti (the shorter, more shallow pans were mostly used for preparing the sauces, *sauce*pan), or flat cookware such as frying pans. No pot had curved edges of a medium height like those found on a *saltapasta*.

This is no longer the case today. It would be very hard to find a house that did not own this new pan. It is such an enormous and sudden success that it leaves people gobsmacked, how did no one think of that before? After all, its technology is not particularly sophisticated, simply giving an unusual shape to some metal. So it was not technical knowledge or industrial processes that impeded the development of such a pan, but taste: only when tastes change are culinary tools able to change. Today in fact, pasta is almost always served pre-mixed with the sauce. Even in a simple tomato pasta, the pasta must be combined with the sauce before it is served on the plate and not after (fig. 8). Some consider this a fad, suggesting it is a senseless whim destined to soon disappear as many trends do. However, not only has this fashion meant that in just a few years millions of pans have been sold, but it would be very difficult to go back. It is true, there will be new fashions, but it is impossible for them to ignore this transformation of taste.

This brings us to the wok-*saltapasta*. Its high and slightly curved walls allow it to effectively contain errant strands of spaghetti whilst mixing with the sauce, while the metal it is made from heats up quickly and distributes that heat evenly, with its broad opening (its shape is like the top of a cone with the base diameter smaller than that on top) allowing liquid to evaporate quickly. The same result can be obtained with a normal frying pan, but would require much more skill, whilst with the wok the object's shape suggests the correct movements, accompanying the user and preventing any spillages. The wok is perfect for this, hence this style of frying pan's impressive sales in a setting where it seemed tradition would always win out.

We are yet to see what kind of ties this pan has with the culture that is responsible for its creation. While, as we have said, kitchen tools are the expression of a particular gastronomic tradition, their form* is determined by this and therefore by the transformations that characterise it, and the way in which that culture understands what is 'tasty'. The wok is a very ancient pan. The first known examples of the wok date back 2,000 years, historically placing it at the basis of Chinese gastronomy, in a country with no pasta to toss, or at least no dishes that are equivalent to those found in Italian cuisine. Chinese noodles, made from beans and other cereals, not only have a different consistency to durum wheat pasta, but are used for many different dishes, from *stir-frys*, the quick cooking of meat and vegetables that are carefully marinated, to deep frying. These are cooking methods for which no one in Italy would ever use the *saltapasta*. Indeed, on close inspection, the wok and the *saltapasta* are in no way identical (figs. 5 and 6). First of all, the traditional wok has a curved rather than a flat base (fig. 6), which means it must be suspended over a gas hob using an adaptor; the curve of the wok's walls is softer compared to that of the *saltapasta*; and the traditional wok often has two handles similar to those of a casserole dish, whilst a *saltapasta* only has one long handle like that of a frying pan. None of these differences exist by chance. Each reflects the different way this objects relates, on one hand, with people, the human beings that will use it to carry out the transformations required by a certain number of recipes, and, on the other, with non-human entities that can be both the ingredients placed inside it and other objects such as a burner.

Take the handles, for example. Creating handles such as those in fig. 6 means imagining them solely as being used to lift and move the saucepan, entirely different to that found in fig. 5, a lever that allows for those movements typically required when tossing the pasta. We can see then that in the traditional Chinese wok the ingredients must have been moved about in the pan, crucial to them not burning, using a spoon. This is the traditional practice of the stir-fry, in which (according to the experts) cooking time must be shorter than the time taken to dress a salad.

Another interface* with culinary value is the base. Making it curved, as in the traditional wok, not only makes it best suited to stir-frying, which requires the continual movement of the ingredients inside the pan, but also to another kind of frying – deep-frying – which requires the food to be fully immersed in boiling oil. An entirely spherical base allows less oil to be used when deep-frying a bite-size chunk of meat or vegetable than a flat one. But while on one hand we have the relationship between food and pan, on the other we have the relationship between food and mouth. In China, the latter is mediated through the use of chopsticks, thus requiring small bite-size chunks to be fried. This is why curved woks have continued to be used despite the inconvenience of requiring an adaptor for use on a gas hob. It is also why when the wok, a truly migratory pan, arrived in Italy, it was able to flatten its base without affecting its functionality. This obviously does not mean that in Italy food is not fried, but that different things are fried in different ways and, crucially, that it is assumed they will be only be cut, portioned, divided and made into 'units of taste' like bite-sized mouthfuls after cooking.

6. DESIGN IN FOOD

In conclusion we must refer to the repercussions that a perspective such as the one we have presented has on the very notion of design. Indeed, for decades the task of design has been summed up in the idea that *form follows function*, so it is the function* that determines the details of the configuration any given object must have. To the point that this same form* should not vary unless it is adapting to functional needs. In light of what we have said about the many objects linked to gastronomy, it is still necessary to ask ourselves not only if such an unequivocal process going from form to **function** is possible, but also, and most importantly, what such a **function** consists of. As we have seen, the function* of the knife is not simply cutting, just as that of a pot is not solely cooking. The knife is devised to cut something in a specific way, and these further determinations are only defined within a precise understanding of food, of what is considered tasty and what is not, aspects that are in no way objective or universal as demonstrated by the diverse traditions found the world over. The same thing happens with the pot, which is made in order to produce a certain kind of heat in a certain timeframe as well as holding specific ingredients, allowing precise actions to be carried out on them. These are all issues that, as we have said, can also be found in objects earmarked for food consumption and not just in its preparation. There could be many other examples beyond those that we have given, and in each one new issues and factors would emerge. What must not change is the gaze that we turn to each one. A gaze that never thinks in terms of single objects or single dishes with specific founding features, but that prefers to maintain a perspective that allows us to perceive and valorise the relationships between objects, dishes, usage, habits and rituals. In a perspective that views gastronomy as a cultural product it is the networks that count, rather than the single nodal points of which the network comprises, especially when it comes to a dimension of life so utterly important as that of food. Only in this way is it possible to think of **design** in relationship to gastronomic culture. A relationship that once more is not unequivocal (an idea of food does not come first, followed by the object required to create it) but one of reciprocal conjecture: a system of objects and a system of tastes arrive together, continually influencing one another. To the point that when a designer thinks of a new kitchen product, they not only need to ask themselves how it will work, if it will have commercial success or if it will be cheap to produce or easy to recycle once it is no longer needed, but what kind of changes it will introduce to the gastronomic system to which it belongs.

FOCUS 1

Thermomix TM6

Vorwerk's Thermomix TM6 is the latest incarnation of one of the most sophisticated kitchen appliances. What counts is not what it does but the role it takes on in the kitchen.

Among the many electrical appliances that fill our kitchens, one seems more representative of our time than any other. We are not talking about an esoteric dehydrator or a sophisticated blast chiller, but that everyday champion that is the Thermomix. It is famous: a blender whose bowl can be heated, that is also able to weigh ingredients and turn itself off at a pre-established time. It does not sound much but the Thermomix has changed the lives of many. It is not so much the actions it carries out (or the very few it does not), but how it does them. In other words, its philosophy is what counts. In theory, it should be an aid, a tool that carries out particularly boring actions, like mixing or kneading, on our behalf, or those tasks that require great speed, such as mincing. But it is not. Everything begins with the recipe, which the machine displays on its integral screen. Once the recipe is chosen, the programme begins, and what follows is a sequence of highly detailed instructions. The user does not need to think, just obey, pouring into the bowl the required ingredients in the required quantities at the right moment. You do not even need to check it, to the extent that you (almost) never have to look inside or open the mixing bowl because the machine never gets it wrong. The recipe you have chosen will come out exactly as you see in the picture. But this is the whole point: what counts is not what it brings to cooking but what it takes out – anxiety. Because cooking is, beyond any required know-how or skill, a question of nerve. All those 'add as required' to consider, those instructions to 'just see how much is needed' dished out by Granny, all those hurdles that will cause those lacking in passion to quit sooner or later. And so, here is the magical object to solve the problem, not a simple aid but an actual operator, a little chef friend who *we* help in the kitchen.

FOCUS 2

Roner

The Roner allows you to maintain the water in any container at a constant temperature. In this way it is possible to cook various foods without them coming into contact with the liquid using vacuum packaging. It therefore becomes possible to bring the food to a very precise temperature, maintaining its consistency and taste to perfection.

If someone had told Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count of Rumford, that the cooking systems he was experimenting with back in 1799 would be the height of fashion in gourmet restaurants the world over, he would perhaps not have believed it. He was a scientist, and his studies on food focused predominantly on canteens for the poor, looking at how to make (for example) nutritious, low-cost soups without compromising on taste. His response was very clear: by lowering the temperature. And so, two centuries later, here we are rethinking how we roast meat. Rather than placing it in the oven at 180° and waiting for it to duly brown on the outside without drying out too much on the inside, we vacuum pack it in a plastic bag with all the necessary seasoning, and down it goes into the heated water of the Roner for 3 hours at just 58° (sometimes even 6-8 hours depending on the amount of meat). Using a resistor, a pump and a thermostat, this device maintains the water inside a container at a constant temperature for the necessary amount of time until the meat reaches that same temperature. At this point, it will not simply be cooked, but it will have reached a kind of metaphysical state of perfection, remaining deliciously soft and full of its juices. The only problem is that when you take it out of the plastic bag the meat will be pale and wholly unappetising. The requisite browning will have to take place after, in a frying pan, perhaps using a knob of butter. But beware: only leave it there for the time necessary to give it a magazine-worthy appearance. At that point, it will be an explosion of flavours the likes of which the palate has never known. This is what many great chefs today search for: to reproduce simple flavours – such as those of meat, tomato, fish – and render them as intense as possible. The only collateral effect is that the Roner needs company: in order to use it correctly, you will also need a vacuum packing machine.

FOCUS 3

The Sieve

Apparently limited in use and of no real complexity, sieves actually play a fundamental role in the kitchen, much like all those tools that 'perfect' dishes. In the photograph is a Chinois, which*, with its characteristically conical shape, is suited to filtering dense substances.*

At times, in order to understand the meaning of kitchen utensils it is necessary to consider them separately from their physical appearance. Take the sieve. It is an object like many others that peers up at us from the kitchen drawer where we throw everything we know we should have but never really use. It is, however, much more than a simple tool: it separates, filters, divides, distinguishing between what is good and what is not, what is desirable and what is best kept away from the plate. When we use a sieve we accept the idea that the sauce we have cooked, the flour we are about to use in our cake, the broth we have watched boil for hours, are not quite as they should be. We suppose they can be improved using something, a net with fairly small holes from which our half-finished dishes will emerge purified, combined, smooth. In short, perfected. So that is why those who use sieves (if they accept their philosophy) have dozens of them. There are the flat ones with fine nylon nets, perfect for removing impurities from sugar and flour and incorporating just enough air to make cakes fluffy and light; those rounded, metal ones that are ideal for liquids; and those conical ones like the *chinois* (literally 'Chinese' in French because it is reminiscent of the traditional Chinese hat), which with the pestle that often accompanies it, is ideal for more dense substances such as a béchamel sauce that needs those last, miniscule lumps smoothed out, or boiled vegetables from which a velvety puree will emerge.

Eating Out
Relations between Spaces and Food

Alice Giannitrapani

The way we work forces us to use canteens, self-service restaurants, bars. The way we spend our free time means we use pizzerias, wine bars, restaurants, *osterias*. Sometimes we travel in search of a particular restaurant because of a review by a renowned food blogger. Eating out is a quick and easy way of consuming our food, be it as a social practice, a way of spending free time or an all-encompassing life experience. Whatever the motivations, however frequently we do it, no matter what kind of establishment we visit, the fact remains that a dinner or lunch eaten out has become a fairly deep-rooted habit for many of us. We often end up growing fond of the places we choose to visit, because we partly identify with them, and because they identify us.

In this chapter we will attempt to investigate the diverse world of restaurants from a particular perspective: that of spatiality. It is, in fact, the initial way in which the restaurant's environment is perceived that leads customers to anticipate a particular kind of restaurant. It is this first impression that either encourages them to stop, or makes them want to leave. If I visit a restaurant where the tables are very close together, the tablecloth is checked with large white and red squares, there is a wine bottle standing on the table and the cutlery is placed in a heap at the centre, I can assume I am in an *osteria*, a place that aims to create an informal, unassuming ambiance and whose spartan décor almost functions as a guarantee of the food's quality, not to mention its low price. If I find myself in a restaurant where the tables are set far apart, the cutlery is silver and the tablecloth is damask, I can assume I am in a high-quality restaurant where I will be able to taste sought-after dishes and pay a high price for the privilege. These are, of course, rather banal examples but they help us intuitively understand how space can be a real language capable of communicating.

In this chapter we will consider how spaces devoted to the consumption of food are structured, and how their articulation tells us a great deal about the chef, their way of understanding food culture, the potential customers and their interests. The restaurant's location, the way in which its entrance is structured, the layout of the tables inside it, the way it is decorated and its *mise en place*, the relationship between dining space and kitchen: none of these things are exclusively aesthetic choices, they are also ways in which the spaces speak about the food philosophy that lies behind them.

1 HOW THE RESTAURANT WAS BORN

Restaurants are generally places open to the public, visited by those willing to pay in exchange for a meal. Within them move a number of actors (maître, chef, waiters, sous-chefs, dishwashers, customers), various objects are present (tables, chairs, cutlery, crockery, kitchen equipment), and different zones are designated for carrying out particular functions (entrance, dining area, kitchen, payment area, possible smoking area, toilets). The restaurant, as we know it today, is, in other words, a complex device orchestrated to offer a gastronomic experience, in which spaces, subjects and objects interact. But this has not always been the case. Before entering into our investigation into how a restaurant is constructed today, we would do well to take a step back and briefly consider its history.

The first meals eaten out of the house, which we can date back to Roman times, were the result of practical demands by men who, because of their work, had to stay away from their place of residence for some days at a time. During their time away, these travellers tended to eat in taverns and inns where they would also often spend the night. So it would seem a kind of proto-business travel helped found the modern restaurant, though its early characteristics were very different to the ones we recognise today. The first customers would choose from a fixed menu at a fixed price, and they ate their meals with strangers, on benches or at shared tables. Even when it became more common in Europe for people of the area (and not just travellers) to frequent these places in order to eat, they were crowded, chaotic and loud. Women were barred and, in France at least, these taverns were often controlled by corporations (innkeepers, butchers, bakers, etc.) who had a monopoly on the distribution of certain foods.

The official birth of the modern restaurant in Europe is usually dated at the French Revolution, which had the effect (among others) of leaving chefs without work, who up until that point had been employed by the nobility. Chefs at that time had to reinvent themselves, and they decided to go out into the world, opening spaces for a discerning clientele. With the passing of time, the variety of dishes on offer grew, the habit of paying a price that reflected what had been consumed (rather than a fixed price) became common, and the tables were assigned to groups of acquaintances. The birth and diffusion of the restaurant is linked to myriad reasons, some predating the Revolution, in step with social and economic changes, changes in production (the establishment of the middle classes, the birth of shops, the experimentation with new forms of cultivation, etc.), changes that paved the way for the establishment of the modern restaurants that gradually spread throughout France in the second half of the 1700s and the first part of the 1800s. And even before the Revolution, the chef Boulanger opened a public house that offered his customers '*bouillons restaurants*', hot broths that would 'restore' the customers.

So, from those first taverns and inns – simple, informal, with few airs and graces, created for clients with specific practical demands (travellers far from home who needed to eat) –, we move progressively towards a real restaurant, a more structured space that gradually shakes off the characteristics of a commercial exercise in order to take on those traits typical of noble domestic environments (large mirrors on the walls, chandeliers, quality crockery). The first restaurants of this kind were often characterised by a standardised style, aimed at enticing people (for the first time, women are also permitted) ready to spend money on both a gastronomic experience and a public declaration of their social status.

Since then, the restaurant market has expanded even further, enriching itself and transforming over time, with the kinds of restaurants on offer multiplying and diversifying, becoming hyper-specialised in the food they offer (oriental, Thai, Chinese, French), in the kind of consumption they offer (lounge bars for drinks, self-service for quick lunches, bakeries for appetising snacks), and in the kind of dietary needs they meet (vegetarian, gluten-free, and so on). Today there is such a broad offering that any attempt to catalogue all kinds of restaurant becomes an almost impossible exercise.

2 OUTSIDE

A restaurant's communication begins with its location. Establishments placed outside the urban context, for example, require an effort to be made by the customer in order to eat there, whilst at the same involving the customer by stimulating in them a sense of discovery and surprise. Conversely, establishments in town and city centres, perhaps with outside tables, encroach on our vision, they call out to the customer, who might choose to stop there simply because they happened to be passing. Places like this become places of spectacle where you can watch what is happening around you whilst being watched by passers by. Similarly, a McDonald's located inside an airport aims to entice travellers on the move, whilst one located next to a city's major tourist attractions is aimed at travellers who intend to visit the area. The same restaurant, with the same kind of décor, the same gastronomic offering, takes on different meanings depending on the wider context in which it is situated and, by so doing, appeals to different kinds of customers. In other words, a restaurant's location is one of the primary indicators of what that place wants to tell us. It is one of the first ways in which the restaurant owner is able to build up their client base. It is clear that the choice of one location over another is due to several, varied factors, but it is also true that, whether they are taken consciously or otherwise, these decisions have rather pronounced communicatory effects. Location can then be emphasised or masked by other elements. There are 'shouty' signs, large and illuminated, that aim to attract attention perhaps from a certain distance (these play a classic function in calling out to customers). Other signs are chameleon-like, almost blending in with the environment in which they are displayed and camouflaging the establishment's existence, they show a certain indifference towards whether or not they are seen, as if speaking to a restricted circle of customers, those who know and recognise that barely visible place.

Another crucial element is the entrance, a fundamental area of passage that marks out the boundaries of the gastronomic experience, which begins as soon as the threshold is crossed and ends the minute the customer leaves. It distinguishes the inside from the outside, the urban space from that of the restaurant. Let's look at a number of Michelin-starred restaurants by way of example. Here, crossing the threshold means passing from normality (that of everyday life) to the exceptional (the experience that is about to be had). This passage, however, can be marked out in very different ways. *El celler de can roca*, named the second best restaurant in the world in 2018, greets its customers with a wall made of large strips of wood in which the entrance is hidden (fig. 1). The limit of the outside world is strongly demarcated and the inside of the restaurant is invisible from the street. This way of understanding the space cannot help but emphasise the exclusive nature of the establishment, seducing and piquing curiosity on the one hand ("I wonder what that restaurant is like inside"), but at the same risking putting potential clients off ("It's so exclusive it's almost too much"). Conversely, the prevalence of transparent surfaces at the *Madonnina del Pescatore* in Senigallia demonstrates an open restaurant, one that wants to be seen, effectively abolishing the separation between the inside and the outside (fig. 2). The customer is reassured by the fact that they can already have a good idea of what to expect when they go in from outside. However, this can backfire as they might be irritated by the fact that they will be watched as they eat by passers-by. There are also intermediary examples. For instance, the partial barrier in Paris' *L'Astrance* allows you to take a peek at the restaurant's dining area (fig. 3); the frosted glass obscures the inside of the *Osteria Francescana*, but not entirely, so that from the street it is possible to make out outlines and movements inside (fig. 4). In this way the restaurant judged to be the best in the world in 2018 seduces and intrigues, showing shadows and silhouettes but not actually revealing anything happening inside to the gaze of the passer-by. There is not, therefore, a single winning recipe for organising a restaurant entrance (otherwise they would all be the same!), but a multiplicity of possible solutions, each with its own pros and cons, each one associated with different communicative effects on potential customers. Each restaurant pursues different strategies, constructing their own identity not least through the way in which they differentiate themselves from potential competitors.




Fig. 1. (on the left) El celler de can roca, entrance
Fig. 2. (on the left) L'Astrance, entrance
Fig.3. (on the left) Madonnina del Pescatore, entrance
Fig.4. (on the right) Osteria Francescana. entrance

3. INSIDE

When we observe a space, and therefore also when we observe a restaurant, it is always worth asking ourselves: what communicates the fact that this space has been conceived and articulated in this way? What effects does it produce? This is what we have done in the previous section, in our consideration of the various ways of separating/ connecting the restaurant's external and internal spaces, and it is a consideration that we can make once more with regards to the play on visibility created between kitchen and dining area.

Today, we increasingly find restaurants that expose the customer to the place where the dishes are being prepared. We can therefore ask ourselves: what effects of meaning does a restaurant with an open kitchen produce? It gives us the idea that whoever has created that space wants to highlight the care and hygiene standards involved in preparing the food (transparency becomes both a visual and a 'moral' trait). At the same time, it brings to mind a curious customer who enjoys participating (even simply with their gaze) in the food's preparation. Furthermore, in these cases cooking becomes a moment of exhibition, a sort of 'show-cooking', to which we have become accustomed thanks to television programmes dedicated to food. The chef, on the other hand, becomes a performer who demonstrates their culinary abilities for all to see, an artist who brings their work and the dressing of the plate to life in a spectacular way.

Other restaurants, instead, continue to prefer the more traditional solution of keeping the kitchen and the dining area separate. A spatial configuration of this kind aims to hide, as if part of a magical ritual, the cooking process and creation of the dishes, preferring the surprise involved in revealing the plate to the customer. Cooking becomes a behind the scenes activity, in which perhaps, at the end of the dinner, the chef will come out to talk to the diners. Not unlike choreographers at the end of a ballet, directors at the end of a play, or designers at the end of a catwalk show, the star chef comes out of their own space (the kitchen) at the end of the meal, to take responsibility for what has taken place. The chef is there to receive compliments from the customer, but also to confirm that what has taken place in a fluid and natural way up until that point is, in fact, the result of complex direction and editing. The meal, with its rhythms, its alternating dishes, its contrasting flavours, its wine pairings, has in reality been carefully orchestrated by the chef and brought to life by the restaurant 'cast', who have followed their orders.

Again there is no lack of intermediary solutions. McDonald's, for example, has a 'semi-screened' kitchen that can be partially seen, but not fully observed. In some restaurants there are television screens in the dining area that stream images directly from the kitchen, once more aiming for an effect of spectacularisation, creating a sort of culinary reality show. At the opposite end of the spectrum is a recent trend among a number of Michelin-starred restaurants: a single table in the kitchen, which the chef can choose to assign to one or more customers. This is a 'privileged' position from which the customer can watch the star-chef of the moment at work, live and up close. An extraordinary experience that is not available to just anyone. The chef decides whether or not, how much and to whom they will show themselves, demonstrating their power and confirming how precious their work is, a privilege that is not for the enjoyment of the many but that is 'given' to those who, for some unknown reason, deserve it. Eating in the kitchen also allows the customer not simply to observe the 'creation' of the dishes, but to recreate a familiar setting even in a place that is usually formal.

All restaurants base their work on the coordination of these two spaces: the dining area and the kitchen. Once rigidly separated, today, as we have seen, they are increasingly hybrid, both at home and in restaurants, and in television programmes (CFR: CAP:????). *Hell's Kitchen* reveals everything that goes on behind the scenes in a restaurant; *Masterchef* and many others illustrate the processes that go into preparing the dishes. In modern houses the kitchen space is increasingly found at the centre of the living space. Unlike in the past, the kitchen has now become something to be seen, if not flaunted. Over time, we have seen an almost complete inversion of means and ends, and, consequently, a re-modelling of the spaces traditionally associated with it, as well as a parallel reconsideration of the role of the chef. Cooking is no longer a way to provide another person with a gastronomic experience, but has become a performance in itself. The kitchen is no longer a place of preparation, the remote space in which manual work is carried out, but a real organisational linchpin, the fulcrum and centre (both physical and metaphorical) of the experience. The cook is not the helper who places their abilities at the service of the customer, but a star-chef, a subject/protagonist. In short, the relationship between what happens behind the scenes and onstage is, in a certain sense, turned on its head, so that the theatricality increasingly lies not in the meal but in its preparation, a practice that inevitably passes from the private sphere into the public one.

4 IDENTITY, VALUES, PASSIONS

We must make it clear that the choices to reveal the kitchen or screen it, to opt for a glass entrance or one that does not allow any glimpse of the restaurant's interior, to use one material rather than another, are not positive or negative in themselves. They are stylistic choices that should be examined and evaluated one by one, according to their specific case. Every architectural choice will become a defining characteristic of a given place if it manages to be successfully incorporated with the establishment's other features, if it is capable of transmitting values and meaning that are compatible with the restaurant's identity, and able to communicate the chef's culinary philosophy. If one wants to plan a restaurant with its own concept of cooking and its own coherent theme, it becomes fundamental to understand if and how the gastronomic discourse and the spatial discourse reference one another and are capable of finding an equilibrium: a well planned restaurant space is one in which the architecture anticipates the food, without overpowering it, and vice versa – a well designed dish is one that integrates well with (and invokes) the place in which it is served. If, for example, the restaurant wants to be seen as an informal space, and wants to communicate an idea of cooking linked to socialising, it would work well to have a 'social table', a table where groups of people who do not know each other can sit together. In these cases, the dishes can become a pretext for speaking to one another, perhaps helping to form social relationships. If, on the contrary, the restaurant intends to propose an intimate atmosphere, perfect for a romantic meal, it would be better to offer small tables set well apart, perhaps accompanied by soft lighting.

It is generally important then, both in analytical and planning terms, to identify those traits that best represent the identity of the restaurant and that guarantee it a certain level of coherence. In the Armani restaurant in Dubai, the minimalist architecture and furnishings are entirely in keeping with the equally elegant dishes on offer (fig. 5). Space and food combined reference a classical aesthetic that refuses excess in the name of sobriety, typical of and coherent with the values that have always been embraced by the Armani brand. Conversely, on cruise ships customers are usually immersed in sumptuous, richly decorated environments that integrate equally well with the abundance of dishes on offer, often laid out as a buffet in an explosion of colours and variety (fig. 6). In this case, an opposite logic of addition, of abundance, is pursued, typical of a baroque aesthetic.

Fig. 5. The Armani restaurant (Dubai).

Fig. 6. Food on cruises.

It is also interesting to explore how food and space work together to communicate particular passions. On one hand are places that embrace an aesthetic of nostalgia, with traditional décor and typical dishes that celebrate, in somewhat rhetorical terms, an emphasis on the past, a past that is by definition supposedly authentic and genuine, just like the dishes on offer. On the other hand, we find an opposite aesthetic that looks to the future and is based around avant-garde furnishings, and unusual and innovative dishes that aim to astonish the customer. This is the case with *Aurum*, a restaurant in Singapore that is very clearly inspired a medical environment, with its prevalence of aluminium surfaces (reminiscent of operating theatres) and wheelchairs instead of normal ones (fig. 7). Here, the dishes on offer are inspired by molecular gastronomy, a form of cooking where the dishes are prepared according to the principles of physics and chemistry. The food, much like the décor, suggests a 'scientific' world. The spatial and culinary discourses once more reflect one another, producing a clear coherence. If nostalgia harks back to the past, celebrating tradition, astonishment looks to the future, focussing entirely on modernity. The resulting customers are radically different. In the first case, the client will be interested in safeguarding typical dishes (cfr. Cap ??) and characterised by food neophobia, whilst in the second case we will have an enthusiastic adventurous eater, characterised by a certain neophilia. Also, while the emphasis on a hyper-artificial and culturalised food preparation process seems to be driven, as with *Aurum*, by loading the space with objects and décor that emphasise the artifice, at the other extreme, a restaurant such as *Noma* – former world number one and renowned for its culinary philosophy inspired by minimal human intervention and maximum respect for natural ingredients – presents us with an extremely simple environment, dominated by natural materials such as wood and where tables are not set with tablecloths (fig. 8). In short, there is minimal intervention in both the space and the dishes.

A search for balance between flavours (tradition) or experimentation with outlandish pairings (innovation), a combination in which fusion prevails or an exhibition of marked contrasts, a desire to either surprise or confirm expectations. There are many diverse trends in the contemporary world of gastronomy that, if coherently translated, give rise to expert analogies between the discourses of food and space, analogies that contribute to the creation of authentic brands, where the chefs, and even the brands themselves, are the testimonials.

Fig. 7. Aurum

Fig. 8. Noma

5. TIME TO TASTE

One criteria that is particularly useful when it comes to classifying restaurants is that linked to temporality/**aspectuality**, as the dimensions of space and time are closely bound. In this sense we can distinguish between those spaces, **singulatives**, visited occasionally, and those, **iteratives**, which, in a certain sense, articulate the passing of time because they are visited more or less constantly (for example, a workplace canteen).

Meals eaten out (and the spaces associated with these) articulate the various phases of the day: you have breakfast in the same coffee shop every morning and this signals an **inchoative** moment, the phase of the beginning of a new day; you go to the usual canteen for lunch, for a meal that differentiates the morning work time from that of the afternoon; you often go to a tea room in the afternoon, marking a moment of rest; you go to a bar for a drink to find yourself in a **terminative** phase, after work. Conversely, there are places whose fundamental characteristic is precisely that of being open all day, as is the case with street food, typically consumed from morning until night.

There are spaces that we could call interstitial, like a bar located on along a main road where the practice of eating, considered simply a means to an end, is subordinate to another more important objective (reaching a destination). There are also prioritary spaces, which become the aim of our action, and other practices often revolve around these (like when you take a journey in order to visit a particular winery, a particular chef, and so on).

Even the temporality of consumption radically changes depending on the kind of restaurant involved: some places are set up for a long stay, others expect any visits to be brief. The former is the case with those restaurants, often those offering haute cuisine, where we go to ‘taste’, to savour good food and a good atmosphere. Time here is dilated, just as the environments themselves can be (the density of bodies diminishes), care is taken over details in order to put the customer at ease. The latter, however, we find with those bars where there are no seats or in which tables are nothing more than something to lean on. Usually we visit these places in order to grab something to eat, something to ‘wolf down’, to satisfy a need for nutrition when we are pushed for time and unable, as such, to pay attention to the quality of the food or the space.

6 CULINARY CULTURES AND SPATIAL SETTINGS

Debates on the globalisation of taste, on what typical dishes are, on how to identify culinary traditions are very much *de rigueur* (cfr. Chap. ??). With regards to the theme dealt with in this chapter, we can ask ourselves if and how the restaurant’s space connects with a particular geographical area. We will consider at least four cases that form a useful typology with which to analyse or plan new restaurant spaces.

On the one hand, we have two cases in which the places openly manifest a bond with a particular territory, and in which the spatial language is strongly pronounced:

The *typicalised* restaurant is one in which space is concerned with reiterating its belonging to a particular culture. Here we find flags, souvenirs, typical objects, characteristic table linen, serving staff dressed in traditional costume and, obviously, a menu made up of traditional local dishes (fig. 9);

The *exoticised* restaurant is that in which belonging to a culture different to our own is emphasised (fig. 10). In these restaurants we might find, for example, multi-coloured awnings that call to mind the *souk* in a Tunisian restaurant, or floor cushions and chopsticks for a Japanese restaurant.

In both cases, we are in fairly traditional positions and find ourselves faced with a space that is excessively full, an almost caricature-like exhibition of elements based on broadly recognised stereotypes (whether their own or those held by others). One thing we should note is that the typical and the exotic do not emerge in opposite terms, as we might expect, but follow the same logic. To define something as typical rather than exotic depends on the perspective of the observer (a Tunisian restaurant in England would be an exotic restaurant, whereas a Tunisian restaurant in Tunisia would be a typical one!).

In other cases, however, any belonging to a particular culture is, in a certain sense, denied: the spatial language in these cases tends not to be defined by territory in order to hide any definite cultural ties:

Globalised restaurants, led by McDonald's, are spaces in which the décor may be neutral, but branding proliferates (fig. 11): those logos are unchanging identifying signs that we find all over the world and that are almost universal symbols (that certainly do not belong to a certain culture). Unchanging spaces, for unchanging dishes that declare the 'global' scope of the place in question.

Glacialised restaurants are instead places in which the space is placed at service of the dishes, with an emphasis on being minimalist, ascetic (fig. 12). There is no attempt here to declare any belonging to the entire world (as with the previous case), but rather a care to neutralise any element that might reveal a bond to a specific place. These are restaurants that could be in New York or Dubai, Beijing or Sydney. Transparency, neutral colours and sobriety characterise these kinds of places.

There are then cases that straddle the two categories: for example, those chains that propose the 'standardisation' of a culture, where the stereotype of the typical becomes a 'global brand' that can be considered both typicalised (local) and globalised. Take the *Fratelli La Bufala* chain. Born as a typical Neapolitan pizzeria, it has become a chain that has spread all over the world. Its spaces are standardised and there is an abundance of logos and emblems that refer to traditional Neapolitan pizza, and, more generally, being Italian. There are also cases where exoticisation is, as it were, glacialised, softened, as is the case with Japanese restaurants in which there are no explicit references to Japanese culture. In these cases it is as if the space wishes to declare itself beyond the stereotype: signs that refer to the exotic are, in a certain sense, neutralised in favour of an appeal to internationalisation.

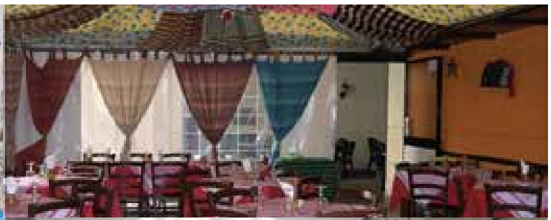




Fig. 9. Typicalised restaurant
Fig. 10. Exoticised restaurant
Fig. 11. Globalised restaurant
Fig. 12. Glacialised restaurant

FOCUS 1

Fast Food and Its Evolutions

One of the world's most widespread, as well as the most debated, forms of restaurant are undoubtedly fast food outlets, whose origins date back to the early 1900s in America, but which were consecrated somewhere in the mid-20th century. Fast food derives from the concept of providing a quick, affordable meal. Increasingly pressurised work timetables and the post-war economic boom were undoubtedly fundamental in the expansion of these places, which favour the democratisation of the practice of eating out. They mean that going to a restaurant was no longer exclusively the prerogative of the middle classes, but an accessible, consistent practice.

As we can tell from the name, this kind of restaurant aims to shorten meal times and the space is called upon to support, encourage this objective. Furthermore, the standardisation of the food on offer (almost identical in all outlets) runs parallel to the standardisation of spaces (the same décor, the same cuisine, the same junctures between the dining area and kitchen). By way of a format, every local version of the *concept* presents a series of recurrent elements. For example, the practice of consumption follows a ritual series of steps: anyone frequenting a fast food restaurants knows they have to queue up, collect their meal, pick up all necessary objects (cutlery, napkins, cups), help themselves to a drink, pay, find somewhere to sit, and so on. The space is meticulously organised, pre-defined, and often planned in such a way as to support this rigid order of sequences.

Fast food restaurants have been the subject of harsh criticism, accused of gaining efficiency through the substitution of human labour with machines (for example, the fryer is programmed in such a way that it turns itself off when the chips are ready), of saving on service costs by making the customer do the work (they have to queue up to order, and empty their trays at the end of their meal). But are we sure that this way of understanding consumption should necessarily be interpreted as a way of constricting and 'exploiting' the end-user? In truth, the opposite may be true: fast food restaurants can be seen as a place where staff and customers activate a form of cooperation in order to ensure a successful eating experience, in a communicative **pact** based on equality (the customer acts as if they were in their own home and works because they feel at ease in a familiar environment).

Furthermore, only if we interpret the rigidity of the space's organisation as a source of potentially positive value for the client can we explain the success and progressive spread of robotic and automated restaurants, places where there are no serving staff, where meals can be ordered through apps or computers, the dishes arrive at the table thanks to a platform system that connects the dining area to the kitchen, and automated systems provide the bill and allow the customer to pay with their credit card.

Fast food restaurants, historically accused of standardisation, have been adept at reinventing themselves, responding to criticism levelled at them and producing some interesting results. McDonald's increasingly offer menus tailored to local customs, using ingredients with certified provenance, and even offering kosher meals in Jerusalem. Some fast food restaurants have specialised in particular kinds of products suited to particular moments of the day: Dunkin' Donuts, for example, has based its entire business on the sale of doughnuts and drinks, making breakfast a moment of privileged consumption. And we are increasingly seeing the emergence of fast food outlets that aim to redeem themselves name by offering fast but quality food. Here, despite it closed, we must cite Fast Good, the brainchild of the very famous chef, Ferran Adrià, that aimed to combine the logic of fast food with haute cuisine.

FOCUS 2

Spectacular Restaurants

The proliferation of restaurants, the multiplication of possible formats and menus has pushed restaurant owners to keep finding new formulas, often depending on hyper-specific themes in order to attract new customers. This has led to the birth of places where the space tends to be more important than the food: environments that are exceptional, bold, cinematographic, like, for example, those of the Hard Rock Cafès, underwater restaurants, places that have become legendary thanks to films and TV series. If we want to give a few specific examples, we could cite Modern Toilet restaurant in Taiwan (where the seats are made from toilets, the plates are shaped like bedpans, the tables are washbasins and napkins are replaced by rolls of toilet paper), the ABQ bar in London (inspired by the cult TV series Breaking Bad), the A380 in China whose spaces simulate the inside of an aeroplane. Having fun becomes a must, as does focussing on a specific customer who seems to appreciate the extravagant ambiance rather than the taste of the dishes on offer. In these cases, eating well or not does not seem to be as important as having an extravagant and unique experience.
In other examples we find places that do not so much aim for enjoyment but to provoke reflection, but always through the offer of an unusual experience. Just think of the phenomenon of dinners in the dark and the restaurants that offer them. *Dans le noir* is a chain of restaurants where the dinners are held in an entirely dark room. Guests are accompanied by visually impaired waiting staff, and all possible light sources (such as lighters or mobile phones) must be left outside. *Dans le noir* offers an ethical discourse as it pushes the customer to immerse themselves and experience what it is like for the visually impaired, but it also offers an **aesthesic** discourse that plays on the rhetoric of sensory compensation: obscuring sight in these cases means magnifying the sense of taste, playing on how anaesthetising one sense can cause the hyperesthesia of the others. In these cases, for a limited period of time the customer is projected, catapulted into ‘another place’, from which they will perhaps return to the ‘normal world’ altered, precisely because the restaurant has, in a certain sense, forced them to rethink their daily lives.

FOCUS 3

Restaurant-markets and Multifunctional Formats

Restaurants are increasingly not only restaurants but blend their traditional duty (offering a range of different foods to a customer) with other functions. So, there are *osterie* were you can buy the furniture or objects that decorate the space, restaurants where you can buy clothes, bars and Laundromats where you can eat whilst you wait for your washing. If the two functions manage to find a common denominator, then the communicative efficacy of the offer is augmented: for example if an antiques dealer also offers the opportunity to taste vintage wines (here we have the joint promotion of two products – antiques and wine – whose value grows over time), or similarly, if a florist also functions as a tea room.

Very often, the function of restaurant goes well with another function that is in some way connected with food. There are more and more butchers that are becoming restaurants specialising in meat dishes, fishmongers that offer fish-based dishes, delis where gourmet sandwiches can be eaten, and so on. These are places that exploit the myth of contraction: the food chain is shortened (the restaurant and the supplier of raw materials are one and the same), and the effect of meaning is that the functions of the product's authenticity and freshness are consolidated.

In a similar way, another contemporary trend seems to be the re-definition of markets in a restorative sense. In many cities, both European and further afield, places where people would traditionally shop for food have also become places for meeting up and socialising, spaces in which to taste a glass of wine accompanied by a tasty snack, or where a quick yet authentic meal can be enjoyed. Again, the typical characteristics of the market (fresh products, affordable prices) are reflected in the meal, whose value is inevitably increased. It is interesting to note how this process is often set in motion rather spontaneously, tending to crystallise and become institutionalised over time. For example, initially the function of the market prevails, accompanied by the opportunity to consume something on the spot (perhaps very quickly whilst standing). If the practice of going to eat at the market then spreads and takes root, the sellers can think about providing more 'permanent' areas, perhaps with tables and chairs, whilst in the meantime broadening their culinary offer with the addition of slightly more elaborate dishes. When taken to the extreme, this mechanism will lead to places in which the function of the restaurant prevails, with spaces that look increasingly less like markets and more like restaurants.

One such example is *Eataly* (fig. 13), found the world over, which is simply a kind of market conceived as a place with a dual purpose: a place where typically Italian products of quality can be bought and various delicacies can be eaten.

Fig. 13. Eataly, Brazil.

SEZIONE IV

COMMUNICATING VALUES

Advertising

Dario Mangano

1. INVENTING FOOD

Advertising has been part of our lives for many years now. We are all used to the fact our cities play host to thousands of enormous billboards, that newspapers and magazines habitually carve out spaces in which to discuss various kinds of products, and that television programmes are continually interrupted so that we can be advised on the purchase of something or other. And this is only the traditional media, because today advertising is increasingly digital, making ample use of the opportunities offered by the internet and the ubiquity of interactive devices such as smartphones and computers, thus expanding enormously not only the ways in which messages can reach us, but also the way in which they are presented. Not only do we have websites, those virtual shop windows that no company can do without, but also social networks such as Facebook and Instagram, video content sites such as YouTube and myriad online news outlets employing varyingly innovative strategies to also entice us to buy. There is an enormous amount of information that we often insist we pay no attention to, but that actually play an enormous role in how we get to know the world around us and structure our tastes and desires.

It is precisely this aspect that interests us most in this chapter. We can clearly see how advertising is particularly concerned with food products. Something we tend to notice less is how this form of communication has historically conditioned our food consumption and the extent to which it continues to do so today, impacting (albeit indirectly) our very tastes. If we think about it, we can see very quickly how what we know (or think we know) about water, beer, frozen foods, snacks and a great many other products has come from the way advertising has spoken to us about them. In order to get an idea of how important this kind of communication is, we have to think about what happens those rare times in which certain brandsx are not available, as happens in discount supermarkets that offer unbranded products or those made by brands that do not advertise. The sensation we get when we first visit these stores is one of bafflement, followed by suspicion: what will those biscuits whose brand we don't know actually taste like? Will that milk we have never heard of actually be safe? These doubts are often enough to stop us from buying, if not stop us from visiting such places altogether.

It is no coincidence that vast multinationals like Coca-Cola or McDonalds, which have built their own fame by investing in expensive advertising campaigns, have never stopped producing them, even when they apparently have no need. This is not simply because on some level advertising works and leads to greater sales, but that our very tastes are influenced by these campaigns and communication in general. Contrary to what we might think, the choices we make, our ways of consuming food and even the times at which we do it, are not bound only to individual sensibilities and habits, the result of a supposed biological 'nature' that is the defining factor in establishing our preferences, but an intersubjective and social dimension that can modify over time. It is on this that advertising intervenes, and it is because of this that it is so effective. Of course, one advert cannot make us like a food that our body refuses, but it can undoubtedly contribute to making us prefer one food over another, to leading us to introduce a new one into our diets, modifying the quantities of it that we consume and to thinking of new occasions on which we would be ready to eat it. In short, advertising is responsible for inventing our current way of eating, and history is there to prove it.

2. COCA-COLA: FROM MEDICINE TO A PART OF DAILY LIFE

One of Coca-Cola's first adverts (and actually one of the very first for a food product) is that dating back to 1886, shown in Fig. 1. At that time, the famous logo with its characteristic curved lines did not exist, as we can see from the uniform font used for both the title and the body text. Coca-Cola was just a name, and not even a particularly imaginative one seeing as the drink was derived from leaves of the Coca plant (the same plant from which cocaine is extracted, though obviously here the psychotropic substances were removed) and the Cola nut. The real brand was not the famous Coke, but (as demonstrated by the signature in the bottom right corner) John Stith Pemberton, the Atlanta pharmacist who invented the recipe for what would become one of the most successful industrial products of all time. What is surprising about this advert, besides the total absence of images, is how it describes a drink that we think we know very well. It is described first and foremost as an 'intellectual beverage', as well as a tonic and a stimulant for the nerves. The advert references its taste ('delicious'), but is most meticulous about listing the ailments it can alleviate: 'sick head-ache, neuralgia, hysteria, melancholy, etc.'. The same drink that is, today, the indispensable accompaniment to pizza and hamburgers. After all, it had been invented by a pharmacist whose first thought had inevitably been the effects that mixture might have on the body, with taste a mere afterthought. The 'peculiar taste' was essentially a kind of collateral effect, a happy accident that would allow, many years later, for that drink to be sold not in pharmacies but in every supermarket and restaurant in the world.

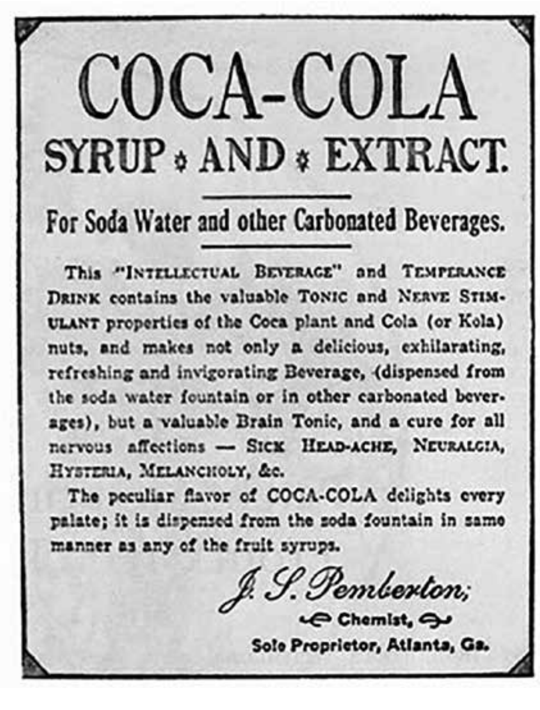


Fig. 1. Coca-Cola advert from 1886. At that time the product was described as a medicine, albeit one that tasted good.

Fig. 2. Coca-Cola advert from 1905. The product was associated with sport for the first time.

But how did it go from being a medicine to the drink we know today? As we know, the chemical modifications were minimal and always committed to respecting its characteristic aroma, meaning that its taste has barely altered over a century and a half. What has changed drastically is the product's image. This transformation is in large part due to advertising, or more generally, communication, with this term understood as a broader collection of actions that are not limited simply to advertising spots and billboards, but involving events, packaging, sponsorships and much more. It would be impossible to take even a cursory glance at the many advertising campaigns created by Coca-Cola from 1886 to date as there are simply far too many. Thousands of adverts and spots have been churned out one after the other without there being even a moment's silence from the brand. The only thing we can do therefore is give examples of the way in which they introduced the specifics of that which we have referred to as the product's relative image.

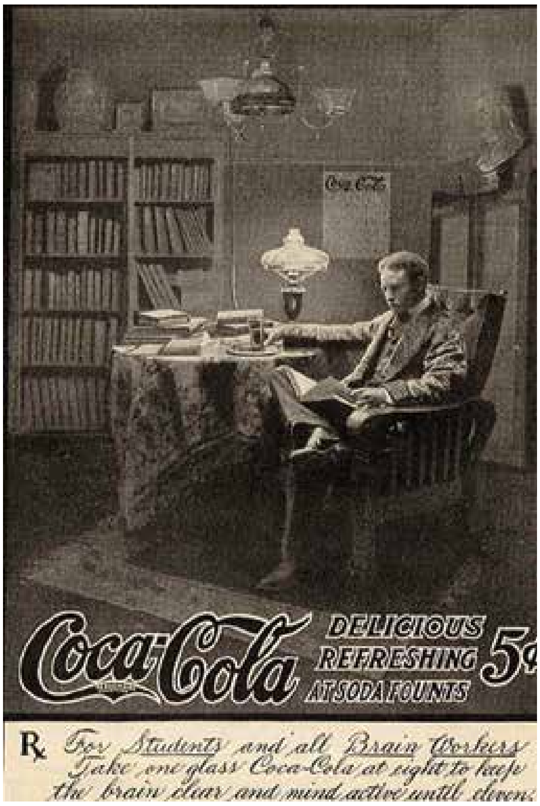


Fig. 3. Coca-Cola advert from 1905. The product not only refreshes but also improves brain function.

Fig. 4. Coca-Cola advert from 1974. Coke becomes a part of everyday life for all sections of society.

For example, the relationship between Coca-Cola and sport began very early on. Already in 1905 we have a print advert telling us how refreshing it is to drink a Coke after physical activity (Fig. 2). Careful though: it does not refer to baseball, football or other popular sports, but to golf and tennis, sports that were the prerogative of the more well-to-do classes, a sign that the drink at that time was a delicacy to be enjoyed by only a few. As we are well aware, the brand has never stopped highlighting the drink's relationship with physical activity, doing everything it can to associate consumption with times of physical exertion. It is interesting to note how important it was even back in 1905 to establish a link with activities of an entirely different nature: those involving not the body but the mind. In another advert (fig. 3) it is clearly stated that a glass of Coke taken at 8pm would ensure a clear and active mind until 11pm, an obvious reference to the pharmaceutical dosage which gave rise to it all. For decades, body and mind, sport and study were keystones in the promotion of Coke consumption. And yet, up until 1905 and also long after, this drink was thought of as a 'break', and not as an accompaniment to something else, something to sit alongside the consumption of food, nor, deep down, was it considered a product to be consumed regularly or in large amounts. It is no coincidence that the bottles at that time were no bigger than 25 cl., equal to a glass, and that bottles holding 1.5 or 2 litres, which today are entirely normal (ideal for bringing to the table in order to accompany a meal), did not even exist. A campaign breaking with this idea was used in 1974 (fig. 4), and in it the product was placed in a scene from daily life in which a mother and her son are cleaning vegetables, each with a 1 litre bottle of Coke next to them. Coke became the companion for daily tasks, for real life – 'For the real times' went the slogan. Furthermore, the family drinking it here are African-Americans who, given by what we can judge from their activity and what we can see of the house they are in, belong to the working class. Not only was Coca-Cola now for everyone, but it could be consumed in any occasion and in much larger quantities. So, it was no longer a break but the indispensable compliment to daily life, irrespective of the consumer's social status.

3. ADVERTS AS TESTIMONIALS

Fig. 5. A poster from the 1930s produced by the Italian National Rice Institute (Ente nazionale risi), a governmental institution that aimed to promote the consumption of rice in a country that traditionally ate pasta. The text laconically reads: "Rice gives you strength and health. Eat rice".

Fig. 6. An Italian poster promoting the consumption of beer in general, rather than that of a specific brand. The slogan reads: "...And to drink? More Beer!".

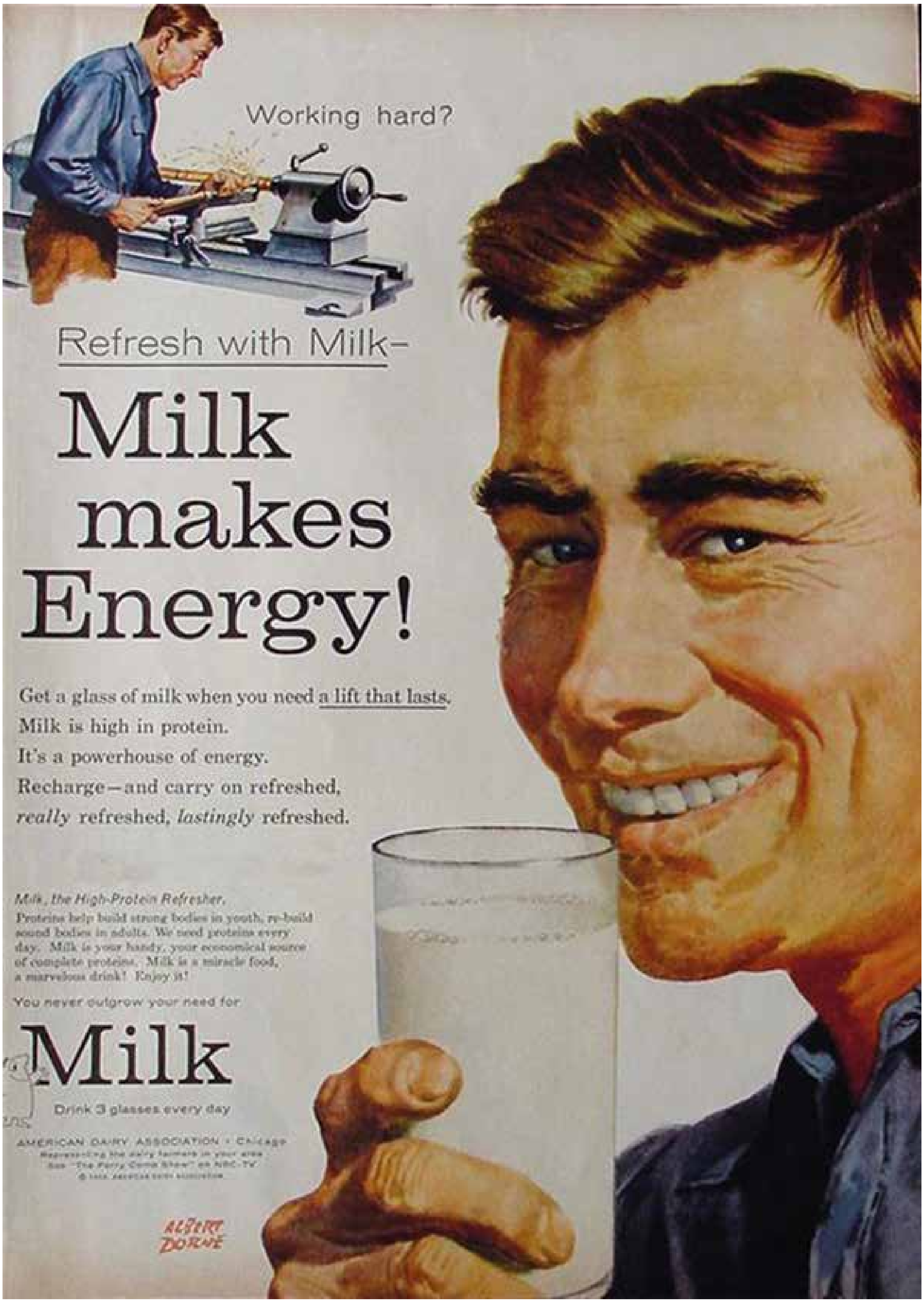


Fig. 7. An announcement by a consortium of American milk producers from 1950 contributes to the creation of the idea that this drink is an irreplaceable source of energy, even for adults.

We could have gone on much longer discussing Coca-Cola's advertising campaigns, highlighting the changes that each one might bring about in the public's impression of the product at any given moment, while perhaps also considering how this translated into a rise in sales and a greater number of consumers. However, our aim is not to carry out an exhaustive analysis of the communication employed by a particular company, but to demonstrate how it is possible to take on different perspectives when it comes to advertising. One in which we view it as a **testimonial** that speaks to us not only of the product being promoted, but of a way of conceiving an entire food universe. A universe that is obviously bound to both global dynamics, such as those that led to the widespread consumption of a product such as Coca-Cola, and to the sensibilities and processes that take place at a local level, such as those of a specific country. It is surprising how accurately a particular culture's sensibility for food can be described through advertising, but most of all, how it helps us grasping the dynamics that bring about changes in food culture.

Take Italy, a country that has one of the oldest and most articulated food traditions in the world, which is, as a result, clearly identifiable from the outside. Everyone, including Italians, are led to think that everything involved with the food choices in this country has its roots in a very distance past, itself a guarantee of inherent goodness and the right nutritional value. In 1910, for example, the advert for a famous meat extract produced by the company Arrigoni boasted of the fact it was made from Australian meat, as if good meat had to come from far away, from an exotic, uncontaminated land. Needless to say, today any such advert would be inconceivable, not to mention counter-productive. Over the years, the gastronomic image has entirely changed direction, and for today's average Italian quality food is food produced close by, that does not have to travel, but that is also the result of a tradition of production that they know and that they can check. Good food is, therefore, food produced locally, as if that had always been the case. Few people reflect on the fact that those who have inherited this tradition, parents and grandparents, were probably born at a time when good meat was meat from abroad.

Of particular interest here are those adverts that were not those created by a specific company to promote a specific product, but by institutes, consortia and even the State in order to promote food lifestyle changes. Continuing with Italy, we have two campaigns that promoted the consumption of rice and beer respectively. With regards to the first of these cases, we have a poster from 1951 in which an attractive woman throws rice into a saucepan (Fig. 5). The slogan says: "Rice gives you strength and health. Eat rice". There is no branding other than that of the *Ente nationale risi*, the Italian rice institute created in 1931 at the height of the Fascist era to organise the production of this cereal and promote its consumption. The reason for this communicative push is very simple: Italy was a country that predominantly ate pasta, a sensibility that forced rice producers to export their produce, placing them in competition with other much larger producers like China, who forced them to lower their prices. This is why a fistful of rice is being thrown into that typical high-walled Italian saucepan, perfect for cooking spaghetti, that we find in the image.

Something similar happens with beer. This time the advert, from 1964, shows us a family that is about to sit down to a classic Sunday lunch (Fig. 6). Everything follows tradition: the home furnishings of a middle-class family, the boastful elegance of the diners and, naturally, the menu, which centres around the legendary *polpettone*. Even the family is straight out of a manual: father, mother and two children, one male and one female. 'And to drink?" goes the slogan, "more beer!', whilst further down we can read "with all food and in all seasons". What we immediately notice today is that every person sitting at the table is holding an identical large glass of beer. It is clearly encouraging child alcohol consumption, but at that time the effect would have been very different. Not only was beer viewed much more as a soft drink than as an alcoholic beverage, but it was a given that wine would be the drink of choice at the table. Once again, an advert attempts to modify tradition and, therefore, sensibilities by introducing a different drink to a country that is traditionally both a producer and consumer of wine, with the advantage, evidently, that it could be shared with even the youngest members of the family.

Obviously, Italy is just one of many possible examples. It would not be difficult to find old adverts from other countries that promote ways of consuming food that have since disappeared or that, conversely, have become entirely normal. In the United States, for example, a print advert from 1950 promotes milk consumption (Fig. 7), not that of a particular **brand** (the campaign belongs to the Dairy Producers' Association) but of generic milk, extolling its nutritional values and its capacity for refreshment that are associated with 'hard work'. It is no coincidence that that country went on to develop a particular taste for this food, to such an extent that it became an accompaniment to meals, a habit that in Italy seems entirely inconceivable from the moment in which milk consumption is relegated almost exclusively to breakfast time, and in some cases, as a snack. The fact that many years later nutritionists have considered the effects of excessive milk consumption and the health problems this can cause, is an incidental fact that is not necessarily a testament to Italians' inherent greater wisdom, but to a different way of viewing food. As such, in a wider sense, if it can be true that the Mediterranean diet is one of the most balanced and correct from a biochemical perspective, we must ask ourselves which chance phenomena – be it of a communicative or a productive nature - are responsible for it taking root.

4. THE VALORISATION OF FOOD

Up until now we have looked at how advertising interprets the tastes and trends that exist outside of food, and also how it contributes to the modification of a nation's tastes, continually altering those very traditions that we believe to be the unchangeable bequest from a past that was always happy and more correct than the present. We are now clear on the role played by advertising: that of attributing value to products made for consumption. Take the milk we discussed earlier. It is obvious that this is a very particular substance with fixed properties, nutrients, characteristics and possible uses, and yet what interests us from a cultural perspective is how all this is *perceived* by consumers. Advertising does not sell milk, it sells a particular idea of milk, the same one that the final user is looking for when they go shopping. Over time, milk understood as a material remains the same (except for chemical and physical alterations caused, for example, by the technology used to aid production), but the idea we have of it can alter beyond recognition. This is what **brands** count on: though they know full well they are selling a product that, in the majority of cases, has very few differences to its competitors, they can and must make their product unique.

The question we ask ourselves is, therefore, how can such a change be brought about. What are the strategies that advertising can use to inscribe particular values into their products? When Coca-Cola goes from being a medicine to a tonic (for the body and the mind), then becomes an enjoyable break, and then changes again to replace water as a companion for daily life, it is not the drink that changes but the way in which it is understood and, therefore, how value is attributed to it. In other words, what advertising does is give meaning to products, ensuring they become a part of a given culture. What is interesting is that these strategies are not infinite. Despite the differences between advertising campaigns, with their slogans, characters, images, music and so on making each one recognisable and interesting, it is always possible to pinpoint certain courses of action that we could describe as being standard. We could describe it as an issue of perspective, as it is necessary to focus each time on the way in which the product is featured, the role it takes on within the story the advert constructs around the product in order to render it not only easily identifiable for the consumer, but also interesting in terms of their lives. Some brief analysis will allow us to better understand what these strategies of advertising **valorisation** are and how they function.

5.1. PRACTICAL VALORISATION

The poster from one of Evian mineral water's most successful campaigns is very simple (fig. 8). There are no complicated slogans, just the **brand's logo** and, beneath it, two simple words: 'Live young'. Further down is the image of an older woman holding a bottle of Evian water and wearing an odd t-shirt. On it is the image of a toddler's body whose neck coincides perfectly with hers. The message is clear: Evian water keeps us young. There is no reference to the fact water quenches thirst, that our body needs it or that it is entirely natural. Instead, Evian chooses to feature its water as a kind of elixir, a magic potion that stops us from aging (on the inside at least). This is essentially what advertising does: it adds something special to different products, presenting them as magical objects as if from fairy tales without which we would never be able to achieve our goals, be they staying young or, in the case of a car, getting around with speed and safety.

Fig. 8. An Evian campaign that stands out for its simple message: that this product will help keep you young.

Fig. 9. The spot for Evian's 'Live young' campaign highlights the youth-giving properties of this mineral water.

This is the defining characteristic of practical advertising, which presents a product as a *means* to a particular end. It is not about what the product is, but what it can do for us, for the way in which (magically or otherwise) it can help us achieve goals that are not directly linked to the product itself. The woman is not drinking the water because she thinks it tastes good or because it is a natural product, she drinks it to keep herself young. This is an effect that a multi award-winning spot from the same campaign highlights perfectly, articulating how this can be done in the space of a short film (fig. 9). During those canonical 30 seconds, set in the streets of a city that could be any, we initially see a man who discovers that his reflection, caught in a number of reflective surfaces (the glass door of a bus, a car's rear view mirror, and finally a shop window), does not show his face but that of a small child who looks just like him. It is in front of a large window created entirely by a mirror that, incredulous, he attempts to test his reflection with a few dance steps. In that moment, the background music swells and in just a few moments he is joined by other people, all with their own tender double imitating their increasingly wild movements. It is as if the mirror were showing their true nature and that (it goes without saying) they are young inside thanks to the water they drink – Evian – as we only discover at the end with the writing that appears on screen: 'Drink pure and natural', before leading to the inevitable payoff – 'Live young'.

Fig. 10. The spot for Santa Lucia Croccarelle (produced by Galbani in Italy) in which mozzarella croquettes resolve a family problem, rather than a nutritional one.

However, practical advertising does not necessarily have to refer to the product's nutritional characteristics. For example, the spot for Santa Lucia *Croccarelle* (Fig. 10) (fried mozzarella sticks) shows us something entirely different. It tells a very articulate story, that of a woman who has to organise the meal at which she will meet her son and the woman he has asked to marry him. The situation is obviously a complicated one to manage, as is made patently clear by the shots that capture the looks exchanged by the two young people as they meet at the woman's front door for the first time. It is the product that then resolves everything: thanks to the croquettes' 'warm mozzarella centre' and the string that ensues when they are broken in half, those sitting at the dining table are 'bound by affection'. There is no talk here of energy, lightness or health, the bond that is referred to is immaterial and demonstrated solely by those white strings. Nevertheless, despite the obvious metaphor, the role played by the product remains one of a means to an end that is not necessarily the purchase of the product. There is no suggestion that the product has its own inherent value, that it would be opportune to possess this very product, only that it can be useful for other reasons, even if the 'other' reason in this case has more to do with emotional rather than physical wellbeing.

5.2 UTOPIAN VALORISATION

It should be clear at this point that a strategy opposite to those described up until this point can also be employed, in which the product is not presented as something required in order to do something else, a *means*, but as a value in itself, an *end*, one with which the subject reaches self-realisation simply by possessing it. In these cases we refer to *basic* values rather than *use* values, alluding to the fact that what the advert attempts to show (and demonstrate) is that the value we attribute to a food product can affect one specific individual, even if it is clearly expected that a far greater number of potential consumers are able to identify with that person.

Fig. 11. An advert for Cadbury's Dairy Milk presents a bar of chocolate as an object of final value by adopting a strategy of utopian valorisation.

The example with which we would like to begin is another spot that received numerous accolades in 2018 (fig. 11). The product is a chocolate bar with a particularly high milk content: a full one and a half glasses in each bar, as we are told at the end of the spot. The way in which the film begins in its 60 second version couldn't be further from what we are used to seeing for a luxury product. The first scene takes place in a noisy, crowded fast-food kitchen where we see a weary young woman coming to the end of her shift. Over the course of the next few seconds we see her on the bus, tired, waiting for her arrival at a destination we only discover in the next frame: her daughter's school, where her child is the last one waiting to be picked up. Normal daily life shrouded in the sadness of inner-city life and an unhappiness that is tangible. In the next scene the mother's phone rings. Her face immediately shows worry: it is clear she faces many difficulties and that in this moment another is about to be added to the list. It is at this point that the daughter decides to go alone into the corner shop next to which they have stopped. She immediately goes to the till and politely asks for a bar of chocolate. "It's for my mum" says the little girl to the bearded shopkeeper who lifts his gaze to see the woman standing outside the shop speaking on the phone. A moment later, when the man places the bar of Cadbury's *Dairy Milk* on the counter, the girls begins to do the same with the things that she holds valuable enough to pay for it: a plastic coin, two buttons and – after a glance from the man – a plastic ring and a little blue unicorn. It is all a play on exchanged looks, on things left unsaid that lead the shopkeeper to understand the symbolic value of those objects as fair payment for the product he then hands over to the little girl. She is somewhat sad as she has had to give up her most prized possessions, but at this point something unexpected happens: the shopkeeper says to her: "your change" and places back on the counter the unicorn the little girl showed most sadness in having to part with. A moment later, the child, now happy, leaves the shop and says to her mother, "Happy birthday Mum!". Taken aback, she thanks her daughter and holds her in a warm hug under the satisfied gaze of the generous shopkeeper.

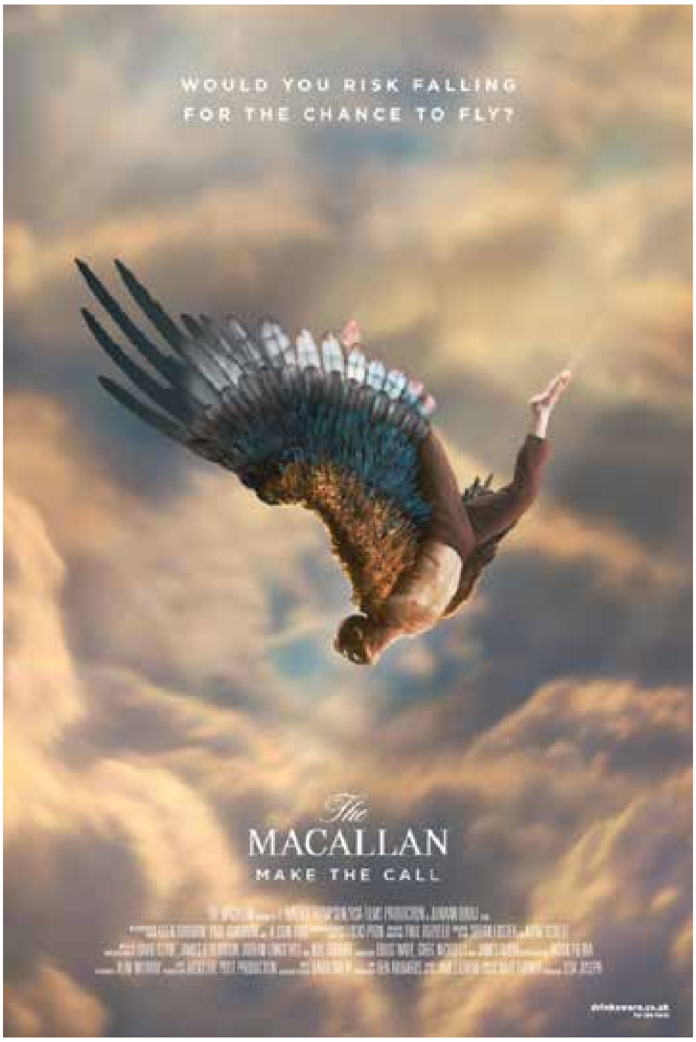


Fig. 12. The poster for a campaign by Macallan whose slogan reads: "Would you risk falling for the chance to fly?"

We cannot help but ask ourselves here what this Cadbury’s advert is trying to sell us, because to think it is simply chocolate would be reductive. What counts here is not the product but its value for those involved. For that mother, who in a difficult situation finds her daughter’s love in that gift; for the child, who gives up her treasures in order to “buy” something for a birthday that is both so special and so ordinary; and finally the shopkeeper who quickly understands the situation and not only decides to give the woman and the child something himself, but also teaches the latter an important lesson. He does not simply give the bar of chocolate away, refusing the useless payment, but instead he accepts it, thus clarifying that there is always a cost when buying something, but without depriving the little girl of her most precious possession. At the end of the story, we do not see the food but something very different indeed: a symbol of the love that can exist not only between mother and child, but also between people who do not know one another. When at the end we read, ‘There’s a glass & a half in everyone’, it is undecidable whether this refers to milk or, actually, love. What matters is not eating the chocolate, but giving and receiving it.

Another good example of **utopian** advertising is that found in a campaign by Macallan whisky from 2018, which comprises not only of the poster seen in figure 12 but also a spot that is very visually refined. It is no coincidence that the poster looks like one for a film, as anyone could see from a cursory look on YouTube. Alcohol is a product that often adopts this **strategy** (if for no other reason than that it is difficult to focus on its nutritional values), or one that is generally presented as a means to obtaining some kind of shared objective. The poster simply reads: ‘Would you risk falling for the chance to fly?’. Beneath the writing is a strange creature, half man and half bird, that seems to be spinning in mid-air, and further down we see the **brand** **logo** and the payoff characterising the whole campaign: ‘Make the call’. What has all this got to do with whisky? Very little. If it weren’t for the amber tones in the sky and the creature’s wings, which seemingly recall the drink’s colour, we could say with no uncertainty, absolutely nothing. What it refers to is, perhaps, the drinker, the person at whom that whisky is ideally aimed, someone who, by the mere fact of having chosen that **brand** and not another, qualifies as a kind of Icarus, the protagonist of the Greek myth who, having received a pair of wings from his famous father Dedalus, got too close to the sun and woefully plummeted after the wax that was holding the wings together melted. No reference is made to the whisky’s taste, to its characteristics, its aromatic notes, only to how courageous and desiring of an extreme, unique experience the person for whom it was made must be. Once more the product is a value in itself, or rather, it has value because it defines a certain kind of person.

5.3 Ludic-aesthetic valorisation

Fig. 13. The advert for *Le Coq* in Aarhus, Denmark, finds a very amusing way to communicate that one eats well there.

Fig. 14. Sometimes a dog is used as a testimonial for mayonnaise: "No leftovers. Sorry Spike" reads the slogan.

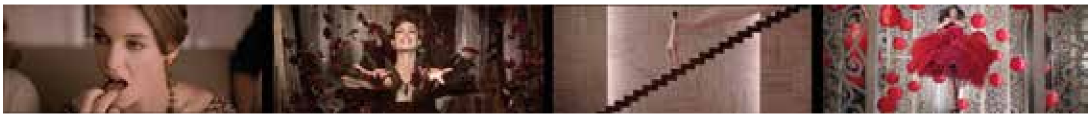


Fig. 15. The advert for *Mon Cherì Ferrero* chocolates is a journey through the taste sensations experienced when you bite into one.

Imagining food as a tool or an end in itself clearly does not exhaust the possibilities. Indeed, each of these two positions are often denied by the advert. Let's look at the entire universe of pleasure, of which food is obviously an essential part. From a strictly logical perspective, valorising food as pleasure means placing its utility to one side, forgetting its nutritional value without, however, being explicit about it, as is the case with **utopian valorisation** in which a symbolic value sets the taste characteristics to one side. Once again ,I will give a number of examples that will help illustrate this point more clearly.

The advert we find in figure 13 does not promote a product but a bar-restaurant called *Le Coq*, in Aarhus, Denmark. The idea is a simple one, all that needs to be said is that the food there is good. To do so explicitly would, however, be counterproductive, not only because overly obvious advertising is often banal and ends up being ignored, but because it would be too obvious the discourse was biased and therefore, even if not false, undoubtedly excessively flattering. The solution to this problem is simple and effective: no slogan, just an image that shows a group of the bar's customers dressed as chefs. The underlying message is effective in its simplicity: if the bar's customers are chefs, what is served there must be delicious.

The example we have just seen shows us how it is not necessary for **testimonials** to be famous, whether sports stars, singers or actors. It is enough for the person to be easily recognisable as an authority or expert, someone who knows how to evaluate and choose, and who therefore, if they prefer a particular product, does so for good reason. This is essentially what happens in a Christmas advert for Hellmann's mayonnaise whose protagonist is a dog named Spike (fig. 14). Spike is actually a rather sad little dog and this is because of the product, as we clearly understand from the slogan: 'No leftovers. Sorry Spike.' Like any good dog, Spike is an expert in leftovers, and as it is Christmas, he was obviously expecting to fill his belly. However, unluckily for him, the mayonnaise made all the meals so delicious that nothing was left. Once more it is not simply stated that that product tastes good, this deliciousness is *signified* by enacting a story that alludes to this quality in a way that is not overly explicit.

There are also adverts that deal with the food's flavour in depth, even attempting to describe it with technical and linguistic solutions very close to those used by poetry to suggest feelings or sensations. More often than not, this is done with television spots, because in order to do so it is necessary to produce somewhat articulated discourses. One good example is the advert for *Mon Cherì Ferrero*, a chocolate filled with rum and a whole cherry (fig. 15). The spot opens with a young woman biting into the product at a party. As soon as we hear the sound of the chocolate cracking between her teeth, however, the shot immediately changes and we are projected into an unreal dimension. We now see the woman walking in a kind of forest filled with strange trees that are entirely brown, and even her dress is different, now also made from brown flakes. It takes a few seconds and the help of the offscreen voice saying "the snap of dark chocolate…" for us to understand that what we are watching are the sensations caused by the chocolate. Each detail of this setting is used to signify this. For example, at one point we see leaves blowing up behind the woman as if they had just exploded. They are also brown and we cannot help but associate them with the crunching noise made by dry leaves when walked over in the street, a crunch that makes us think of the dry sound chocolate makes when it breaks. But there is no time to concentrate on how rich this setting is in suggestion before the scene changes and we see the same woman in a different dress, this time amber coloured, descending a staircase. The voice tells us this refers to the warmth of the liqueur, and her descent seems to represent the sensation alcohol produces as it runs down the oesophagus, leaving a trail that is referenced by a long veil. Finally, we have the third scene change and the inevitable reference to the cherry. The woman is now dressed in a red dress with a large tulle skirt and falls, slow motion, into a pool full of cherries from which she emerges with one of the fruits in her mouth, as the voiceover says: "*Mon Cherì* is one emotion after another. To understand it, you have to try it". Proof, in a certain sense, the spot itself has provided us with, translating the sensory stimuli provoked on the palate by eating *Mon Cherì* into high impact images that manage to evoke precisely what happens in the mouth. Despite the complex staging, everything that takes place is an affirmation of the pleasure provoked by the product, as is the case with **ludic-aesthetic** advertising.

5.4 CRITICAL VALORISATION

Fig. 16. Rather than articulating a discourse on taste, the advert for Tabasco concentrates solely on heat, which is easier to express.

Fig. 17. The symbol for radioactivity perfectly expresses the potency of Tabasco whilst associating this sauce with the consumption of pizza.

Fig. 18. Starbucks Coffee becomes a need worthy of a drip.

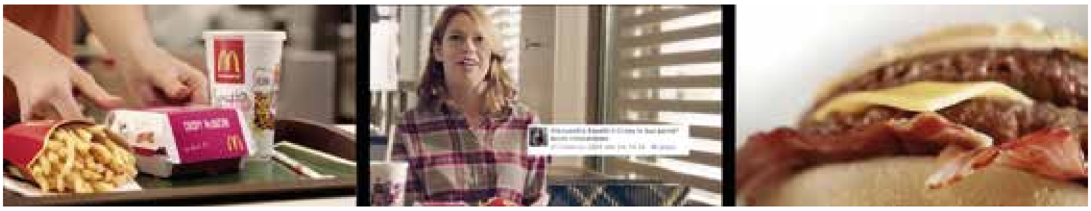


Fig. 19. A brilliant spot by McDonald's that culminates in the slogan: "We couldn't make it tastier. So we made it bigger".

With the last of the four advertising strategies being discussed here, we are brought into contact with what is perhaps the greatest problem when advertising food: objectivity. We all know that taste is purely subjective. It is so individual that it cannot be brought into discussion, because one person's likes might be disliked by another, so no one is permitted to pass such judgement. *De gustibus non est disputandum* said the Ancient Romans. Even simply saying that a certain food is tasty can give rise to objections: it may be tasty for some, but not necessarily for all. This is the reason use of such adjectives is treated with great caution in advertising. For example, there are enormous differences with the automobile market, in which there are parameters that are, if not objective, objectifiable. A car's performance, for example, can be measured and expressed numerically, and although in certain cases such numbers are not particularly relevant, the very possibility of presenting them produces certain communicative effects. However, while a car **brand** can say that its product has the best acceleration in its category or a larger boot space than a competitor's model, when we talk about frozen minestrone, stating that the taste of one may be better than another is not only difficult to believe but also may give rise to criticism. It is no coincidence that very often in food advertising reference is made to the food's nutritional qualities, diverting attention away from things that are non-quantifiable, such as taste, to something that is, such as fat content, vitamins, carbohydrates and so on.

This is why finding an objective variable in food often ends up going beyond the product, leaning on the ultimate parameter: price. There are many adverts that refer to this, even when (when this happens) it is to state that it is low and, therefore, the extent to which a certain **brand** manages to offer good quality *despite* a cost that they want to be deemed derisory. At the beginning of McDonald's long success story, for example, the 15¢ price of a hamburger was displayed on enormous signs inside restaurants and, of course, in advertising. 'Real good…and still only 15¢' read a poster from the 1960s. Like the hamburger chain, many other **brands** have used price in communication. In fact, we could say that all products for mass consumption do so periodically, launching campaigns that rely alternately on a reduction of cost and an increase in quality in the product that can be bought for that price. On closer inspection, even the Coca-Cola adverts we see in figures 2 and 3 make clear the price of 5¢ a bottle.

Different again is the case of food products that are not sold on taste, but on a characteristic that is not strictly flavour related, and that unlike taste can be objectified. One such example are the many spicy sauces on the market, which often focus their communication on the sensation of heat they are able to produce, and which becomes central to the message. The most prolific brand from this point of view is undoubtedly *Tabasco*, which has, over the years, brought to life a vast number of captivating solutions with which to affirm their 'strength', sparring with their competitors. Their creative output often references objects and images that are generally associated with heat, like the fire extinguisher seen in figure 16 or a thermometer, but also the symbols of danger and power, as with figure 17 where the pizza slices left in the box depict the symbol for radioactivity, as if thanks to Tabasco, an innocuous pizza might transform itself into a mighty bomb. Furthermore, by doing this the sauce is associated with a specific food, making a suggestion to the consumer who, paradoxically, may not be able to come up with a correct pairing for the sauce on their own. In these cases, the effect of objectivity is obtained through the use of figures, objects from the world that can be referred to visually or verbally, and that are usually associated with things other than food so that it is possible to imagine various ways of objectivization. Another example is that given in figure 18 in which the image of a drip immediately tells us just how necessary and effective a coffee from Starbucks is.

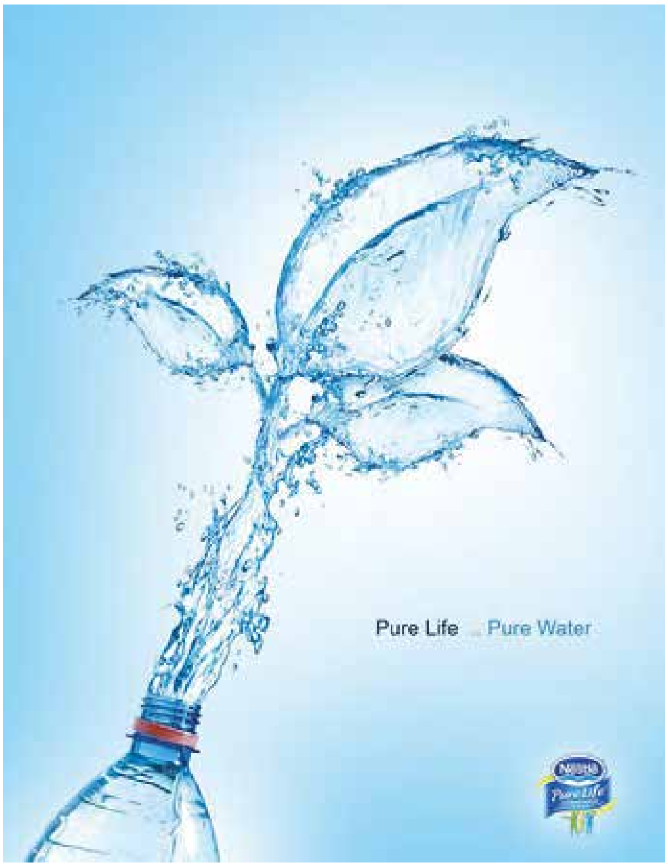


Fig. 20. 'Pure life...pure water' reads the advert for *Pure Life,* focus on how natural the product is.

One of the very few cases in which there is a successful operation of objectivization of taste in itself and not through a specific sensation, can be seen in a McDonald's spot (figure 19). The film begins with a series of shots that show two young customers talking about the Crispy McBacon, a limited edition sandwich sold at that time. The appearance is one of spontaneous interviews despite the fact that when each of the interviewee's faces appear on screen it is accompanied by a kind of superimposed Facebook post where we can read what that person has just said. Hence the slogan: 'We couldn't make it tastier. So we made it bigger.'. From a communication point of view, the idea is as simple as it is brilliant: unable to talk explicitly about how tasty the product is, it is referred to in the negative. But most importantly, a parameter is introduced, the size of the sandwich, which is undeniably objective. In this way, a measurable quantity ends up being related to one that is not, with the result that the latter somehow ends up finding its own measure. According to the customers, the taste cannot be improved, the only way of going further is to make the product bigger.

6. CONCLUSIONS

It goes without saying that a discourse on advertising, even if limited to the food sector, could go on forever, as the few examples we have made are nothing more than a tiny fraction of those that have been created. However, our intention was not to write an exhaustive dissertation of what advertising says about food, but to show the main ways in which to ensure a specific product is perceived as a desirable object when compared to others. Advertising valorises products as we have seen, but these products are almost never alone on the market, hence why companies support the economic investment involved in financing advertising campaigns in order to prevail over competitors. The problem shifts: it is no longer a case of stating a product's value, but of making it clear how one product distinguishes itself from others that are often very similar. There is no doubt that the more similar products are (and/or less likely it is consumers are able to distinguish between them), the more necessary it is to have an effective communication strategy in order for a product to be easily identifiable. This is why we have chosen to think in terms of advertising strategies. If a mineral water such as Evian decides to publicise its product with a practical strategy, it would be rather ineffectual for another mineral water brand to do the same thing. The outcome would be that one keeps you young and the other, let's say, purifies the body, or worse, that one keeps you younger than the other, creating nothing but confusion for consumers. 'Which was the one that kept me youngest?!' one may ask. It is fundamental in advertising to *differentiate* products. This is what the strategies that we have looked at aim to do by visualising the various ways of constructing an identity for any given product so that the creative work carried out is focused entirely upon affirming what counts most: the product's personality. This is how a water **brand** like *Pure Life*, produced by Nestlé, uses its advert to position itself at the opposite end of the scale to Evian (figure 20). What the water does, what it is for and what its benefits may be are not discussed by the poster. Nor does it discuss taste or convenience. Instead it evokes nature. 'Pure Life…Pure Water' reads the slogan. The key concept is the purity that is declined by a superior value such as that of nature. Signifying this is the shape taken by the water as it leaves the bottle: that of a plant that has little to do with water (there are no waterfalls, fish, rivers or any such thing), but that speaks volumes about the environment, which is understood as an absolute value. Life is not understood here as a physical state, but as a supreme good from which the value of water hails, water that (at this point) is not a means but an end, as we see with **utopian valorisation**. The idea is that if the consumer shares these values, if this is their identity, then this is their water. After all, water is the product that perhaps requires most communication. Colourless, odourless and tasteless by definition, it is a substance that is difficult to unequivocally identify. Furthermore, its effects on the body do not differentiate much from one **brand** to another, unlike the fat content in biscuits for example. Preference is something that must be constructed by evoking images that are different each time, images that make differences that are very often only minimal, but that are both perceptible and concrete. As we have said, what is being sold is not actually a thing, a product with particular characteristics, but the idea that we form of that product from the systems of signs that signify it.

At this point we could consider advertising to be a kind of dark force that conditions consumers, forcing them to make senseless choices. It must not be forgotten however that, if it is true this is a one-sided discourse that often brushes with untruths in order to capture the public's attention and convince them of the desirability of what is being sold, consumers are never passive, defenceless subjects. As 'native advertisers', we have not only learned how to understand spots and slogans, but also how to defend ourselves from them, not to take them too seriously, and in some cases, criticise them mercilessly. This is another reason why what we have said thus far is important: to better understand how our tastes are formed and change in a world that, like it or not, talks to us using multiple languages.

The Role of the Big Brands

Kristian Bankov

1. FROM TRADEMARK TO BRAND

McDonald's, *Starbucks*, *Milka*, *Coca-Cola*, *Nescafe*, *Kellog's* are just a few of the hundreds of company names, which have drastically changed our eating habits and the taste perception of billions of people in the last 150 years. In this chapter we will attempt to explain why the influence of the large **brands** in food industry is so strong and we will get to know the story of the most important ones.

But first, let's see what exactly we mean by "**trademark**" and "**brand**".

The mark appeared much before there were machines and factories – back when everything was obtained and produced manually. Even then, the more capable and hard-working producers would put some sort of seal or inscription on the goods they had manufactured – be it pottery, porcelain vases, clay lamps, etc. – in order to make them *distinguishable* from the rest. The more numerous the producers, the bigger their need to mark the goods. Ever since then, the mark has become a sign of quality and guarantee. During the Middle Ages, the mark even became required for some types of goods, as unscrupulous producers would be tempted to cut corners in the production process. This way, goldsmiths, bakers, etc. would be required to mark their production, so that if the gold turned out to be impure, or if bread weighed less than advertised, certain punishment would be imminent.

Fig. 1. Among the first uses of the trade mark there was the incision of the proper name or the name of the company on the timber, when the river was used as a natural transport from the place of harvesting to the market. (Item is held by John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland, Public domain image).

After the discovery of America, world trade gained momentum. Goods, which today are considered indispensable, such as tea, coffee, sugar, pepper, etc., were then considered luxury and generated great profit. The marks of the traders, which guaranteed the origin and quality of the goods, became even more important. Tobacco and some simple medications became popular thanks to some of the most recognizable marks of the time. It was back then that substantial legislation regarding marks came into existence, effectively giving birth to the concept of **trade marks**.

A new phase in the development of trade marks ensued during the Industrial Revolution of XVIII – XIX. During the course of that period, the number and diversity of the goods on the market grew quickly and substantially. The number of people grew as well, as did the number and size of cities; transportation improved and department stores appeared for the first time, allowing people to find an unimaginable multiplicity of goods in one single location. The most important phenomenon born in this period, however, is *advertising* – the poetic voice of the trade marks, which began transforming them into more than just an indicator of distinction and quality.

It was precisely the trade mark that gave rise to consumer **loyalty** as a phenomenon, and, as a logical outcome – to the emergence of **counterfeits**. The sale of inferior items under the false pretense of respected and popular brands was so widely spread in the US by the end of XIX century that strict legislature against counterfeit goods had to be drafted.

Several decades later, the present-day supermarket appeared. Consumer society was born. Big corporations started managing multiple trade marks, which were sold all over the world. *Procter and Gamble* were the first to introduce the **brand manager** position. The trade mark transformed into a brand and was now used as a strategic business tool.

This is the most important point for our purposes. The brand makes it possible not only for the goods or services of a certain company to stand out in comparison to the rest, as had previously been the case, but to also create **added value** for the consumer. Creating a strong brand is an undertaking, akin to creating a work of art. First, one needs to imagine a nice and memorable brand name, unclaimed by anyone else. After that, a beautiful and impressive logo should be fashioned, making sure it corresponds to the brand name. Next, a clever and original slogan must be attached to the ensemble. Many brands also introduce characters (such as Mr. Proper), as well as jingles, which best reflect the emotion built into the brand. Today, package design is an increasingly important brand element, as well as the layout and design of the location, where a service is offered.

All these elements represent the public face of the brand. It must be attractive and memorable, but even that is not enough for today's market competition. **Added value**, which contemporary brands afford to their goods and services, takes great effort and a long time to create. Imagine a sports goods brand. Their football shoes and t-shirts are of no lesser quality than those of their competitors. But then this exact company signs a contract with the greatest football stars. Millions of children and young people, all over the world, will purchase these shoes and shirts, precisely because the name of their idol is embroidered on them – and not because of quality advantages. This is what we call **added value** *of the brand* – just regular goods, like shoes or shirts, acquire a radically different signification for a child, simply because they feature a single name. But this brings love and admiration to that child, it brings hope that one day he or she will also become a great football player, it brings the desire and motivation required to train hard and to improve every single day.

Because of **added value**, the goods of strong brands are more expensive. It has been proven that the consumer is not only willing to pay more for brand goods but will also enjoy the purchase to a higher extent. Furthermore, a big brand can successfully sell not only the main goods it manufactures: people are willing to pay a premium price for a *Mercedes* pram, *Ferrari* sunglasses, or *Adidas* cologne. All in all, big brands sell *a lifestyle*. They manage to settle in our everyday life and assume the role of close friends who constantly guide us – how to spend our time in a more fun, healthy, or meaningful way – all in exchange for a suitable fee, of course. Contemporary lifestyles are consumerist – they are highly dependent on consumption – and brands are the main driver behind our consumer choices.

2. HOW CULT BRANDS CHANGE CULTURE

What makes certain people get a tattoo of a brand's logo, or others – use one for their *Facebook* profile picture? We can say, without doubt, that today brands are created in such a way, that we can literally fall in love with them, have faith in them, bet our image and reputation on them. Just think about car brands! There are *BMW* or *Audi* fans who drive their cars with such unadulterated love and pride! They would be furious if someone were to insult the brand to their face, just as they would get mad if someone were to insult their friends or relatives. Many people would also judge a person by the car they drive. Neither side is correct, but they are both extreme manifestations of a tendency that affects all of us – and not only with regard to car brands. Such big brands have great power and are able to affect and change the lifestyles of millions of consumers. In the long term, this changes everyday culture as well.

Fig. 2. Unauthored funny photomontage that became a meme in social media, parodying and at the same time confirming the importance of the big brands in imposing the Fast food culture.

Expressions such as **cult brands** have become part of everyday parlance. Cult and culture have a common root. These expressions don't so much reflect the essence of the brand itself, as they reflect the attitude of the consumers towards the brand. Research has shown that each of us has his or her own **cult brands**, although not everyone has the need to actively display them for all to see. A person is the most passionate about **cult brands** when they have something to do with their hobbies, their free time in general, or important family moments – especially when it comes to gifts, or memorable moments with friends and loved ones. This is why most **cult brands** can be found in sectors such as *automotive, fashion, sports, alcoholic beverages, dining, video games, energy drinks* and *smartphones*. However, if we further unfold the idea of **cult brands** in their contemporary form, we can rightfully add *big football clubs,* cinematic sagas such as *Star Wars* and *Game of Thrones*, TV formats such as *X Factor* and *Master Chef*, popular singers and bands, athletes and even influencers.

What is interesting is the mechanism that allows brands to fit so well in our personal world. And we are not talking about products and services that become a part of our life because of convenience, affordability, or any such practical benefit. Nobody has ever gotten a tattoo of laundry detergent or toothpaste. We are talking about **cult brands** with which we feel intimacy, closeness, in whose mission we see parts of our aspirations. Today, for example, most companies claim a concern for nature and participate in various environmental initiatives. However, a true ecologist would hardly identify with any of them. On the other hand, there are companies that have been created precisely with the idea to change the environmental status quo, to manufacture more ecologically than the rest, to limit their consumers to just the ones who are willing to accept the inconvenience of a higher price, just so that they can support an ecological product. It is easy to see that the goal of such companies is not revenue growth at all costs, no matter how important profit is to their survival. Oftentimes, the founders of such companies are public figures, fighting for their ideas in the public space, whose own life is exemplary, while their employees are none other than people, inspired by their ideas. In these companies, the lifestyle of the employees often overlaps with the company values. Such companies are *Patagonia* and *Harmonica*, and their reputation among ecologically-minded people is undisputed.

So, in order for a brand to turn into a **cult brand**, its founders must rely on some idea, a vision of improving the world, and must make this idea the leading element in their work – leaving profit in the role of just a means to an end. American market scientist Laurence Vincent calls this conceptual basis of the **cult brands** their *sacred beliefs*. Ecology is just one of the many directions in which companies can develop their ideals. Family and the self-sacrifice that goes with raising children is another idea, on which many companies base their sacred beliefs and attract millions of followers. Other companies, such as *Harley Davidson*, sell their motorcycles as an instrument that helps their adherents to experience freedom, to be anti-conformist and to enjoy their life, day for day. *Chanel* acquired a cult status way back in the first decades of the last century, based on the convictions of its founder, Coco Chanel, that fashion must alter the social role of the woman and transform her from simple decoration in a male-dominated world into an active participant with her own style and fulfillment. The founder of *Apple*, Steve Jobs, was led by the extraordinary insight that it is possible to create a personal computer in a time when only enormous machines existed, each at least 200-300kg. It was *Apple's* mission to bring that technology to the ordinary people, because Jobs was convinced that this powerful and easy-to-use tool, which his company manufactured, would allow every single creative individual to change the world – or, at least, to leave a mark.

Another element needed to create a **cult brand** is the **brand's agent**. This role is most often taken on by the founder of the company, but, as we will see, this is not always the case. The agent is an extremely important element, because simply having the company's ideals (sacred beliefs) formulated and written down is not sufficient. They need to be in constant circulation among the loyal and potential consumers of the brand. **Cult brands** don't rely too strongly on conventional advertising, since people don't tend to trust it – instead, they do their best to become a topic of conversation. Many of these companies are founded by extraordinary, charismatic people, who attract the media spotlight with every single public appearance – such as Steve Jobs, Richard Branson, Elon Musk. True followers trust these agents the way believers follow religious leaders and are always excited to talk about them.

There are also other cases, when the product itself can be **brand agent**, as is the case with the *Harley Davidson* bikes. Their design, their sound, the position of the rider – these features are so typical that they embody the brand ideals in a very natural way. Every *Harley Davidson* owner becomes part of a tribe of people who believe in freedom, liberty, anti-conformism.

The *Star Wars* brand is yet another interesting case. From the very first episode, Darth Vader has become the most captivating character – even though (or maybe precisely because) he stands at the dark side of the force, he has the greatest number of admirers among the fans of the franchise. His dramatic fate, his quality of power and his impressive appearance have turned him into an icon and an eternal **brand agent**, in spite of his death in episode six.

All of these manifestations of **cult brands** live in the minds of their followers – not so much an aggregation of facts, but as a *mythology*, a heroic narrative of stark contrasts, in which the sacred beliefs make all the difference. Some call that "**brand storytelling**". This is the third element of **cult** brands. *Mercedes* worshippers, for example, know very well that it was *their* brand that created the automobile; they also know that many of the most important innovations in automotive have come from *Mercedes*; they know about all the greatest Formula 1 victories, and all the many, many other charts, where their brand is at the top. All of this is narrated at the expense of all those brands who wanted to be Mercedes but never could. Similarly, the *Adidas* mythology tells the glorious history of many of the greatest athletes of the XX century, as well as the memorable victory of the German national team at the World Cup in 1954, when, thanks to the replaceable studs of the *Adidas* football shoes, Germany defeated Hungary.

The most important (fourth) element of this system of the cult brands is the emergence of brand culture. The culture of a brand is indicative of the real impact that the brand has on its followers. According to Vincent, usually brand culture is expressed as *the formation of communities, practicing of rituals* and *the use of symbols*. This element of cult brands can most easily be observed in football clubs. We must note that most football clubs did not arise as brands, but during the last decades, all of them have adopted this business model. Each club has a community of followers, although it is not a requirement that the followers be especially numerous. Every Sunday this community gathers, often hours before the game starts, and practices certain rituals. These include songs and chants, unique to each separate club, which glamorize the team and are often offensive to the rival. Most fans wear team t-shirts, which is one of the most visible membership symbols. There are also those fans who get the team name tattooed onto their bodies, which is a more extreme use of a brand symbol. Carrying flags, wearing caps, scarves, pins, etc. are all other forms of use of the brand symbols.

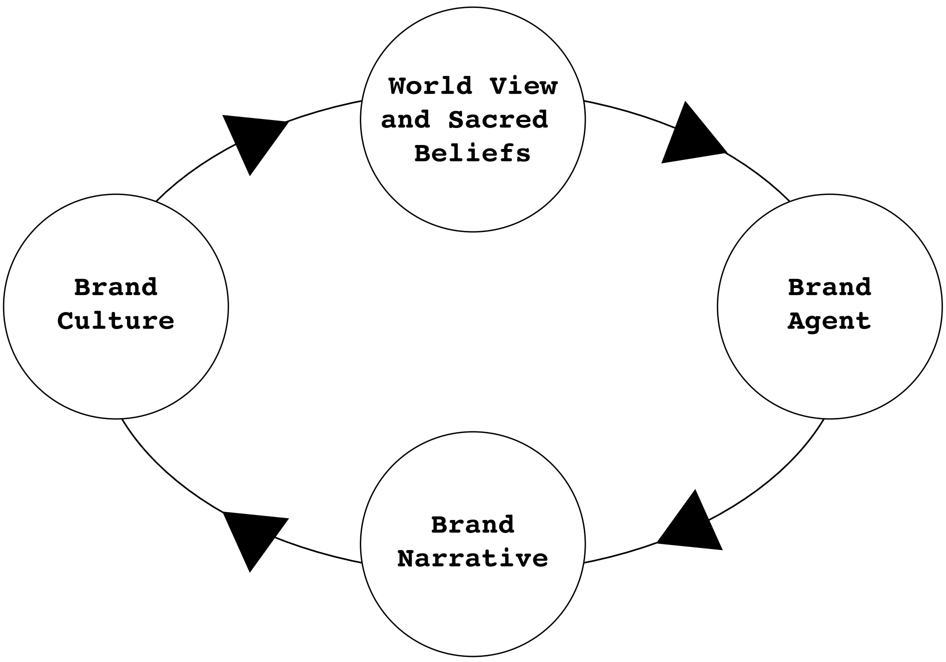


Fig. 3. Brand mythology system (Vincent 2002: 22)

These same elements of brand culture can be observed in the case of some automotive brands, although they are not as distinct or as routine. Still, simply visiting one of the *BMW* motorbike shows would allow anyone to observe a multitude of zealous fans, ritual competitions and chases, tune-up exhibitions and contests, hundreds of branded jackets, caps, and many other expressions of love for the brand.

For the *Apple* fanboys, the company used to organize the annual Macworld Expo, where – when he was still alive – Steve Jobs himself would present the newest and best of the company's products and services. And, although it was just laptops, smartphones, etc. the sheer emotional charge of the audience, and their euphoria, brought the event much closer to a Michael Jackson concert than a corporate event. *Apple*, more so than any other tech company, created a new kind of culture and lifestyle for the creative professionals in the IT sector.

Similarly, we could say that *Amazon* has not only created the most popular online trade platform, but that the company is responsible for a brand-new shopping culture, characteristic explicitly for the digital age. We should not even have to mention *Google* and *Facebook* and their influence on contemporary culture.

Examples for companies that have developed their own brand culture and have changed the habits and lifestyles of millions of people can be found in almost any realm of consumption. Let us, however, have a look at the sector that interests us most.

3.BIG BRANDS OF CONTEMPORARY CULINARY CULTURE

So far, we have managed to present a short overview of the historic development of trade marks, as well as a description of the main elements, which transform a trade mark into a cult brand. Do such brands exist in the field of gastronomy – brands that have been so influential that they have managed to change the tastes and the ways that people eat? The answer is a resounding yes. Maybe here we will not find exactly the same kind of worshippers, who would be willing to tattoo the brand logo on their forehead, but there are definitely companies that have penetrated deep inside the daily life of millions of people, often introducing models, which may even violate orthodox traditions.

3.1. MCDONALD'S *AND FAST FOOD CULTURE*

For many people, *McDonald's* and "cult brand" are not only unrelated, but even mutually exclusive. On the surface of it, this may be so, but after we have exposed the mechanisms of influence, employed by brands, and the ways that they can change contemporary culture, it would make sense to take a closer look at the American fast food chain.

If we exclude the last 10-15 years, when companies such as *Google* and *Facebook* changed our lives profoundly, it is precisely *McDonald's* that has most remarkably influenced everyday culture on our planet during the previous 60-70 years. And we don't mean just influence by fast food restaurants. The American sociologist George Ritzer talks about the "McDonaldization" of the world – the fact that the outstanding success of the *McDonald's* business model has spread the company's influence far beyond the preparation and consumption of hamburgers, also influencing the way of thinking of all entrepreneurs and millions of workers in the service economy, as well as the overall organization of social life and politics.

Fig. 4. The Golden arches and the overall design of the McDonalds restaurants is part of the brand identity of the company and a powerful instrument for marketing their service.

Soon after WWII, *McDonald's* had already become one of the symbols of the American lifestyle. After the fall of the Berlin wall, the brand had already turned into a symbol of globalization and capitalism in general. Today, *McDonald's* is one of the largest employers in the world, with almost two million employees.

What are the reasons for the brand's prominence and influence?

Not until after WWII did the United States finally escape the crisis that followed the Great Depression of 1929. What followed was two decades of unparalleled economic growth and the birth of a new, prosperous society, at least in comparison to the rest of the world. The McDonald's model of consumption fit quite nicely in the main spheres of social life:

1. in the new lifestyle and routine of working people;
2. in the new forms of leisure and entertainment;
3. in an updated family model, where many of the old, more traditional habits, faded away.

During the years after WWII, economic growth could be observed not just in the scale of production, but also in the variability of market supply. A constantly growing number of career options supported the service sector and the pop-culture industries. These new jobs necessitated a much more dynamic daily routine, where the aging industrial schedules of breakfast, lunch and dinner gave way to new patterns. *McDonald's* not only responded to this new need for food at any time, but also became a standard for how people plan their time.

Economic growth provides room for a constantly increasing expenditure of spare time. People do not seem to have more spare time in comparison to previous decades but have much more money and an ever-increasing desire for *entertainment*. *McDonald's* and the fast food culture authored by the brand have become an integral part of the new consumerist lifestyle, which we have seen in movies and novels from that period.

Perhaps the most important change that arose with the ascent of fast food concerns the *family model*. Family dinner and lunch in non-working days had been a ritual for centuries, affirming power relations within the family. The codes of conduct follow the roles of head of the family, wife, children, etc. Fast food culture strikes this model at the foot. The family no longer eats together at the same time, as children and youths feel at home in fast food restaurants – but not the parents. Additionally, saying a prayer no longer takes place at the commencement of the meal. There isn't even cutlery, or a hard model of table manners – a fact, which allows each customer to simply satisfy his or her gastronomic desires without any hassle.

3.2. STARBUCKS *AND THE COMMODITIZATION OF THE SOPHISTICATED TASTE OF COFFEE*

Contrary to *McDonald's*, *Starbucks* has become a global **legendary brand** without any substantial contradictions. The scale at which *Starbucks* culture has influenced contemporary lifestyles is not as extensive as that of the "Lord" of fast food, but it is nonetheless fundamental and has defined tendencies, which are developing even today. In fact, the *Starbucks* brand harvests the fruit of its success precisely because of some of the negative consequences of the "McDonaldization" of the world.

It can generally be said that the *McDonald's* model transferred the organizational precision of the industrial assembly line from the field of industrial production onto the service sector. The convenience and effectiveness of this approach led to the extreme standardization of the overall *experience* of going out to eat. Everything became fast-paced, everyone received the same "prefabricated" smile from the uniform-wearing staff, the same expressions and phrases, the same deep-fried smell from the kitchen area. The idea of *McDonald's* coffee, or any fast-food coffee in general, used to follow the same logic – to provide a certain quantity of aromatic liquid, which the customer needs to stay alert for work and entertainment. Nothing more.

The *Starbucks* phenomenon "exploded" in the 1980s, after at least a decade of trial and error. The idea is simple, but surprisingly tough to actualize: to import into the US the highly developed Italian coffee culture. The important insight that *Starbucks'* visionary Howard Shultz had is that it will not suffice to simply offer quality coffee – a completely new attitude towards coffee consumption was needed, which, however, found fertile conditions in the 1980s and 1990s.

Fig. 5. The core value of the brand Starbucks originated from the sophisticated Italian coffee culture, translated by the company initially for the American market and then globally in more than 70 countries and 25,000 stores worldwide.

1. Starbucks culture developed within a new medium of intelligent and highly educated people, able to develop a sophisticated taste and to understand how important it is for the quality of life. According to Holt, the increasing number of American graduates in the 70s contributed to that trend (Holt 2010:92). Additionally, the brand originated in the emblematic city of Seattle, where the standard of life is higher than the US mean, and from where many other cultural trends spread throughout the years.
2. All elements of the Starbucks brand suggest its cultural sophistication: the name of the brand comes from a character of the classical American novel *Moby Dick*; the interior includes artworks, jazz and ethnic music; during the first years of the brand, aphorisms and quotations adorned the coffee cups.
3. *Starbucks* coffee shops are organized in such a way that the patrons go there not just to enjoy Italian-style espresso, but also to learn how to be true connoisseurs. The staff is commonly composed of coffee aficionados and devotees, who deliberately cultivate a close relationship with the customers, calling them by their first names and even writing their names on the cups – the opposite to the *McDonald's* model.
4. Before *Starbucks*, sophisticated taste was always associated with luxury, no matter whether it was in gourmet restaurants, wine

cellars or fashion shows. Starbucks transformed sophisticated taste and coffee culture into a sort of accessible luxury. What is interesting is that the model is similarly attractive both for pretentious coffee snobs and the patrons of smaller local indie coffee shops. The intelligent atmosphere, good coffee and the high culture of *Starbucks* patrons quickly made the chain into a preferred location for true fans.

5. During recent years, the hipster spirit of the brand has been affirmed by the many progressive causes that the brand has joined – including Fair Trade activities, environmental protection, etc.

3.3. DOMINO'S *PIZZA AND FOOD DELIVERY*

Another global brand that became a byword for the food culture in the last 6 decades is *Domino's pizza*. The company's efforts to transform food delivery into a convenient, pleasant and reliable way to eat at home, quickly gave results. Today thousands of companies around the world deliver food and beverages, the global yearly turnover being around $100 billion.

The implementation of this model seems easy but taking a deeper look at delivery shows the opposite is true. Like *Starbucks*, *Domino's* turned an Italian culinary delight into an accessible product. The great efforts of the company aimed to adapt the idea of pizza for the entirely different American lifestyle, but also to the "industrial" approach in the service sector. Domino's remain in the annals of marketing with their promise that *if the pizza is not delivered within 30 minutes, the customer will not have to pay*. This unconditional engagement with timely delivery, and the multitude of technological innovations aimed at keeping the product fresh and warm, further increase trust in this new approach at dining.

It is important to note that the cultural innovation of food delivery, successfully championed by *Domino's*, is, to many, a disgrace and a downfall of the culinary standards of the general population. This is indicative of the effectiveness with which large companies can take advantage of the possibilities offered by new lifestyles. Ignoring culinary standards, however, did lead to a negative turn of events and in 2010 the company organized another impressive marketing feat. In a self-critical campaign, *Domino's* published authentic comments by dissatisfied customers, filmed at the chain's shops. Then, the company presented a film depicting the introduction of tangible improvements in all elements of their product.

The company further strengthens the success of home delivery with active use of the advantages that internet and mobile devices provide. They have been extremely innovative in integrating new technologies in their services. Their website provides a special option for delivery tracking by the minute. The company is also experimenting with automated drone and robot delivery.

3.4. HARMONICA *AND THE HEALTH FOOD WAVE IN BULGARIA*

The Bulgarian bio and health food brand *Harmonica* is an interesting case. We can say that it has influenced culinary culture in a way similar to the previous examples, albeit on a local scale, but it can be asserted that behind the vision of the brand one can discover the insight of the most significant tendency in food business during the last 10 years – *organic food production*.

Fig. 6. In the core of the brand Domino's all over the world there is the promise of the fast delivery, independently what technology and model of organization is employed. (Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.0 Generic license).

Before *Harmonica*, there was essentially no market for bio foods in Bulgaria. The company was created in 2006 by Magdalena Maleeva, her husband and a friend of theirs. Magdalena Maleeva is the most successful Bulgarian female tennis player, reaching 4th place in the international rankings. After the end of her sports career, she became a charismatic public figure and an eco-activist.

Harmonica started as an eco-hobby, after the family could not find bio yogurt in any of the shops they visited. They contacted like-minded people, owners of a local dairy farm close to Sofia. The first stages of the company's activities don't even look like business endeavors, but more closely resemble eco activism. People in the country, at that time, were not especially keen on paying premium prices for bio products, except for a very small percentage of earnest environmentalists. In this sense, the **brand culture** of Harmonica predates the development of the company's business activities. What's impressive here is that, unfazed by the market success, the company never changed its attitude and respect toward its followers – they were never treated simply as clients or consumers, but rather always as adherents.

Not long after, the bio-organic market wave reached Bulgaria but thanks to *Harmonica* there was already an authentic local trend on the market, so it didn't have to be an imported western fad. Credit must be given to the idealism of the brand and the connection of the brand culture with ecological causes and the humane treatment of animals. This is also the biggest challenge that *Harmonica* faces today.

The increasing demand of bio products has forced Harmonica to grow and to expand its product portfolio to *over 100 products*. Additionally, the distribution of these products has grown so that it can cover the largest supermarket chains, where most of the other products offered are precisely the kind that environmental production renounces. It has become harder for the company to maintain the high level of trust and rapport with such an expanded audience, especially when a large percentage of buyers finds the green idea rather distant. As a result, skepticism towards the ecological paradigms and the high standards in food production has increased.

Harmonica maintains its brand culture via a few successful approaches. In the first place, we have the people who work for the company. They are devoted followers of the brand values. Harmonica has a very well developed website, and these people's

Fig. 7. he Straw Festival, organized each year in the clean, ecological area near the production facilities of Harmonica company and where employees, their families and the families of many of their customers meet, is the major expression of the brand culture.

stories and views, as well as the stories of independent producers and partners, are an important part of that site.

The *Harmonica Facebook* page is also well developed and is the stage for authentic dialogue between both allies and skeptics, and even the unescapable "haters". The main values that Harmonica's brand culture demonstrates here are honesty, openness and directness. Many of the products are introduced on this page through enjoyable stories, featuring the faces of the company's employees.

Maybe the most important – and already ritualized – events of *Harmonica's* **brand culture** are the annual *Straw Festival* and the monthly open doors events at the production facilities of the company. The latter are usually targeted toward sceptics, so that they can personally observe the environmentally friendly methods of production, the humane treatment of animals, and the many other characteristics of the company, which distinguish it from the non-bio food producers. The *Straw Festival*, on the other hand, is organized in the fields behind the main production facilities of the company, where families can experience all of Harmonica in one place: children play in the open air, parents spend time in the good company of *Harmonica* employees and even the founders, and everyone can enjoy a free meal, featuring the company's healthy products.

FOCUS 1

An interesting case: Slow food as a brand

Slow Food was born as a civil movement against the opening of a gigantic *McDonald's* restaurant in downtown Rome in 1986. It quickly became obvious that the movement had captured an important attitude of progressive Italians, which lead to an inaugural manifesto and a clearly stated vision, reaching far beyond the initial protest. The idea also reached beyond the borders of Italy, as only two years after the initial manifesto, at the end of 1989, alongside the fall of the Berlin wall, Slow Food International was founded in Paris. Today, there are *Slow Food* activists all over the world, as the movement has offices on all continents and an active membership of around 70,000 people, affecting the lives of millions of people.

While attempting to make out the impressive success of the movement, we come across a paradox, which is quite symptomatic of the topic of the current chapter. Slow food is a movement of resistance against the large fast food corporations and their brands, but at the same time the effectiveness of its impact is owed to the fact that it too has adopted the attributes of a global brand. Slow food came at a moment when traditional pre-industrial food culture, with all its diversity and authenticity, appeared to be headed towards extinction. The goal of the movement, however, is not to just bring the world back 200 years. Rather, the goal is to necessitate a *new food culture*, whose values are inspired by tradition and represent total repudiation of fast food culture.

As we have seen above, creating a new culture in a certain sphere of contemporary life is one of the indicators of **legendary brand** success and this is precisely what the *Slow*

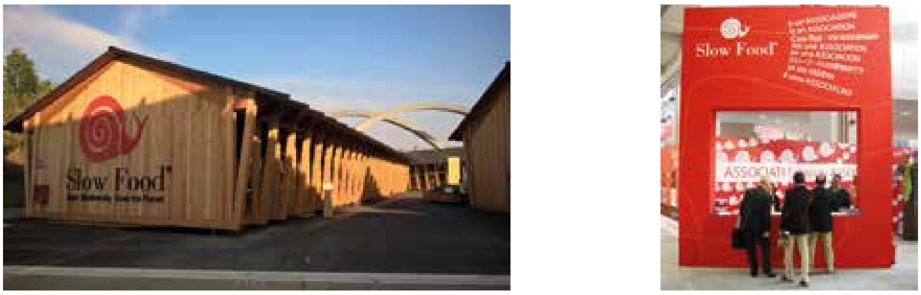


Fig. 8. The Slow Food movement achieved its exceptional success partially due to the fact that they have adopted the communication instruments of the brand management although their mission is to resist the influence of the giant fast food corporations and their global brands. (Jan-Tore Egge CC BY-SA 2.0; CC BY-SA 4.0)

Food organization has become today. Its sacred beliefs have been very clearly formulated in the manifesto, the numerous local convivia have become actual **brand agents**, and the brand narrative is so strong and convincing that the cause against the multinational corporations has been perceived in a manner similar to the fight between David and Goliath.

According to the Italian semiologist Gianfranco Marrone, a large part of Slow food's power comes from its direct contrast at a brand level with the global colossus *McDonald's*. This clash is actually a collision between two ideologies, two opposing attitudes towards life, embodied by the logos of the two brands, by their slogans, their visions and all of their brand elements. They can be generally summarized as follows:

Fast food	**Slow food**
Practical need for food	Pleasure from food
Entertainment and gluttony	Communication and conviviality
Industrial production	Natural (domestic) production
Novelty and modernity	Past and tradition
Fast	Slow

Slow food achieves the formation of a new culinary culture through a large variety of activities, which, however, inevitably carry the basic values of the brand. These activities include the organization of large international expositions of local producers and specialties, the formation of local societies working for the development and popularization of local culinary wealth, the founding of a gastronomic university in Italy, the building of a culinary "Noah's ark" for the conservation of disappearing animals and plants, political lobbying in favor of small local producers, etc.

The Role of Packaging in Communicating taste

Dimitar Trendafilov and Ilaria Ventura

1. INTRODUCTION

As manufacturing, production and trade advance, **the packaging** of goods has become a necessity and its importance has constantly been increasing. For food products, packaging has generally been a way to provide a “barrier” or a “frame” within which certain products can be placed – such as beans, sugar, flour, seeds, liquids, but also oftentimes fruit and vegetables, all of which were once sold in bulk, in various units – kilogram, unit, litre, etc. Thus, packaging has made it somewhat easier for the consumers to deal with goods without having to lug various items around, without having to weigh and package them on their own. We say “somewhat” because such practices do still exist, and are even going through a sort of renaissance, especially having in mind recent ecological trends (especially when it comes to food products) going against most sorts of packaging. In other places, such as open markets or specialized butcher’s shops, it’s the seller who completes the above-mentioned weighing and packaging activity.

It is important to note that, while the packaging of physical goods is quite an understandable concept, it is not so clear when it comes to **services** (at least theoretically). In fact, however, packaging in the service sector has simply been replaced by other visual elements, which, in their entirety, form a sort of “packaging”. The bank office, the interior of a restaurant, employee uniforms, stationery insignia – these have the same effect. In marketing, we talk about the “**halo effect**” (naturally, it’s up to the specialists at any given company to make sure that it’s a positive effect and acts as an attractor for customers), which, in the service sector, comprises of visible and invisible elements and processes, and the entire experience the customer goes through. You would certainly not be especially glad if you were to visit a fashionable restaurant, with great reviews, only to find out that half of the menu is unavailable, the waiter is incompetent or impolite, while the rowdy bunch at the next table is making your dinner even more unpleasant. Your unfavorable sentiment will be attributed to the restaurant itself, not to any particular person.

In this text, we will look more closely at packaging of physical products, due to their particular importance in food products, and more precisely – in shaping the perception of taste. Currently, packaging is so tightly connected with the product that some experts have suggested that it be called “the 5^{th} element” of marketing, or at least that it be considered as one of the elements, whose development requires special attention. Little wonder, then, that entire design departments and even specialized creative agencies get huge budgets in order to develop new packaging ideas, better fitting the marketing objectives and the taste of today’s consumer. With this in mind, different experts propose various lateral definitions for packaging, most of which have particular attitude towards its role in the products’ advertising, and more specifically – towards the consumer’s contact with the desired product at the point of purchase:

- The constant media
- Marketing’s last 5 seconds
- The last salesman
- The brand’s face

2. MAIN FUNCTIONS OF PACKAGING

Before we list the multitude of objectives that plain old packaging has to accomplish, we must state that it is generally subdivided in three various types:

Internal layer (or storage/receptacle of the product).

External – which covers (usually) the internal and serves as a “face” on the shelf at the store, since it’s a direct (mostly visual, but not only) contact with the customer before the purchase.

Transport packaging – useful when transporting and storing in warehouses.

As it is already obvious, we are talking about packaging’s tendency to affect the customer at the moment when she is making her choice, during actual shopping. However, we also see packaging “exposed” in TV commercials, in the shop windows and

– something often underestimated – in our homes and during the actual moment of utilization (while eating a Mars bar, we often perceive the packaging as a sort of "banana peel", so that we do not have to touch the product with our hand, while we store the olive oil we use in our salads in its original packaging). It is no less important to note that packaging is also directly connected to the price of the product, and that developing technologically, functionally, aesthetically, ergonomically and legally appropriate packaging leads to actual expenses, which are included in the end price.

Coming from the practical situations, in which packaging is used, theory has come up with the following main functionalities:

- **Presentation** – advertises the product (creating an image about its content, price and general positioning).
- **Preservation** – shields the product from external influence (light, air, mixing with other products, leakage, unwanted skin contact, etc.).
- **Protection** – supports the functionality of the product.
- **Portability** – provides convenience during transportation (usually from manufacturer to retailer, but also from the shop to the home, office, kitchen, etc.), keeping the product intact.
- **Proportion** – contains the precise/required/stated quantity of the product for the respective price.
- **Pollution** – meets ecological requirements and standards in order to protect the environment during the production, utilization and disposal of the product.
- **Promotion** – promotes the brand, adds value to the product with additional information, illustrations, instructions, markings, certificates, barcodes, etc.

It can clearly be seen that the main functionality of packaging is to protect the product and right after that (and as a consequence) – to protect its functionality. This is especially typical when storing liquids, some foodstuffs, chemical products, etc. Usually, at the discretion of retailers, some packaging even contains markers or devices, which protect against theft in shops. They activate alarms in the case someone attempts to take them out of the shop without having paid.

Although they usually function simultaneously, sometimes some of the aforementioned principles stand out. For example, Proportion, Promotion and Environmental friendliness overlap to a large extent in the so-called "**economy size**" packaging. This type of packaging is "proportional" according to the quantity requirements of a given customer target and it reduces the manufacturer's packaging costs, while providing a promotional offer for the end user by exposing a positive **benefit-cost ratio**. Finally, the packaging itself is less than it would be in the standard case, which benefits the environment by creating less pollution. Meanwhile, when the shop offers a "2+1" promotion ("buy two, get one free"), the products need to be bundled together in a larger package, which also means that some additional Promotional elements (stickers, ribbons, additional cardboard or plastic elements, etc.) need to be provided, without making the bundle harder to transport or use.

The promotional functionality is the result of a series of verbal and nonverbal elements, whose sum is also called "**media ecology**" of the packaging, since it functions in a system, which should inform, attract, convince and educate. The manufacturers create a certain image of themselves (luxury, ecological, farmer, etc.) and certain associations through colors, materials and the overall shape of the packaging. If we look at Pringles cans, for example (a light, metallic cylinder with a plastic cover, suitable for multiple use), we can see how an innovative packaging can become a meaningful – i.e. recognizable – element of the brand, while strongly connected to the functioning and protection of the product. In short, in addition to being different from other brand of chips (who tend to use bags), Pringles is convenient. Similarly, we can look at the small and easy-to-use sachets of instant "Nescafe 3-in-1" coffee, which were created precisely to be convenient, with a specific target – people on the go.

When talking about "verbal" elements (i.e. written text), we usually mean the name of the brand, the name of the manufacturer (and any additional indications), the country of origin, and the information regarding the content, use and storage of the product, as well as any certifications, warnings, instructions, etc. "Nonverbal" elements, on the other hand, include the size, shape and material of the packaging, characters and symbols (e.g. certificates), colors and color combinations, fonts, images, as well as the overall collaboration between these elements, and the ideas they may inspire in the consumer.

All of the above helps the brand, the manufacturer and the product to be recognized, and can lead to a **spontaneous purchase**, to provide better, more useful and more interesting information, to help the consumers perceive the quality of the product, etc. It is well known that, in general, we tend to perceive most of the information with our sight, which is why many manufacturers use tricks to outwit us, or to suggest certain proportions of their products through packaging. Thin, vertical lines, for example, can make the packaging seem taller, while wide, vertical lines make it appear shorter and more compact. Comparing the different items at the shelves is also important, as the consumer only has mere moments to perceive the information from the packages, which can sometimes be in the thousands (img. 1). This is why manufacturers usually test their packaging ideas, using dummy samples of their direct competitors' products, so as to simulate real market situations. This way they can better judge whether their packaging stands out, if it's better, more attractive, more informative (it is recommended that no more than 2-3 important pieces of information cohabit the same packaging). Simultaneously, manufacturers do their best – and spend large amounts of money – to make sure that their products are placed on the best locations on the shelves (usually at eye level, as well as in zones of the shops where there is the most traffic).

Fig. 1. The role of packaging as media when presented on an entire shelf, as well as during close contact between the products and the consumer.
Sources: https://www.seriouseats.com and http://freshneasybuzz.blogspot.com.

The typical packaging of the "Vereya" milk brand of the United Milk Company (Bulgaria) is a clear example for the multi-communicational function of packaging (img.2). Firstly, it has a rectangular shape, which makes it easy to transport alongside other packages, to put on the shelf, and to hold in the customer's hand. Secondly, the material it is made of is suitable for long-term storage (TetraPack), while the opening of the package is made for multiple use. Thirdly, the dominating color is green (in contrast with the red color of the brand name), which demonstrates a lower fat content, in contrast with the blue color, which the company uses to denote milk with 3% fat content. Then, on the top of the packaging we can see a box, showing the "best before" date, as well as instructions for using the opening. Next, on the "face" of the box (the side, usually turned toward the shoppers) is a label which describes the product – "milk" (top left of img. 2); as well as graphic elements (akin to children's drawings), indicating that this is cow's milk, presumably from a farm; and then a quality certificate. The "back" side (right of img. 2) of the packaging contains mostly verbal information, identifying the manufacturer, the batch of the product (barcode), a customer phone line, nutritional parameters of the product (table) and some more non-verbal/graphical communication, related to the recycling of the packaging (i.e. demonstrating the manufacturer's environmental responsibility). Finally, one of the sides of the packaging, apart from displaying even more certificates, is fully used as an advertisement board, where the manufacturer has displayed other of its dairy products range. That would indicate that the company relies on the packaging to act as an advertising channel, precisely in the home space, the office, or the restaurant, where the product will be used.

Fig. 2. “Multifunctional” packaging of “Vereya” milk.
Photos by the author.

Changes in the appearance of packaging can be significant and can literally transform the way a product appears, especially if we do not see it directly on the shelf when we are shopping. As an example for this, the website Boredpanda.com demonstrated how some mass food products – and not especially healthy ones – could look, if their packaging were to be reimagined according to the “hipster culture” (img. 3). This serves to show that a change is not especially difficult to achieve and the shopper can perceive the food in a very different way, simply because of the packaging.

Fig. 3. Real packaging of some of the most widespread (and not especially healthy) food products in the USA, next to their hypothetical modernized versions.
Source: www.boredpanda.com

3. INNOVATIVE PACKAGING

Sometimes manufacturers resort to original caps or locking mechanisms of the packaging, original design, additional accessories or attachments, in order to achieve distinction on the shelf, and to make their product more memorable. These innovations, however, have a more pronounced effect when they actually improve the main functions of the packaging described above (ease of use, convenience, storage, longevity, etc.). This comes with its disadvantages, seeing as unusual packaging often require increased effort by the company, as well as additional time for the consumer to learn to handle the novel design and to recognize its added advantages. Additionally, as mentioned earlier, changes in design could bring to changes in perception – for example (as studies demonstrate), interesting and attractive packaging makes people believe that it contains a larger amount of the product. Another example of "teaching" the consumer can be seen in a campaign by Lidl retail chain from several years ago, where a TV commercial explained that products, sold in sealed plastic trays (generally meat and similar items) were sealed in a special atmosphere of a colorless gas, which protects the product from microorganisms for a longer time. While this is not some packaging innovation – manufacturers routinely use this approach to increase the shelf life of perishable items – Lidl announced it publicly and managed to build up their image, without even being a manufacturer of the aforementioned items.

3.1. NEW TRENDS IN FOOD PACKAGING

- **Aesthetics** – we do not need many examples to prove that the aesthetic function of packaging is becoming increasingly more important. Each of us can go to any store, which offers packaged goods, and witness the variation and attractiveness of the items. Furthermore, if one were to compare today's items and those, offered 10, 20 or even 50 years ago, it would become even more obvious how far we have come in packaging design – making the items more beautiful (original, distinguishable), better aligned to the requirements of the particular brands, of the contemporary perception of "beauty", etc.
- **Interactivity** – a part of the functionality in the 21st century escapes its strict functional relationship with the product (img. 4). The image on the left shows how, apart from utility and direct communication, the design relies on extending the relationship with the consumer by providing a QR code (upper right corner). The QR's role is to allow the users the possibility to seek additional specific information online – about the brand, the product, the store or the restaurant – and to even allow them to participate in some promotional activity and/or to request registration in a loyalty program and receive interesting information about the manufacturer, events, promotions and new products. This practice has been on the increase, espe-

cially with food products and beverages. Many manufacturers rely on this approach in order to provide additional ideas and recipes for using their products, and so – to increase their value to you as users. On the other hand, some luxury companies provide QR codes, which help guarantee the consumers that they are looking at a genuine product.

Fig. 4. Packaging evolution – originality, fun, adding new elements.
Sources: https://www.qr-code-generator.com and https://www.boredpanda.com.

- **Entertainment** – The item on the right side of the image (4) is an example of combining functionality (when opening the product) and fun. In other situations, designers turn to comics, labyrinths, all sorts of games, which allow the user to draw, write and even put together different fun designs. In the beverage field, unique designs for certain limited series can even become collectibles, which adds an element of gamification, which can last long after the product has been utilized – and thus makes people remember and even prefer the particular brand.

FOCUS 1

Coca-Cola and the Contour Bottle

Some of the packaging used by the world's most famous brands is so well known that it is considered iconic. What does this mean? In short, these objects have acquired, for the collective imagination, a broader communicative and cultural role than that of simple containers. The Coca-Cola bottle, that used by luxury water brand Perrier, Toblerone's pyramid-shaped packaging, the bottle of Chanel n. 5 (to name but a few examples) are so famous globally that in some cases they have become logos for the brands themselves (Figs 1 and 2). For certain brands, packaging design is of central importance. Their advertising materials draw the consumer's attention to it, often through the use of the packshot, and it functions as a visual sign that conveys the values of the brand. it conveys the values of the brand. The green, curved bottle used by Perrier immediately brings to mind the brand's values of luxury and elegance. The square silhouette of Chanel n. 5 evokes that collection of meanings connected to the product, such as femininity, refinement, a classic, timeless fragrance, and so on.

How is it possible for a simple container, like a bottle or a jar, to become such a powerful sign?

Let's look at Coca-Cola, which has some of the most successful packaging in the history of industrial production. Invented by an American pharmacist in 1886, as a drink to invigorate and aid digestion, Coca-Cola was initially contained in a simple cylindrical glass bottle. In 1915, the company held a competition to invent a new, unmistakable bottle that not only had to be recognisable to all on first sight, but also on first touch. The designer Earl J. Dean designed a prototype bottle that was extremely different to the bottles commonly found on the market at that time. Whilst those traditional bottles were generally smooth and straight, the Coca-Cola bottle was purposefully contoured, curved, with vertical lines embossed on the glass surface. And so the *contour* bottle was born – this is the official name of Coca-Cola's glass bottle (Fig 3 and 4) - as if telling us that the Coke packaging is the contour *par excellence*. Though the bottle has undergone various changes, being slimmed down among other minor modifications, the outline of the bottle has remained the same for over one hundred years. During the 1960s, cans arrived followed by multi-format plastic bottles, causing Coca-Cola's packaging system to broaden and diversify. Within this system we can identify a number of unchanging visual elements that guarantee coherence and recognisability: the white/red duality, the sinuous form of bottles, the **brand name** and the 'dynamic wave', the long white curl found on the logo and all packaging (fig. 5). But the most representative packaging remains the *contour* bottle, which has been a firm fixture in Coca-Cola's advertising: television spots, print ads and posters all often feature the bottle as their protagonist (Fig. 6). Demonstrating the strategic centrality of packaging for brand identity is also the fact that their historic rival, Pepsi, designed their own packaging system inspired by that of Coca-Cola, imitating it in some ways and using others to set itself apart.

There are numerous stories about the possible origins of the *contour* bottle. One is that its unique shape is derived from the shape of the skirts worn by women in the early twentieth century, broad at the hips and tight at the ankles (known as hobble skirts). According to another version of the story, its silhouette was inspired by the curvaceous figure of the actress of the time, Mae West, and in yet another legend, its true inspiration is the shape of the cacao pod, which is equally sinuous. Regardless of the supposed truth of these various versions of the story, when it comes to the culture and communication of taste, what is most important is the fact that different transpositions exist for the same event, serving only to render this bottle's history even more legendary and iconic. Indeed, exhibitions, shows, books and illustrated albums have been dedicated to Coca-Cola's packaging, not to mention the numerous citations in films and works of art (especially in pop art and the work of Andy Warhol). These phenomena demonstrate how the bottle, beyond its practical function of preserving and protecting the drink, plays a communicative and cultural role that is much further reaching. First and foremost, it is the identifying sign of the brand and everything that means, but it is also the sign of a time and a certain style of consumption, and therefore, the carrier of social and cultural views. Coca-Cola brings to mind dynamism, Americanism, socialising, liberation, though according to one's viewpoint, it can also signify consumerism, globalisation, commodification and so on.

Fig. 5. The bottle 'inside' the bottle.

Fig. 6. The outline of the Perrier bottle is used as a distinguishing feature. even on its cans.

Fig. 7. Poster demonstrating the evolution of Coca-Cola's packaging, from its conception to the 1960s

Fig. 8. The current design for the glass contour (2019)

Fig. 9. The dynamic wave.

Fig. 10. Print ad for the United States, early 1990s.

FOCUS 2

Nutella and the Pelikan Jar

Another case of packaging that has become truly iconic is that of the hazelnut chocolate spread Nutella, produced by Italian company Ferrero (Fig 1). The Nutella jar came about in the 1960s and is called the *Pelikan*, seemingly because its design was inspired by the shape of the ink bottle of the same name. When the spread was still called *SuperCrema*, its container was very different to what it is now: a long jar with vertical lines embossed on the glass surface. Later, when the brand was renamed Nutella, the old jar was substituted with an eight-sided glass (Fig. 2). In the mid-1960s, the current jar was introduced, with its softer lines and slightly concave shape in the centre. The straight and longer lines of previous containers are gone. Curved lines dominate, and the object's general orientation is no longer vertical but horizontal. The new jar seems to better communicate the substance contained within it: through the softness of its lines, the sense of creaminess is heightened. Another fundamental element for Nutella's visual identity, as well as its container's outline, is the image on its label, which has remained the same since the 1960s: a slice of bread with Nutella spread thickly over it, a knife, a glass of milk and hazelnuts beside it. This is not simply a banal visual decoration, it is more than that: it is an offer of consumption and of taste, a slice of daily life featuring simple objects that attempts to sum up the Nutella experience.
As with Coca-Cola, this packaging is a complex visual sign, representative of the brand and everything is signifies (the other brands of hazelnut chocolate spread on the

Italian market, for example, have chosen different types and shapes of container). A few years ago, the first *Nutella Cafés* opened in the US, their entrance doors mimicking the outline of the jar. Entering a Nutella Café means literally immersing oneself in the jar of hazelnut chocolate spread (Fig. 3). In 2014, Nutella collaborated with Italian design house Alessi in the creation of the *Nutella Clock* (Fig. 4), and in 2019, they made a jar-radio alarm clock. And so the jar goes from being a simple container and becomes a design object, a collector's item to have on display. Different in their objective but similar in style are the brand's limited edition promotions, like the 7 Million Campaign (2017): special edition jars numbered by Nutella and boasting brightly coloured, neon illustrations. The interesting aspect of all these makeovers is that the packaging takes on a new meaning (broader, more cultural), whilst, at the same time, essentially reinforcing the very identity of the brand's sign, as it just a few features make it instantly recognisable. What are these features? There is, of course, the jar's outline, but also its white lid and the horizontal band formed by the label. In fact, as happens with logos, which are small signs that must be very simple but still capable of communicating many different meanings, packaging, especially in those large global brands, also reinforces the product's communicative power when it is visually simplified, losing some of its detail and thus becoming, more than ever, icons of our consumption.

Fig. 11. The Nutella jar.

Fig. 12. Nutella advert from the 1960s, with its eight-sided jar.

Fig. 13. Nutella Clock by Alessi.

Fig. 14. Entrance to the Nutella Café, Chicago.

Marketing of food and taste

Dimitar Trendafilov

Marketing is one of the words that we hear often at for various reasons, but even the professionals who use it will often give different definitions for it, if we ask them about it. Their opinion depends on their understanding of the term, based on education, profession, and even the sphere they work in – cosmetics, automotive, apparel, leisure, travel, etc. Very often, this word is used as a synonym for advertising, sales or even unethical practices (such as selling unhealthy drinks to children or selling ice to Eskimos), for creating hassle around new products in the store (a new collection, or a new model that must be noticed), for promoting an event (a Madonna concert) or a company (Google, Nestle, Bella Bulgaria, Happy or McDonalds restaurants). In fact, *marketing is the way companies think and act when they must realize on the market a given product that the buyers are looking for*. It is at the base of any business, while at the base of every successful business there is at least one defining marketing decision – an innovative product; the right place and time for offering a certain good; an attractive combination of menu presentation, service, good food and agreeable prices.

The "product" that companies offer can be an actual physical good, like bread (carefully curated along the shelves) or a service (like getting your bread delivered straight to your house). McDonald's, for example, doesn't create actual goods, in spite of Big Mac, Kids' Menu, etc., but is, in fact, a **retailer** offering its customers the *service* of quick and easy access to a familiar meal. Put differently, in the remote 1948, the McDonald's brothers of San Bernardino, CA, did not create the burger and the fries, but *the system of actions, which allows food to move from the kitchen to the customer in the quickest way possible at the lowest possible cost* (sparing resources such as staff effort, electricity, water, foodstuffs), in order to be able to offer *the lowest price possible*. We must also add that the familiar menu is also part of this service, as it represents the full assortment of the chain, which is almost completely standardized all over the world. The same goes for the restaurants' locations – carefully selected spots with a high flow of both human and automotive traffic, aiming for the highest number of potential customers. This is why, as should already be clear, the keyword is not just "food" but also "fast" – both for the hungry person, who doesn't want to spend time waiting in lines or paying expensive meals at refined restaurants with waiters and a gourmet menu, and for McDonald's as a company, that wants to be efficient.

1. MARKETING MIX

How will all this happen in practice? "Marketing" the products would mean estimating what is being sought on the market (what people are still missing for solving a certain problem), so that it can be produced and offered; estimating where it should be offered (various bottles of water can be found at your local shop, the gas station, the cafè, at restaurants, at the bus station vending machines, etc.); at what price the product will be sold, so that it is interesting to the customer but doesn't appear too expensive; and finally, what we would *say* about the product – i.e. how we will advertise it, so that people know it even exists, they learn about its attractive features and about why it's even worth the money (we usually call all of this communication). In other words, marketing works with a combination of four main elements, which are known as the "**marketing mix**" or the 4 P's (Product, Price, Placement, Promotion), which you can see in Fig. 1.

Fig. 1. Basic marketing mix.

The marketing mix was officially entered into practice in 1960 and has since been a basic mainstay for companies, quite the same way the four legs of a table serve to keep it steady and usable. The reason it still exists today – even with the immense possibilities of the Internet and the thousands of digital products and online shops – is that the mix has survived through time and possesses the four principles (or measures) according to which all product creation and placement functions, no matter whether software, mobile communications, transport, soap, massages or burgers.

So, shaping the mix, with which marketing specialists work, depends on:

Marketing goals of a given company (e.g. releasing a new product, diversification of an existing product [cheeseburger, veggie burger, pizza burger, etc.], attracting new customers, entering foreign markets, etc.)

Product type (goods or **services**, fast-moving consumer goods [daily use, such as bread, milk, cookies, etc.]; slower-moving goods [durable goods such as bread machine, car, shoes]; business-to-business [delivery of products or professional kitchen equipment for restaurants]; or end clients [the restaurant itself, where we are served a complete dish]).

Target group being served (e.g. children, teens, adults, women or men, families, sports enthusiasts, diabetics, vegetarians, etc.)

Market structure (type and size of competing companies, substituting products and services, size and growth of demand, etc.).

Competitors behavior (larger chains prefer larger cities, McDonald's pick highways and city centers; what pricing they apply; what their delivery range is; what their target groups are; where, how and how much they advertise; etc.)

Cultural specifics – these may include predominant local religion, language, customs and holidays, eating habits (in the USA, a Christmas turkey is customary, whereas in Bulgaria the custom includes lean and meatless breads, sarmi/dolmas, which are closely connected to the agricultural traditions and products of the region), typical foods (pizza, hamburger, banitsa, kanafeh, sushi, moussaka, paella, etc.), as well as the foodstuffs, which are produced locally. For example, in Great Britain tea with milk is preferred to coffee, and the typical "local" dish is Fish & Chips, whereas in Italy the culinary and coffee culture is more sophisticated, relying on a much larger number of local producers, so giants such as Starbucks and McDonald's find it more difficult to develop their business there.)

Market positioning – through their marketing activities, companies consolidate a certain image in front of their clients (e.g. Lidl is known as a "**hard discounter**" because it aims to attract customers by offering low prices. At the same time, they have weekly discount campaigns, which doesn't mean that the chain offers low quality goods, but rather wants to position itself as close to the customer, because it has stores virtually everywhere and offers the most important goods and wares, while providing a balance between price and quality).

Product portfolio – rarely a company offers just a single good or service (even at the local market you will find various items at the same stall), so the marketing mix depends on all products that the company must place on the market.

2. MARKETING AND FOOD

When speaking about realization on the food market, we must think about something very specific. *Firstly*, food is something that we cannot live without, so we will always need to search for it (several times a day) and to buy it, but *secondly*, it is usually presented to us (mostly city folk) as fresh, packaged, semifinished or completely cooked meals. Each of these different types of food products is being offered to us in a different way – on the shelves, at the booth, on the table, and it's also differently "tasty" to us, due to the occasion. It would probably not be very romantic if we were to open a can of baked beans at a restaurant, during a first date. Oftentimes, we do not even remember what we had for dinner yesterday, because we just prepared something at home, which took a lot of time and effort, but was so "automated" that we simply perceive it as something we just ate so that we don't go to bed hungry.

It is important to state that food marketing is highly dependent on the fluidity of **trends**, as well as on the possibilities of offering a certain food product on certain markets. For example, in Bulgaria fish and seafood have experienced a growth spurt, thanks to rapid delivery from Greece, after the former country entered the European Union, and thanks to direct connections with other destinations, such as Italy, Japan and Norway, bringing not only products, but also skills for preparing the food. It is certain that you would doubt the quality of a seafood dish, prepared by a Serbian barbeque master just as much as you would doubt a pleskavica (Serbian pancake-shaped version of burger), prepared by a Greek fisherman. Why is that so? Because it is impossible for the local natural resources not to have influenced the local culinary skills and traditions.

Furthermore, increased mobility makes it possible for us to prefer to purchase prepackaged or semifinished food and to frequent restaurants, cafes and street vendors, or to simply order food online.

Regarding food and specifically – its taste, marketing activities are very intensive. Inevitably, our relatives and friends have influenced our tastes, but we are all influenced by the companies, who offer foods and beverages in various shapes and sizes. The direct link between communication (advertising) and distribution (points of sale) when it comes to food is very strong. We (especially city folk who don't grow their own food) often encounter our food in the following locations:

- Booths at the markets (the local shop or the farmers' market)
- Supermarkets and grocery stores

- Restaurants
- Street food locations (where we often find sandwiches or sliced pizza) where a relatively short menu offers specialized foods (hot-dogs, Chinese, etc.)
- Food delivery platforms (some are owned by restaurants who offer their own delivery, while others are simply intermediaries between multiple food joints and the end customers).

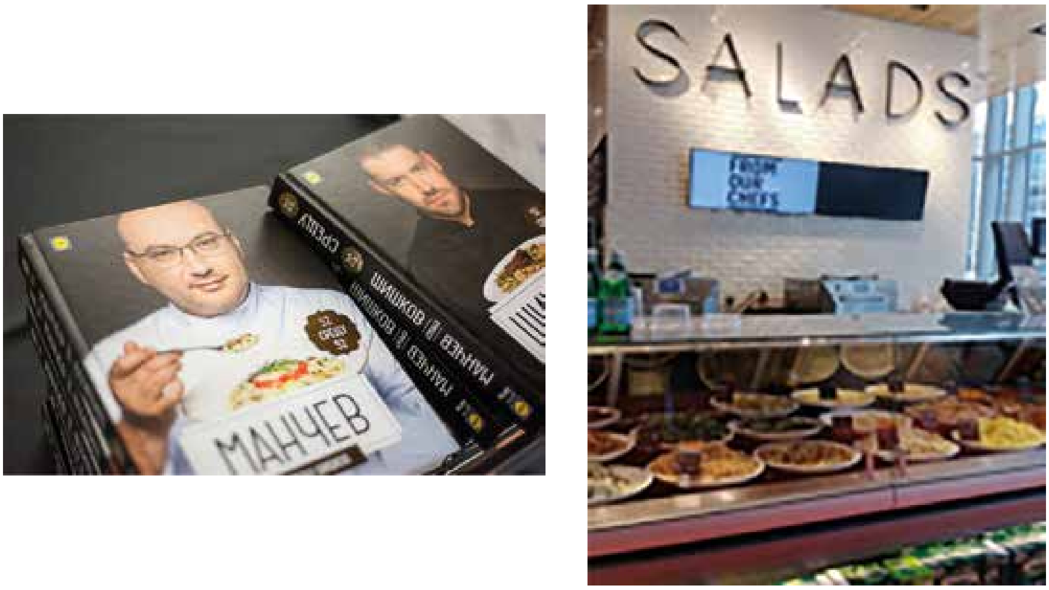


Fig. 2. Receipt and tastes communication in the form of a book (by „Shefs Manchev and Shishkov") produced by Lidl (lefthand side) and ready ot eat salads' glass-case in Lablaws, Toronto, Canada.
Images: novini.bg („The "Manchev vs. Shishkov" continues", 13.11.2015) and by the author (2017)

All the abovementioned locations have their own approach at advertising. They differ mostly based on the presence of a live salesperson, from whom you can learn more about the stuff you are interested in trying or buying, as well as on the environment where your transactions with the people and the food are taking place. Think of the waiter, who often explains details about the menu or the ingredients in a certain dish, or directly recommends a certain specialty or a very fresh dish (i.e. influences our choice); or think of the old woman, selling bunches of parsley at the open market; or of the way that a certain chef will influence our choice of restaurant.

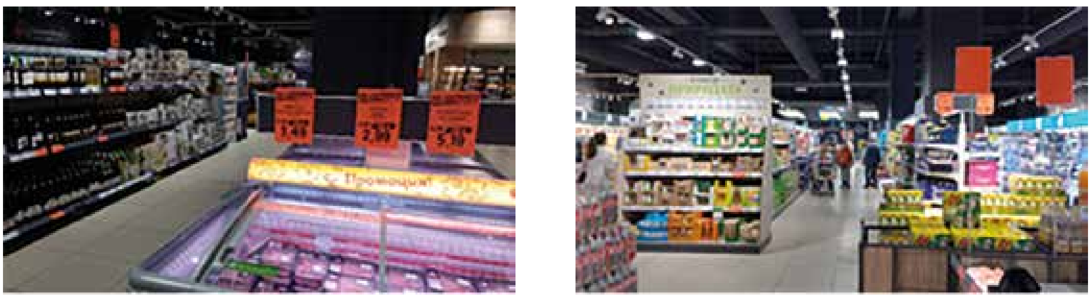


Fig. 3. The renovated interior of Lidl supermarket (Ring Mall, Sofia).
Images by the author.

Nobody will say that the food they are offering is bad, old, full of nitrates, etc. On the contrary, whether vocally, or through appetite-inducing images and text, they will tell us how fresh their offerings are, how pure and authentic, based on "traditional recipes", with a "unique flavor", "exotic", etc. Similarly, when shopping at the grocery store, our choice is influenced by TV commercials (usually sausages and meats, chicken, vegetables, spices, seafood, pasta, dairy, etc.), the posters, display placements, packaging (Fig. 3), which we encounter at the store, while we are actively looking for products ("fresh", "promo", "bio", "new", "discount"), but also by the personnel, who provide us with information. In online platforms, the human factor is almost completely absent, which turns them into a sort of colorful catalog of menus and dishes, which can be delivered to us.

3. ILLUSTRATION OF MARKETING FOR ORGANIC FOOD

When we consider the aforementioned guiding principles of marketing, we could analyze the peculiarities that arise when marketing *organic food products*. The very fact that we need to underline the difference between them and "regular" foods is already a sign that the approaches for these two product categories are different. The differences, actually, cover all aspects of all marketing activities, since the marketing mix elements generally influence one another.

As a general rule, organic products must have been manufactured (grown) under certain conditions, which will guarantee their "organic-ness", i.e. their "high quality", their "purity" and, naturally their "unique taste". At least for the time being, most widespread grocery chains prefer to work with large production volumes and with packaging which guarantees a longer shelf life, and with prices much lower than those that organic producers can offer. This is why organic products can more easily be found in specialized "bio" shops.

Before we introduce the peculiarities, it must be noted that organic foods, as a "product", did not appear on the market by accident. In the markets, where grocery stores have been offering, for decades, cheap, industrially produced food (most frequently treated with herbicides and pesticides), one can observe that this food can lead to the contradiction of effecting negatively on people's health, on the environment, in parallel with being unpleasant to consume, while available at such vast quantities that guarantee a large amount of waste. Consequently, comments from buyers, culinary experts, chefs and manufacturers, have signaled to predominantly smaller producers that organic food could present an opportunity (i.e. increase in demand). Thus, organic food has become a natural counterpoint to industrial, and often genetically modified, food. This provides an impetus to the mechanisms of the four elements of the marketing mix.

In order to correspond to its "sophisticated" image, organic food needs to be packaged in ecological, attractive and modern-looking packaging (e.g. made from recycled paper, with natural colors [green, brown, and other "earthly" colors]). Sometimes, the packaging may be completely translucent, to allow the customer to examine its contents and to enhance the perception of "freshness", but it must always present all the needed information and carry all certificates of origin. Too many technical terms on the label are not recommended – on the contrary, unclear language may act as a deterrent, against the principle of attractiveness at the point of sale.

The Pricing policy of the producers needs to take into consideration the type of products they are offering. Usually, prices are formed as a result of research, looking at how much customers would be willing to spend, which, on the other hand, is strongly affected by the economic circumstances (are people at ease regarding their jobs, their income, their expenses, etc.). This influences their choice to consume "organic" products and to observe a healthier diet altogether. Most often, advertising resources in this sector are much lower than in "regular" food trade, which does not add heft to the end price.

Naturally, prices are consistent with manufacturing expenses of the products, and with shipping and delivery expenses. Attention must be paid to the prices of "regular" products, since customers intuitively make the comparison. A study demonstrates that, in order to be effective, organic food prices must not exceed regular food prices by more than 50% - or, put more precisely, practice shows that organic foods generally keep a 10-20% overhead on regular foods, and rarely exceed 40%.

As far as distribution goes, an increasing number of large chains are joining the distribution network for organic products, since they see the increase in demand even within their own target groups. They, however, separate these products in special sectors and present them as "special" offers, seeing as these foods are different from the rest that can be found in the store. The point of sale must not be underestimated because of the customers' perception of the "authenticity", "quality" and "guarantees" of these products. Additionally, more and more web shops and platforms are shortening the distance between producer and buyer, which additionally decreases the price of the product and increases trust between both sides.

Since organic products are more attractive to the fans of "traditional" cuisine and "diet/healthy" food, more specialized advertising is needed for them (mostly highlighting authenticity and taste) and some specific promotional offers. We must not forget that the price of these products is generally higher, when they are offered in the general stores, and it needs to be justified, at least by underscoring the higher quality, as well as by bundled offers, which can increase the purchase volume, while also giving the customer the impression that he or she has received a discount. Shopping is not always driven by rational/practical reasons ("I need to feed myself today"), but on the contrary, it's connected to certain emotions. In the case of organic foods, these emotions are the customer's satisfaction, stemming from the idea that she or he will prepare a certain meal with these biologically clean, authentic and real-tasting products, and will provide a healthy and tasty meal for her or his family, while simultaneously supporting small-scale producers, who are also ecologically superior to their larger counterparts; or that the purchase of high quality products will give her or him the perception of a higher standard of life and make her or him look better in other people's eyes. Due to these reasons, very often the communication highlights the origin and authenticity of the food – posters with lush meadows are placed near the products, images of happy cows and piglets, as well as photos of traditional farms and farmers, which aim to "guarantee" the quality of the produce and the taste qualities of the food (Fig. 4).

Fig. 4. Examples for communication of organic food.
Images: foodnavigator-usa.com ("Organic Trade Association: US retail sales of organics grew 11,5% to $35.1 bn in 2013", 12.05.2014) and goodtoknow.co.uk ("What is organic food and what does organic mean? All your organic food questions answered...", 17.09.2018).

The media, where we can see adverts for organic foods, are generally all known media – newspapers, magazines, posters, TV spots, radio, Internet. However, it's not direct advertising that is most effective here, but rather information, delivered as an article, analysis or interview with a professional chef, sports person, nutritionist or farmer. This is due to the fact that this manner of advertising does not annoy, while people are more inclined to pay attention and to trust experts, or at least people who present themselves as "experts". We should not exclude personal recommendation from other users of organic products, which can be encountered in forums, on social media and in different blogs. The power of this approach has proven to be great, especially when keeping in mind the conflicting opinions, which have become so turbulent online, ever since organic farming and veganism became more mainstream. For the abovementioned target groups, interested in organic foods, it is important that the benefits of these products are highlighted, as well as their specific properties, which give them advantage when compared to regular products; also, it is useful to underline their quality standards and the overall guarantee that these users are buying genuine organic products.

The challenges in the marketing of organic foods come from some barriers existing in especially developed markets, which can interfere with their growth. Experts in the field see such barriers in the lack of willingness in many producers to become better informed about the specifics and processes typical for organic agriculture, but also in the lack of financing, which is needed in the starting cycles of transforming from industrial to organic production, which can be very expensive, and thus – not especially attractive.

Additionally, distribution is causing problems, since organic products are not as durable and it is almost impossible to ship them across great distances, plus they have a shorter shelf life. For large chains it is often unprofitable to support low quantities from multiple small producers, which can complicate distribution and add weight to the end price.

Last, but not least, society, which is composed of buyers of organic foods, should become much better informed by independent organizations and state bodies regarding the advantages of consuming such products, and quality standards for the delivered food should be observed closely.

Food marketing and communication in self-service stores

Maurilio Caracci

To be successful on the market, marketing managers must make important decisions about which products to market, at what price, how to communicate them and where to sell them. In this chapter, we will analyze some unconventional communication methods in the field of Large Distribution and Organized Distribution because this channel, despite frequent and substantial changes, assumes a very great importance for sales in the food sector. Sales of food products are growing in the GDO channel in almost all European countries, while approaching a possible saturation phase, combining sales growth with decreasing operating returns.

The market share of the large-scale retail trade underwent a strong increase in the first years of the millennium, reaching 62% of the total market for edible food products in 2011, compared to 44% in 2000. The aggregate revenues of the eighteen main international groups in 2017 amounted to 1,258 billion euros, up 3.3% from 2016. According to the major international operators, the share referable to e-commerce is still marginal and could still be around 4-5%.

In Italy in particular, according to an updated study conducted by Mediobanca, the aggregate turnover of the major operators of the Italian GDO, representing 97% of the national GDO market, stood at 83 billion euros in 2017 (net of VAT), marking an increase of 4.4% on 2016. This is the largest growth since 2014. However, it has been noted that this increase has been recorded above all in the discount chains. The growth recorded in the non-discount supermarket chains was less significant.

1. OBJECTIVES

We will present some marketing and communication techniques that can be implemented in favor of agri-food products to optimize sales focusing on the aspects that concern the "staging" of food products in large self-service sales areas.

In these points of sale, customers are free to move as they like. They are free to interact with the goods, to read the labels, to evaluate and compare prices and promotions of products belonging to the same family, or satisfying the same need, to the point of defining a trolley consistent with their spending budget.

The trolley will include products that shoppers had already decided to buy before the visit (programmed purchase products) and products whose purchase decision has matured within the supermarket (impulse purchase products).

Supermarket operators have less direct influence on the consumers compared to traditional retailers, but they still have many indirect ways of influencing purchase choices, guiding them towards products with a higher margin or to get rid of, for example because they are present in large stocks, or seasonal, or close to the expiry date.

This chapter focuses on these techniques.

We will ask ourselves how the manager of the GDO can act to achieve his business objectives in the food category through communication techniques. Since we will focus on indirect communication methods, which therefore do not involve personal interaction with the customer, we will not deal with that broad category of persuasive techniques that are exercised on physically present and interacting subjects, for example during the sale of a product or during a commercial negotiation.

Specifically, the cognitive question is:

What marketing and communication "levers" can be activated to create value for the customer, to contribute to the correct expression of the company's positioning and to orient and increase sales in the food sector of the large-scale retail trade, achieving its economic objectives?

This management approach assumes that the food category is identified as a real Strategic Business Area (SBA), within which to build a category marketing plan.

2. COMBINING DIFFERENT FOOD MARKETING ACTIONS IN SELF-SERVICE STORES

The self-service stores managers can implement a mix of strategically conceived marketing and communication actions. These must be considered as real decision variables for the manager of the GDO, defined one by one, harmonized with each other and consistent with the positioning of the supermarket brand. The final goal of these activities is to enhance the offer of products in the "grocery" and "fresh" areas of the supermarket and maximize their sales.

From the point of view of managers of companies in the retail sector, the design of sales spaces requires greater transversal skills that involve not only the economic aspects, but also architecture, painting, psychology, sociology and semiotics. We will understand this concept better if we consider the pragmatic aspects of communication which, in this context, will be defined as the intentional emission of planned messages "capable of sharing certain meanings on the basis of symbolic and conventional systems of signification and signaling, according to the culture of reference". When we talk about pragmatic communication, we refer to a type of communication developed with the conscious purpose of exercising an influence on the recipients. McCarthy (1998) determined the mix of marketing communications as a specific combination of elements: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct marketing that companies use to implement their targets for advertising and marketing.

We will not consider communication in the food sector as an independent variable, but we will place it in a wider decision-making framework that can be adopted by the retail manager, which includes:

- Assortment of products
- Price scale and promotional pressure
- Sensory levers and visual merchandising

3. ASSORTMENT

Assortment is one of the marketing levers included in the retail manager's decision-making set. It can significantly influence food purchases. Assortment can be "specialized", if it includes only fresh foods, such as fruit and vegetables, bread and pastries, fish etc., but in most supermarkets it also includes various goods such as oil, flour, pasta, preserves, drinks, snacks, tea and coffee, house cleaning products and toiletries. Larger stores add non-food products, such as textiles, gardening, electronics etc.

A master grocery list that includes these different categories could be structured as follows:

- Edible products
  - Fruit
  - Vegetables
  - Meat
  - Seafood
  - Frozen
  - Bakery
  - Baking
  - Snacks

- Pasta & Rice
- Cans & Jars
- Refrigerated
- Seasoning
- Sauces & condiments
- Drinks

- Non-edible products
  - Baby
  - Pets
  - Personal care
  - Cleaning
  - Paper products
  - Misc. items

Within each category, families and subfamilies are identified.

The assortment is the key element in managing the offer of a store in quantity and quality.

There must be consistency in terms of communication between the image of the supermarket, the assortment and how it is arranged or enhanced within the store. In terms of food, it is necessary to determine what importance needs to be given to this sector compared to the total assortment, and also where to place it within the store so as to give it greater or lesser emphasis. For example, the manager could focus on a particular group or family of products, such as ready meals if the supermarket is in a business district, or fruit and vegetables if he is able to offer good quality at good prices for this group of products.

Each product family satisfies a need. Having an assortment rich in width and depth means being able to satisfy a greater number of different needs, but it requires more space and represents a higher cost in terms of economic and managerial resources. A balance should be found. For example, the yogurt family is included in the "refrigerated" category. Having a wide and deep assortment means satisfying many specific needs, for example low-fat yogurt vs. creamy, white vs. fruit, with or without lactose, in twin pack vs. multipacks; but also, for each specific need, to have a greater or lesser number of brands on the shelf.

The assortment can be considered a real communication act and determines (and is determined by) the strategic choices of the brand. A distribution company that wants to enhance the food area will have to make decisions, also based on the following parameters:

- Brand mission
- Brand image
- Market situation, in particular
  - number of suppliers
  - concentration of supply
  - range and trend of expected demand

The distributor will have to build its own assortment by first defining what the width of the food (and in particular of fresh products) area inside the store will be. Given the short amount of time spent in the consumer's home, fresh products (bread, fresh milk, meat etc.) are one of the main determinants of the frequency of visits.

Then, having chosen the number of edible products compared to the total number of references, it will be necessary to choose the breadth and depth of assortment in each category, family and subfamily of products.

Another typical strategic categorization of products divides up products as follows:

- Leaders, i.e. the most popular products, those which have the largest market share in their segment
- Low price, which include the cheapest products, target a price-conscious consumer and generate a high volume of sales
- Private labels, created by the manufacturer himself, to support the brand image and increase profitability
- National / regional, which rely on the reputation of the manufacturer in a given area and benefit from a strong quality image.

The following table summarizes the contributions of each of these product groups to the store's turnover and the commercial margin:

Product type	**Contribution to store turnover**	**Contribution to store commercial margin**
Leader	Strong	Weak
National/regional	Medium/weak	Medium
Low price	Strong /medium	Weak /medium
Private label	Medium	Strong

For each subfamily there should be one or more references representing the group (Leader, N / R, LP, PL). But this criterion is not enough. In general, the stronger the demand for a certain product family (in other words the higher the potential turnover generated), the larger the coverage of needs and the choice proposed to the consumer.

In other words, the VA / REF ratio should tend to unity, where:

- VA is the percentage of sales volume (in value) of a given family compared to the global sales volume (in value) of the brand
- REF is the percentage of sales volume (in quantity) of a given family compared to the total sales volume of the brand (in quantity).

However if you settle on this criterion alone, you do not take into account new consumption trends and you risk going out of business. If the consumption of a specific product, a subfamily or family of products tends to grow or decrease as a result of a market trend, the store must be found ready to meet new consumer demands.

4. PRICE RANGE AND PROMOTIONAL PRESSURE

Retailers will choose their own assortment in line with the market in which they operate and the chosen positioning. Retail spaces are limited. Furthermore, the wider and deeper the assortment, the higher the management costs. Two aspects to be considered in this choice of products are the price range in which they are placed and the level of promotional pressure: how many and which products, compared to the total assortment, will promote the supermarket image of convenience?

The price structure proposed for each family or subfamily of products must consider the number of references on sale, the breadth of the price range and the average price. In general, the larger the area, the greater the number of references per family and the size of the price range. However, it could happen that there are "holes" in the price range leaving areas of supply uncovered.

For example, if 6 extra virgin olive oils are on sale and this is the price range:

E. V. Olive Oil 1 (low price)	3.8 €/liter
E. V. Olive Oil 2	4.2 €/liter
E. V. Olive Oil 3 (private label)	4.2 €/liter
E. V. Olive Oil 4 (leader)	4.5 €/liter
E. V. Olive Oil 5 (premium price)	7.9 €/liter

You can observe that there is a significant difference between the average (4.92 euros) and the median (4.20 euros) of prices. A more accurate analysis shows a significant "jump" between the fourth and fifth price.

Smaller supermarkets, depending on their strategic positioning, may have fewer references in a category (unless they choose to have a specialization in that category) and will be able to choose a high price positioning (for example, prices between 4.5 and 9 euros / liter), medium (for example prices between 4.2 and 6 euros / liter) or low range (for example prices between 3.5 and 4.5 euros / liter).

Another factor of great importance in the management of the retail "marketing mix" is the promotional policy. You can choose an "every day low price" policy or schedule promotions of limited duration. In any case, from a strictly communicative point of view, the number and type of products on promotion, and the frequency of promotions will show a very precise image strategy in the eyes of consumers. This type of communication can be implemented both outside the store (for example through flyers, billboards and banners), and internally, giving great emphasis to products in promotion through stoppers, placing them in the end-cap displays or in queuing areas (cash register barrier, assisted service areas).

A check of the price differences with any direct competitors and the performances of the categories, families, subfamilies and individual brands to compare them with the relative developments of the markets and micro markets, will highlight any errors in the assortment or in the prices offered.

5. SENSORY LEVERS

The sensory levers are powerful tools for theming and theatralizing the offer, characterizing the store and increasing turnover.

The sound environment, according to numerous studies, would influence purchases for various reasons. First of all, ambient music cancels silence, which is synonymous with “absence”, “emptiness”. For example, in western culture, the minute of silence is a ritual usually associated with pain and mourning. Silence is unacceptable because it is not an explicit form of communication. Ambient music also makes customers more cheerful. However, if the music is known to customers, it interferes with impulse purchases because it evokes images of singers, video clips and adverts whose recall in memory interferes with the act of purchase.

Music can have the effect of drawing attention to some brands or categories of products, food in our case, and can change the perception of time spent in the store. During a scientific experiment it was shown that there is a significant relationship between the geographical origin of the music played in the sales area and the choice of products. Customers purchased more French wines if French music was broadcast and more German wines if German music was broadcast. The researchers concluded that the geographical origin of music can activate thoughts that are related to a particular country and influence individual choices.

Other research shows that consumers have the impression of spending more time in the store or waiting at the checkouts if they listen to known, appreciated or slow-paced music, as long as it is associated with a visually stimulating environment. Retailers usually prefer to minimize the perception of time spent in the store and, in particular, to cash desks. The time spent in the place of purchase or consumption, for example the restaurant, is influenced by the time of the music, as the heartbeat naturally adapts to the rhythm of the music. Customers have been shown to move faster in a supermarket and spend less time in a restaurant where music is played at a faster pace.

The smells widespread in supermarkets are very important, for example in the gastronomy (roast chicken, ready meals etc.), dessert or fishmongers counters, or where food tastings are organized. Research carried out on Hollywood mint chewing gum has shown that the presence of mint smells in the sales area has increased sales between 10% and 25%. The presence of aromas can attract attention to products and departments and improve environmental comfort. Given the specificity of the olfactory memory, a food store, as well as a food sector company, can find in a specific smell an important means of evoking the brand and its identity, without making any use of other signs. Who does not remember the smells of old delicatessens or bakeries frequented when he was a child?

The management of the aspects of light and color performs the function of stimulating attention, attraction, well-being and congruence. Since the dawn of consumer society, light has played a significant role. Starting around 1850, it was possible to produce larger shop windows. Moreover, in that period, mirrors were added to amplify the spectacular effect, give greater prominence to merchandise and attract the attention of passers-by. Shop windows were used as if they were a theater stage on which a show could be performed, with the passers-by as the audience.

Today, with the help of new technologies that allow you to change intensity, color and even program different lighting scenarios according to the occasions, seasons and hours of the day, it is possible to determine a true reference map for the customer, influencing cognitive processes and determining correct symbolic associations.

A supermarket can be illuminated following a general criterion for the self-service area, with high efficiency lighting bodies preferably positioned perpendicular to the shelves. The presentation of certain products, promotions or tasting counters can be enhanced through pendant lights or spotlights on tracks. Different techniques can be used for assisted service areas, for fresh products in general and in particular for dairy products, bread and fish. The appearance of products can vary considerably depending on the type of lamps used. As an indication, warm shades are recommended for the bakery, that is, color temperatures located between 2,700 and 3,000 K; for meat, fruit and vegetables or dairy products, it is better to use intermediate, neutral shades, between 4,000 and 5,000 K, such as neon or fluorescent lamps, and colder shades still for seafood. One need only go to any traditional market, bakery or grocery store, to understand how these indications have long been known and do not constitute a surprise. For example, cold shades give the fish a particular brightness, especially if abundantly sprayed with water and ice. In any case, the use of filters or colored lights, which distorts the appearance of the products, should be avoided.

Warm colors stimulate consumers, make them more active, curious and spontaneous. Their perceptions (positive or negative) will be reinforced. On the contrary, cold colors make the consumer more relaxed, calm, but at the same time less attentive to commercial offers.

Finally, for the aspects relating to tactile sensations, reference is made to contact with the products on sale. This aspect continues to be the real strength of physical stores compared to online sales, together with total immersion in an environment where it is possible to live sensorially and relationally satisfying experiences. In addition to the possibility of coming into contact with packaged or bulk products to be purchased, perceiving their size, weight, consistency, freshness, degree of maturation, the customer experiences a physical relationship with the store itself and its materials and equipment. Thermal and hydrometric variations can be perceived when entering the dairy or frozen products department. The consumer will be, or will not be, in a situation of physical comfort that will interact with his trust in the seller and in his ability to better preserve the products with the most up-to-date equipment, allowing him to correctly decode the prices, the offers and providing him with all the facilities to move without hindrance in the sales area.

All these factors facilitate a sense of generalized pleasure in individuals who require more and more products and places capable of communicating with their physicality. This change of vision has been caused largely by the progressive abandonment of the negative conception of the body and by the reassessment of pleasure of senses without self-reproach or feelings of guilt.

The communicative message thus breaks down into stimuli perceivable by the different senses, which act on the rational and emotional sphere of the customer to transform the intention in the act of purchase and the purchasing process into a consumer experience.

FOCUS 1

Basic classification of food sales areas

When classifying food sales areas, they can be divided on the basis of various variables. For example, if the buyer purchases the products for immediate or for delayed consumption. This is the first hierarchical level, identifying the two macrosectors of “out of home” consumption (such as bars, kiosks, petrol stations’ forecourts stores, vending machines and HO.RE.CA (hotels, restaurants and catering), and “in home” use. The latter can be divided into Modern Grocery Distribution (MGD), traditional grocery distribution, and specialist retail outlets (mostly nongrocery).
MGD includes all self-service channels, ranging from hypermarkets and superstores to supermarkets, superettes, and mini- and micromarkets. This classification is normally linked to the store sales surface and the merchandise on sale. A simple classification of sales areas has been proposed by the research company Nielsen:

- Hypermarkets: sales area from 2.500 sqm
- Superstores: sales area from 1500 to 2499 sqm
- Supermarkets: sales area from 400 to 1499 sqm
- Superette: sales area from 200 to 399 sqm

▪ Mini- and micromarkets: sales area from 100 to 199 sqm. The nongrocery offering is normally very limited in superstores and smaller stores, while hypermarkets also sell houseware, textiles, consumer electronics, domestic appliances, and car accessories.
The same food product may be sold in different stores, which will most likely also differ in the degree of assistance provided to the customer. In fact, in small areas there will be less competition from alternative products and greater assistance from the sales force (assisted service areas). The larger the sales area however, the greater the degree of freedom that the consumer will have in determining his choices (self-service areas), being influenced by factors such as packaging, shelf position, and number of products.

FOCUS 2PHERE AS A MARKETING TOOL

Philip Kotler: the origins of store atmosphere as a marketing tool

Kotler was the first scholar to understand the importance of a correct organization of the place of purchase and place of consumption:
In many areas of marketing in the future, marketing planners will use spatial aesthetics as consciously and skillfully as they now use price, advertising, personal selling, public relations, and other tools of marketing. We shall use the term atmospherics to describe the conscious designing of space to create certain effects in buyers. More specifically, atmospherics is the effort to design buying environments to produce specific emotional effects in the buyer that enhance his purchase probability.
Anticipating the future paradigm of sensory marketing, Kotler notes that the store atmosphere can be perceived through senses, identifying the key senses as being sight, hearing, smell and touch. In particular, he mentions the most relevant dimensions of each of the senses involved. As for the view, he mentions: color, brightness, size, shape. The main aural dimensions of an atmosphere are volume and pitch. The main olfactory dimensions of an atmosphere are scent and freshness. And the main tactile dimensions of an atmosphere are softness, smoothness and temperature.
The sense of taste is not considered by the Author, because:
An atmosphere is seen, heard, smelled, and felt, but not tasted. At the same time, certain artifacts in an atmosphere can activate remembered tastes.
However, taste plays an important role in modern sensory marketing strategies, in particular as regards food, since

the tastings offered in the stores can encourage the purchase of products, that are new, that have a premium price point, are on offer or are brands that are less well known. Kotler hypothesizes how the atmosphere influences purchasing behavior:

The purchase object is nested in a space characterized by certain sensory qualities. These sensory qualities may be intrinsic to the space or may be designed into the space by the seller. Each buyer perceives only certain qualities of this space. His perception is subject to selective attention, distortion, and retention. The perceived qualities of the atmosphere can affect the person's information and affective state. The buyer's modified information and affective state may increase his purchase probability.

This concept is synthesized in the following diagram:

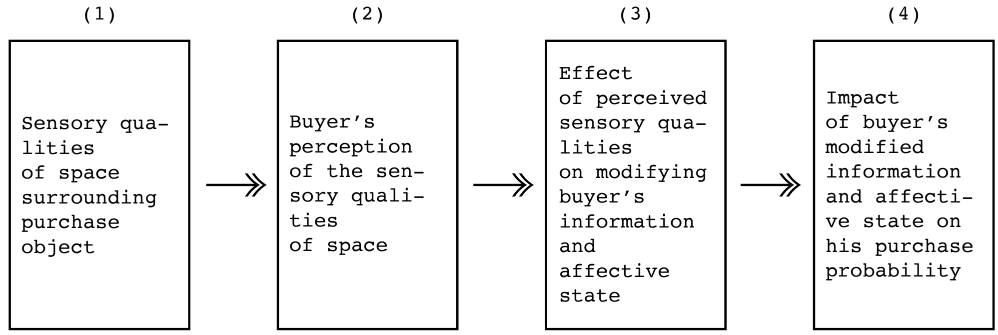


Diagram. 1. The casual chain connecting atmosphere and purchase probability

Other authors have expanded Kotler's initial idea, including through studies in environmental psychology, and have considered how the store atmosphere is able to determine the emotional state and, therefore, the purchasing behavior of the customer.

SEZIONE V

ETHICS AND POLITICS

Dietetics and Food Regimens

Ilaria Ventura Bordenca

1. FROM DIET TO DIETETICS

When we think of slimming diets, some of the first things that come to mind are smaller portion sizes, limiting **calorie** intake, giving up the tastiest foods, following particular instructions, manuals, regular checks, regular weigh-ins and everything else associated with **slimming diets**. Recently, the notion of diet has expanded to include food intolerances (to gluten, lactose and other substances) and a controlled food intake for health reasons (for example, people with cardiovascular problems must follow a very specific diet). The word 'diet' tends to bring to mind the idea of control over our bodies, guided by other people such as doctors, nutritionists, dieticians, personal trainers and so on, all professionals recognised as experts in health and the human **body**.

In truth, the word 'diet' means something else entirely. Its etymology dates back to the Ancient Greek word '*diaitìa*', meaning 'a way of living, daily habits' and therefore involving not only food, but all of the activities involving the body, such as sleeping, eating, drinking, physical exercise and sexual activity. For the Ancient Greeks, eating was just one of the different everyday actions that, together, constituted a 'diaitìa'. This concept helped people to take care of themselves as a human being and a citizen.

The term 'diet' should therefore not only be understood in the restricted sense of a programme for weight loss – which is nevertheless one of its very important meanings with many significant practical consequences – but more generally as *a way of living, a lifestyle that affects our food choices but not only*. Take, for example, vegetarian or vegan diets. The abstention from eating foods of animal origin is certainly not a diet in the strict sense of eliminating certain foods, but depends on ethical motivations that reflect the individual's values (respect for animals, for the environment and so on), their way of thinking. In this case, what to eat or not eat is chosen on the basis of ethical and even political principles. Furthermore, the choice to be a vegan affects decisions regarding clothing (no leather is permitted), cosmetics and even home decoration, as products suitable for vegans must be made without the use of any animal-derived substances and must not be the result of the mistreatment of animals. There are also many religions that place restrictions on, or ban certain foods: foods that are always forbidden, foods that are forbidden at certain times because they are associated with religious celebrations or rituals, foods that are allowed in certain conditions, and so on. In these cases the elimination of specific foods or the insertion of foods with particular characteristics also constitutes a *dietetics* because it is based on a selection of foods based on religious or spiritual principles.

Over recent years, the Mediterranean diet (v. cap. xxx) has been hailed by the Western world as the best one available. It is not a diet in a strict sense, based on restrictions and sacrifice, but a dietetics in a broader sense with its variety of foods, combination of ingredients, recipes, kitchen tools, all of which also reflect a particular culture and its history. It is therefore much more than a simple list of prime materials. Rather, it is a real way of eating and living. So we need to think of a diet as something broader. Diets are systems of food selection, perspectives on the totality of foods. Even the slimming diet, in its strict sense, is not simply a list of foods that are permitted or forbidden, but involves cooking techniques (some are banned, such as frying, others preferred, like boiling or steaming), ways of shopping, a particular choice of raw materials or restaurant, information on the food's origin, and other actions that do not strictly fall within the field of food and gastronomy, such as general care for the body, one's own fitness (i.e. the gym), how one dresses, reading choices and favourite films and so on.

We can therefore think of diets as **regimens of meaning**, in which the term 'regimen' refers to a particular system governing our choices, not necessarily rules imposed by an external other but a general collection of criteria that guides our lives, from eating to walking, from sleeping to choosing a film to watch at the cinema. 'Meaning' here refers to everything these choices signify to us and in society. For example, if I begin a slimming diet I choose to change my life goals entirely. I will think of food as a total of calories, my day will be punctuated by meals assigned by the dietician, I will be governed by periodic checks, I will evaluate my weight loss and my capacity for continuing this dietetic programme, whether I am tenacious or not, whether or not I am capable of resisting temptation and so on. Furthermore, being on a diet will mean a change in the way I shop, in my decisions about what to cook each day, perhaps involving my relatives, who might join me or not, and it will certainly influence my life outside the house. Similarly, if I decide to convert to vegetarianism, this will revolutionise what I usually buy, what I keep in my store cupboard and the various daily meals. It might lead me to introduce new ingredients (for example, tofu and tempeh, usually used as substitutes for meat and cheese in vegetarian and vegan diets, are not well known in the Mediterranean diet), but it will also cause me to change the way I see the world, the way I make choices regarding my social or work life, the way I interact with different associations, groups, and so on.

In short, being on a diet is a way of being in the world, a way of choosing, ruling out, prohibiting foods. It is a mental and cultural filter based on criteria that can be social, aesthetic, medical, political, ethical or religious, which gives form and meaning to what we eat, and in doing so contributes to the construction of our identity, our belonging to a social group or our bond with a particular community or culture.

So, whilst we usually think of a diet as something temporary, out of the ordinary, something we follow for a certain period of time in order to achieve a particular goal (weight loss), or as a style that is different from the mainstream (like certain extreme dietetics, such as fruitarians who only eat fruit, or respirians who aspire to free themselves entirely of food), in truth we are always within some form of diet because dietetics refers to the relationship between food choices and ways of living. Food choices are only one part of these ways of living, but they contribute to the way in which they are defined.

2. DIETETICS THROUGH HISTORY

In ancient times the concept of diet was different to today's, because it was a part of a more comprehensive whole regarding the individual and their actions. In Ancient Greece, the citizen of the *polis* was expected to take rational care of their own body, without subjecting themselves to a restrictive food regimen or an externally imposed one. It was sufficient to eat and drink with moderation, to feed oneself without excess of any kind (neither too much nor too little) in order to achieve the physical wellbeing that was the key to general wellbeing. Eating moderately and taking care of your body in a balanced way made you both healthy and a good citizen, as diet and civil life were considered to be two sides of the same coin. Similarly, even in modern times respected men were not to impose too many food rules on themselves, nor were they allowed to eat to excess. The English gentleman of the 18th century, for example, was a public man who, precisely because he had to set an example, ate and drank with moderation. He was expected to demonstrate his own moral standing but avoid too many sacrifices. For instance, he was not allowed to follow strange ascetic practices that would have caused him to become weak and thus have a negative impact on his active life (Fig. x-x-x).

Fig. 1. Unknown Artist, Interior of a London coffee house, 1690-1700 ca., London, The British Museum. English gentlemen and intellectuals, towards the end of the 17th century, depicted as they drink coffee, smoke, read newspapers and debate. The coffee houses were public spaces visited by men at that time in order to discuss politics, art and science. These places were central to the affirmation and circulation of ideas during the Enlightenment, in which culture, political involvement and socialising went hand in hand.

That which the ancient and modern understanding of dietetics have in common is, first and foremost, the value of *measure*, the fact that they always strived for, and showed themselves publicly to be, balanced, as excesses (too much or too little) were a sign of inadequate moral fibre or an inability to be a good citizen. Secondly, the link between dietetics and the subject's moral qualities was explicit. Thirdly, self-regulation, the capacity to decide for oneself without turning to external orders given by others was fundamental. In the modern era, no one could tell a gentlemen or a wise man what and how much to eat. He was considered his own doctor because he knew his own body better than anyone else. Indeed, the gentleman had the right to ignore the advice of his own doctor, and to even disagree with him. This is because medicine as a structured science had not, at the time, yet reached the rank of indisputable scientific expertise. Today, on the contrary, dietetics is dominated by a vision that is scientific and closely linked to the physiological and quantifiable aspects of eating.

Fig. 2. Johannes Eckstein, John Freete and His Circle, 1792, Birmingham, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. A political meeting held in a Birmingham tavern in the late 1700s. The protagonists of both paintings (here and above) are not shown eating or stuffing themselves at banquets, as happens in many paintings depicting the lavish dinners enjoyed by the rich and noble. The true nobleman shows himself to be virtuous when he is in company, but nor is he ascetic, unable to enjoy worldly pleasures. Indeed, as we see here, the men are shown drinking and smoking whilst absorbed in other activities.

The self-regulation typical of ancient and modern dietetics is a long way from our contemporary reality, in which people are unable to set themselves rules and risk falling into excess: obesity, unregulated eating, junk food, eating disorders of all kinds including orthorexia (a form of neurosis that provokes an excessive control over eating and an obsessive search for healthy food) and so on.

The media provides a clear representation of this process of dietetics becoming more scientific: television programmes, videos online and on social media, newspapers that focus on wellbeing and health all offer advice on how to eat healthily, providing information on various slimming diets, presenting the results of new scientific studies on the effects of a particular food or its components on our body, illustrating how muscles and organs work during physical exercise and so on. What's more, the trend of paying attention to food labels and nutritional tables, and therefore to the invisible content of food and its potential effects on health, is prevalent among consumers. In recent years, with increasing frequency in the wealthiest parts of the world, institutions and associations run programmes on health and food education that teach children, young people and parents how to eat well. What does 'eating well' mean today? Where can individuals acquire knowledge about their own body and about what is necessary for their own wellbeing? They acquire it from medicine, from biology, from chemistry, from specialist knowledge. Our culture considers these fields to be exact and indisputable sources because of their physiological and quantitative basis. As such, care for the body is no longer the responsibility of the subject themselves but is delegated to experts and, more generally, to science.

An essential characteristic of today's dietetic is, in fact, that its basis is entirely scientific, based in particular on *nutritionism*, an ideology that brings together medicine, food science and the needs of food industry.

3. NUTRITIONISM

The idea of nutritionism is that eating well means eating well *biologically*, paying attention to what foods are made up of (protein, carbohydrates, fats, vitamins, etc.) and the energy they provide (calories). It is a concept developed over the last century, becoming established in the post-war period thanks to the expansion of the mass food market, the improvement of living standards in the Western world, and the development of the food industry. The principles of nutritionism were able to be economically exploited by the food industry, as it was possible to modify, add or eliminate any given nutrient from any food. Advertising also played a fundamental role in communicating this (a sector that, in the meantime, was growing in importance because of the increasingly competitive market and the improving quality of products). In a Europe that had just been ravaged by war, the nutritional value of foods was considered fundamental, so anything a food product contained that could strengthen the bodies of adults and children had to undoubtedly be promoted, advertised. It is within this context that nutritionism takes root and spreads, helping to modify the very way in which food is conceived (figs x-x).

With its focus on food's chemical and physical makeup, nutritionism has given rise to a completely new way of viewing food, on the basis of which nutritional value and energy content are more important than the food's taste, despite it being a product with its own organoleptic and sensory qualities, as well as its own history and cultural identity [see the chapters xxx xxx]. Thus food becomes the simple intake of nutrients. For example, bread and pasta are thought of as carbohydrates, eggs as protein and fats, vegetables as fibre and water, and so on. A new way of classifying food is born that we find normal today because it is so widespread, and has become a part of most people's basic knowledge. This does not mean that foods have lost their identity or their value. It means that the traditional way of viewing food is now combined with science, so the composition of the food we eat is viewed with regards to the effect it has on our physical health. If, as we have seen, in past interpretations of dietetics it was the individual's connection with morality and their civil qualities that dominated, today it is health and the body's wellbeing. Choosing what to eat and what not to eat means taking care of one's own body, but in a different way to the past: not so much in order to become a better person but to be better physically and stay healthy. These changes in the way we think about what we eat demonstrate the importance of cultural, social and historical changes in the field of dietetics, food and cookery in general. And they confirm what we said at the beginning of this chapter, namely that food choices carry social and cultural meaning, and are in no way neutral.

Fig. 3. Fig. x – Advert from the 1940s promoting donuts with added vitamins for children, made by the American company the Doughnut Corporation of America.
This advert is perfectly representative of the industrial logic of nutritionism, which not only gives importance to the substances the food contains, but adds them during the factory production process and then promotes them through advertising. In this case, as we see, it is not the donuts' taste that is promoted but their capacity to improve the energy levels of young consumers. The idea of food as fuel.

Fig. 4. The box of one of Kellogg's latest cereals places the nutritional table in the foreground, indicating its calorie content and that of other nutrients. It also specifically indicates its suitability for a female consumer due to its addition of other substances (iron, vitamin D, protein). Despite the distance in time between the two products, and the difference in the type of food, the basic logic of nutrionism remains the same, presenting the foods from the perspective of their nutritional value.

The consolidation of nutritionism has brought with it a scientific way of viewing food, a socio-cultural phenomenon that is specific to our time.

All of this has had several consequences on people's diets, as certain foods are preferred to others because they are thought to be either more healthy or less harmful. But even more importantly, within the nutritionist paradigm we find differences in whether foods are considered healthy or unhealthy according to the dominant scientific theory of the time.

Take Coca-Cola. Invented as a digestive tonic by a pharmacist at the end of the 1800s, it was presented for a long time as an invigorating drink with restorative properties, an ability to cure ailments such as headaches (fig. x), even considered suitable for athletes (fig. x). Then, over the course of time, it came to be considered as a drink that was bad for your health, something to drink in moderation or to eliminate altogether due to its high levels of sugar and caffeine. Today, therefore, Coca-Cola have modified their products, offering versions of the drink without sugar or with reduced sugar, or without caffeine, even launching a line of plant-based drinks featuring oats, rice, almonds and so on (fig. xxx).

Something similar has happened in the sector of children's food. In today's society, in which obesity has become an emergency, parents and food producers have grown more aware of the nutritional values and calorie content of those foods sold for the youngest consumers. If up until a few years ago you could sell snacks and also pasta, yogurt and milk with added sugars, containing lots of butter, eggs or other fatty ingredients, today we tend to move in the opposite direction to reduce the use of those kinds of substances believed to be potentially damaging to children. Consequently, adverts for baby food have adapted, promoting precisely that which their products *do not contain* (fig. x), according to the dominant ideology or dietetic fashion of the time (see the focus on the fashion for gluten-free food).

Fig. 5. Advert for Coca-Cola (late 1800s). Coca-Cola was an invigorating drink that alleviated many physical ailments, and was therefore treated in the same way as a drug. This is because the criteria establishing what constituted a drug was very different then to that used today.

Fig. 6. Advert for Coca-Cola from 1909, dedicated to Bobby Walthour, a famous American cyclist of the era. Precisely because of its refreshing and invigorating qualities, it was considered a drink that would even enhance sports skills.

Fig. 7. There is no longer just one Coca-Cola but different versions with varying amounts of sugar, in response to the new demands of consumers who are careful about what they drink and, more generally, want to ride the current health-conscious wave.

Fig. 8. Moving in the same direction, in 2018 Coca-Cola launched Adez in Europe, a line of plant-based drinks (rice, oat, soy, coconut, etc.), suitable also for vegans and vegetarians. On the label we see 'Lactose-Free' and 'No added sugar'. 'Free (from)' seems to be one of the communicative trends of the moment.

Let's look at other examples. Scientists have long demonised fats, but today they tend to differentiate between the types of fat. And so, after being considered a food that was very fatty and one to be avoided, the avocado has today been re-evaluated as a food rich in 'good' fats that can be incorporated into a balanced diet. Similarly, proteins tend to be preferred in contemporary dietetics because they provide strength, muscle mass, tone and are therefore in line with the main health-conscious values of time: being physically slim and in good cardio-vascular health. However, these must be proteins with a low fat level, so it's a yes to turkey and a no to bacon, yes to egg whites but no to the yolks. Even carbohydrates, once a fundamental component of a daily diet, are now consumed in moderation, with their simple versions, found in fruit and vegetables, preferred to those found in bread and pasta.

Fig. 9. A few examples of baby food boxes that highlight what the product does not contain, as it is considered a substance to avoid at this particular moment in time ("without palm oil", "without milk", "without artificial colours").

Fig. 10. Here are a number of foods usually considered junk food (sauces, ice cream, snacks, ready meals etc.) that are adapting to the health-conscious trend and use their labels to declare the ingredients they do not contain because considered dangerous. While this is important and useful for those who are actually intolerant, it is, however, a generalised trend that has now become a standard in food communication, a sort of rhetoric of 'without' (how important it is to state what the product does not contain), which we can consider another characteristic of contemporary dietetic culture

FOCUS1

Slimming Diets: A Contemporary Phenomenon

Slimming diets are a contemporary phenomenon, because they reflect the canons of beauty that require one to be toned and slim. But this has not always been the aesthetic standard. Not only has the collection of ideas that give us dietetics changed over time, the values of aesthetic standards have also mutated. Indeed, until the modern age, the notion of 'fat' was a predominantly positive one, both with regards to food (oils, butter, lard, meats are all found on the tables of the rich and noble) and people's physical make-up (men of a certain stature and full-figured women were considered beautiful and healthy). Physical abundance, as is still the case today in many countries, was considered a sign of economic wellbeing and social prestige. Eating to excess was a sign of a privileged position in the social hierarchy, whilst thinness signalled poverty, deprivation and illness. In the 1800s, things began to change because greater wellbeing became more widespread in Europe among the various social classes, and varied and plentiful food slowly became more available. There was a democratisation of food. This led the wealthy people in society to start preferring physical thinness to abundance, as a way of distinguishing themselves from the masses. And so, eating a lot in an ostentatious way, previously a habit of the rich, became common practice, first of the middle classes and later, over the years, with food available to all, of the working classes and the less educated. This situation still continues today in the wealthy countries of the world. The biggest problems with obesity, and the subsequent health crises, are found among the poorest and least well-educated sections of society.

Today, slimming diets are based on the principles of nutritionism and advocate goals that reflect the aesthetic values of the moment (muscular good looks and an absence of excess fat). There are a vast number in circulation, each with its own method, name, collection of manuals, products (supplements, specific foods, drinks, etc.) and a whole communicative apparatus behind it (logo, advertising, website, social media accounts, and so on). Contemporary diets can be considered as being in competition with one another because there are so many to choose from. And as competitors, as it were, each one presents and emphasises a certain way of being on a diet. There is the Fast Diet, the low-carb diet, the Super Metabolism diet, the diet by blood type, the anti-cancer diet, and so many others that are periodically fine tuned and then marketed, feeding the production of manuals, recipe books and ad hoc products.

Some highlight the speed of the method, others on how natural it is, some on cutting out carbohydrates, others on hyper-proteic foods, some on calorie counting, others on the food's glycaemic index and other complex biochemical mechanisms. For example, the Zone diet views food as a drug that can have an anti-inflammatory effect and presents a highly medicalised idea of eating and physical activity (fig.x), while Weight Watchers, based on a complex calculation in which calories = points, instead provides an idea of a diet closest to everyday eating in people's real lives (fig.x). The Dukan diet presents itself as the fastest and most efficient method, even for those who are not able to stay on a diet, its advantage being that there are no forbidden foods and that you can eat as much as you like of the allowed foods, all of which are protein-based (fig.x). Tisanoreica, based on meal substitutes (herbal teas, food supplements and so on), instead focuses on how natural its products are, as well as the fact that they work for everyone, from big-screen divas to manual labourers (fig.x). The so-called Paleo diet, according to which you must eat like primitive humans - predominantly meat and no cereals, promises to improve physical abilities through a return to what is presumed to be humanity's original way of life. Each diet presents itself to the consumer by focusing on a different advantage.

Fig. 11. The Zone Diet. This image is taken from the diet's website and shows an athlete providing a testimonial for the diet, placing particular importance on the food supplements produced by the brand, ZoneLabs. This gives us a clear impression of a diet suitable for those who wish to maximise and improve their physical abilities.

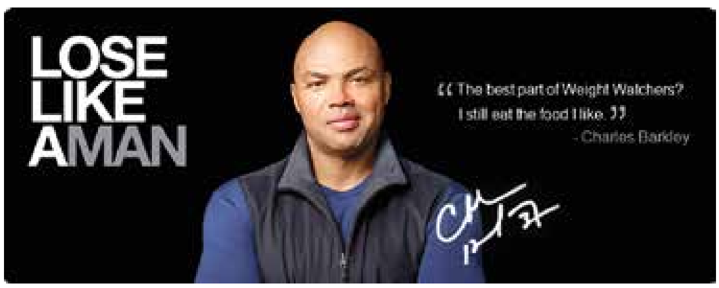


Fig. 12. Weight Watchers advert aimed at a male audience. Here we have US basketball player Charles Barkley, but unlike the image taken from the Zone diet's website, the testimonial does not depict him whilst he plays sport, but as looks directly at the camera, at the audience, with a knowing gaze. The phrase "The best part of Weight Watchers? I can still eat the food I like" demonstrates a fundamental aspect of communication by Weight Watchers, namely that it is a diet that adapts to the person's tastes and habits.

Fig. 13. Advert for the Dukan diet. As we see, the main message here is that, in this diet, there is an enormous variety of foods that are allowed in unlimited quantities, unlike traditional diets which (in theory) require sacrifices in food enjoyment and calorie counting. In truth, many slimming diets found today aim to present themselves not as a rigid set of eating rules that demand sacrifices and abstention, but as lifestyles that adapt to the subject's preferences and tastes.

Fig. 14. Press advert promoting the Italian diet called Tisanoreica. Despite it being a method that requires the elimination of many types of food and the use of meal substitutes, the phrase "I'm not on a diet, I'm in Tisanoreica" clearly demonstrates the widely-accepted tendency to deny being on a diet. The goal is, first and foremost, to convince the greatest number of people possible to embrace this method, and then to try and change the common perception of a slimming diet as a series of sacrifices.

4. FOOD FASHIONS AND TRENDS: BETWEEN SCIENCE AND THE MEDIA

The mass media plays an important role in spreading nutritionalist ideology. Firstly because, as we have seen, the companies have used advertising to promote their own products, with the addition of some nutrient or other. Secondly, the media (television, newspapers, advertising campaigns, the internet) help to promote a scientistic culture of food, ensuring that nutrients and calories are terms understood by most people. As regards this last point, an important role is played by the so-called 'experts' who use mass media to teach us what is in our food, the negative or positive effects that certain substances can have on our body, the best foods for losing weight or improving our own health, and so on.

As such, the figure of the expert has become fundamental in food's representation on television. Today, in programmes devoted to cooking, healthy eating or losing weight, these experts are ever-present. Who are they? Doctors, dieticians, nutritionists, but also fitness experts and personal trainers. In international TV programmes on weight loss, for example, which feature the stories of obese people who have to lose lots of weight, we see the glorification of the expert and, more generally, of nutritionist ideology. These TV programmes demonstrate the effects on the body and mind of 'bad' eating. This term is used to refer to an incorrect diet that does not follow the principles of nutritionism (foods with a high calorie content, snacks filled with fattening ingredients, enormous portions, an excess of fats and sugars, etc.), before showing the intervention by these experts (doctors and personal trainers) who help the protagonists to transform themselves positively, that is, to lose weight and be more physically active.

Another contemporary phenomenon is the rise of 'myths' about eating that circulate easily and very quickly through the media, particularly online. For example, there was recently a controversy over the use of palm oil, which had been used for many years in the industrial production of many foods (spreads, snacks, baked goods, etc.) and cosmetics. The cause of this controversy was essentially ethical, linked to the fact that large-scale use of this oil would cause deforestation in certain parts of the world. But added to this environmentalist reason was the conviction that it is harmful to human health, because of the large quantities and the kinds of fats this oil is composed of, which could cause a rise in cardio-vascular problems. This information, spread through journalistic publications, websites on healthy eating and the environment, and then circulated on social media, created such a situation that many consumers began to avoid products containing palm oil. Recognising a potentially negative trend, food companies eliminated palm oil from production and rushed to communicate this both with their advertising and their packaging (stating 'without palm oil', as demonstrated above in fig. xxx).

Another example is that of gluten, a protein that must be avoided in all cases by people affected by coeliac disease. The market for gluten-free products has recently been transformed from a sector dedicated exclusively to coeliacs, into a desirable market for even non-specialist companies because of the unfounded, unjustified conviction that gluten is a substance to be avoided, even by those who are not coeliac (see Focus II).

Today we generally see a tendency to prefer products with fewer ingredients, because they are thought to be more simple, less artificial, potentially less damaging. There is, in today's society, a preference for natural, organic, homemade foods that are cultivated and produced in a non-industrial, artisanal way that has led to such an expansion of the organic market that almost every company has its own line of organic products. This phenomenon comes from a **food trend** that is increasingly common among consumers, and is connected to the nutritionist ideology we have been discussing: *healthism*, which, when it comes to food, means being careful to choose foods that are not harmful to our physical health.

Another example of this can be seen with sugar. Recently there has been a fashion for brown sugar, which is preferable to the traditional white sugar because it is less processed and therefore considered to be healthier. Beyond whether or not one is actually of better quality than the other, what matters when it comes to the culture of eating and dietetics, is that these convictions are shared and that they modify purchasing trends, consumer habits outside (in a café, drinks are now sweetened using raw cane sugar) and inside the home (unknown until fairly recently, brown sugar has now also substituted white sugar in many home kitchens).

How are eating myths born and developed then? They emerge, in part, as scientific trends of the moment, on the basis of which a particular substance is considered healthy or unhealthy (like the kind of sugar, palm oil, etc.). They are fed by food companies and their advertising campaigns (like the packaging that carries the label 'without palm oil'), and they are partially constructed and spread by the media (**food journalism**, TV programmes). Dietetics is not therefore a phenomenon that only affects the body in its physiological sense, but it is also profoundly influenced by social fashions and trends.

FOCUS 2

Gluten-Free Mania

We have recently witnessed what can be described as gluten-free mania, an apparently inexplicable boom in the sales of products that contain no gluten, the protein that cannot be consumed by those affected by coeliac disease. Its cause seems to be the belief that a gluten-free diet stops weight gain. Newspapers and websites dedicated to health and eating, but also doctors, associations and institutional groups advocating for coeliacs in many parts of the world, are trying to fight this trend, which seems to be very much a fashion, explaining how unfounded the reasons are for following a gluten-free diet in order to lose weight, as well as its potential risks. It was advice given by a number of celebrities, including famous athletes, singers and actresses, who used their social media accounts and books (autobiographis, diet manuals and so on) to extol the virtues of eliminating gluten from one's diet, that has given rise and fed this dietetic phenomenon. Obviously, as we have already mentioned, companies have embraced the opportunity and many have included a gluten-free line in their offering.

Beyond the motivations of either side, it is interesting to analyse the kind of phenomenon this gluten-free mania is, especially in light of the considerations we have made so far on nutritionism and the media. Various issues come into play here, forming a fertile terrain for the birth and development of such a situation.

On one hand we have the diffusion of scientistic language, of nutritionism, meaning that something that was at one time unknown to most people – coeliac disease and the gluten protein – has become common knowledge. We know which foods contain gluten (cereals first and foremost, but also many other industrially produced products), and in a more or less autonomous way, or following the guru of the moment, the decision is made to stop eating these foods. This occurs to such an extent that the diet recommended by an actress or a singer can bring significant media coverage.

At the same time, we have the phenomenon of competition between slimming diets (see Focus) that compete through adverts, testimonials and recipe books, in order to propose the most efficient way of losing weight and, more generally, to feel healthy. Thus the gluten free diet looks like one of many slimming diets on the market that use nutritionist principles of varying validity as leverage.

Thirdly, we have the alternating opinions voiced by many within society, with varying degrees of authority and experience. There are the celebrity testimonials, followed by many because they are models of beauty and physical attractiveness, but these are then questioned by scientists and experts, who aim to convince us otherwise in the name of different values: those of science, research, medicine. And the media? They act as platforms for both.

The case of gluten-free mania is a great example of how, within a certain society, food beliefs are created and fed, and how such beliefs, that represent a sort of degeneration of nutritionism, create real conflicts between various social subjects.

Fig. 15. In the first half of the 1900s, the Italian pasta company, Buitoni, promoted one of its key products, 'glutinated pasta', aimed specifically at children.

Fig. 16. The same company today sells a vast range of gluten-free products, including pre-cooked foods such as pizza.

Fig. 17. In 2015, AIC, Italian Coeliac Association (Associazione Italiana Celiachia) ran an information campaign to combat the fashion for gluten-free, highlighting the possible risks of such a diet for someone who is not coeliac. This kind of communication demonstrates the existence in society of a conflict between the various subjects involved (companies, consumers, doctors, associations, etc.).

The ethics of eating

The impact of food on local and global problems

Dario Martinelli

1. FOOD IS MORE THAN JUST EATING

A scene from our childhood: our parents have just prepared food for us, and it happens to be food we don't like – maybe some boiled carrots, maybe a broccoli stew, maybe a chicken broth: pick your own nightmare! So, as always, we start protesting, we don't want this, we don't want that, maybe later, maybe after dessert, maybe without those green things… any excuse will go, as long as we avoid the dreadful dish. At some point our parents lose their patience, they point at the dish, and here they go with the most familiar line: "Eat! Why are you being so choosy? There are people starving in the world, you know!?". Now: what did they actually mean with that sentence? What's the connection? That if we do not eat more people will die? How is that possible?

Well, usually, what our parents mean is that we should feel lucky to have been born in a part of the world where we can have a meal every day. We should therefore cherish that privilege by not wasting the food we are given, because, indeed, in other parts of the world, people would be immensely grateful to afford such a meal. Otherwise, that reproach does not make much sense, does it? Could we really imagine a direct connection between what we eat and some major problem like **world famine**?

Actually, oddly enough, there *is* a connection, and it is not a loose one.

Eating and drinking are primary needs: it is something we need every single day, and several times during the day. The need for food requires a great deal of variety in order to be properly fulfilled, and a great deal of processes that go along with that variety: preparation, production, growth, packaging, transportation, sale, consumption… Everywhere in the world, the food industry contributes to a significant chunk of a country's economy, and on average we all spend about 10% of our money in food and drinks.

So, yes, our relation with food is deeply connected with the world's problems. The food we choose to place or not to place on our table is, in many ways, an ethical action, that is, an action that may be "right" or "wrong", not only for ourselves, but also for the society we live in. The more information becomes available to everyone (through the internet and the likes), the more people are realizing this idea, and start choosing what they eat in relation to their opinions on the world's problems. For instance, people who believe that their country's economy should be defended and promoted, tend to choose more local products; people who are against the exploitation of workers in **developing countries** tend to choose so-called "**Fair Trade**" products; people who believe that animals should not be killed for our pleasure, tend to **vegetarianism** or **veganism**, and so forth.

The act of choosing what we buy in accordance to values we believe in and social problems we care for is called **critical consumerism**. You are a critical consumer if you buy your food not only because it's healthy, tasty or affordable, but also because you believe it will make the world a better place, somewhere, somehow.

The goal of this chapter is to make you aware of the various social, moral and political implications of foods and drinks, and to help you discover whether or not you would like to be a critical consumer too.

2. HOW TO INVESTIGATE ON A PRODUCT

Let us say that, yes, we want to try and be critical consumers. We want to make the world a better place by choosing more carefully what we eat, the same way as we may have made other choices in life with the same spirit: maybe we have changed our car and bought a hybrid model, maybe we bought a T-shirt in a charity sale, or maybe we chose to bring a gadget to repair instead of throwing it in the garbage and buy straight away a new one. If we have done any of these or similar actions, we are already critical consumers. So, the point here is whether we want to extend this awareness also to what we eat and drink. If yes, then we may want to first understand how to gather information about a certain food product we buy, in order to understand if it is related to some ethically-sensitive issue, and, if yes, which ones.

Let us take a food product of any type – say: a bag of chips. There are dozens of questions we may want to answer to, that have an ethical relevance. Who produced this bag of chips? Who sells it? Where does it come from? What kind of resources were employed to produce it? How did it come here? From how far? What do the chips contain, but also what is the package made of? And so on and so forth, up to questions related to the questions themselves: was there enough information available about these chips? Was it easy to find out who produced them, where they come from, etc.? All of these are important questions that, once answered, will guide our ethical assessment of the product, ultimately encouraging us to buy it or not.

The first and foremost way to start answering, at least in part, is to take the product and read whatever information is on the package. There, we usually learn at least the following three items:

1. The **ingredients**: they can tell us a great deal of information, not only how healthy the product is, but also how much chemistry and processing is involved and how many ethically "suspicious" substances are included. For instance, an ingredient like palm oil has become in recent times object of controversy, due to its ecological impact, and more and more people prefer to buy products that do not contain it.
2. The **producers** – particularly the place where the product was manufactured and the main office of the producing company. Sometimes, the company belongs to a bigger corporation: usually we get information about the latter, as well, but not always.
3. Some **characteristics of the product** in relation to the production process, the environment, the distribution and else: these are often embodied in graphic labels, as we exemplify in fig.1 (see chapter on packaging?).

Fig. 1. Four typical product labels bearing ethically-sensitive information. From top left, clockwise: the "Euro-leaf" means that the product is certified "biological" according to EU laws; the "leaping bunny" means that the product is certified "cruelty-free" by the European Coalition to End Animal Experimentation; the "Ecolabel" means that the product meets the EU standards for low environmental impact in production and distribution; and finally the Fair Trade logo informs that the product was produced and distributed while providing fair contracts and conditions to the workers involved (usually in developing countries).

There can be more information available, but definitely these three items may tell us a lot about ethically-sensitive issues, if we learn how to read them correctly. And that is not always easy. For instance: do you know what ingredient names like Lauryl pyrrolidone, Octyl stearate, Myristic acid and Ceteth-24 have in common (let alone what they mean)? They are all based on palm oil! There is something like 150 ingredient names that in fact mean that the product contains palm oil. So, definitely, if you are aiming at avoiding things like palm oil in your purchases, this is not the easiest of tasks.

The second important step is to actually collect information about the product and the producer. There is plenty we can learn by reading news on the media, browsing the web or visiting the official website of a company; plus, most importantly, associations like **NGO**s that are active in different causes of social concern. Any kind of information can actually tell us something worthwhile to reflect upon. Information about the history of the company may reveal that this company has been involved in lawsuits for violating labour rights or environmental regulations; information about the ownership may reveal suspicious people and connections, and so forth. Of course, you particularly may want to learn if the above-mentioned NGOs have actively campaigned against a certain product or a certain company, for instance suggesting the **boycotting** of them.

Third step: you can always ask. If you want to know more about a product or the company that produces it, you may write to their customer service or more specific offices. The company may or may not answer, and if they do, the answer may be more or less specific, but you will find this is a useful action in all cases. If they answer, and in detail, good: you will have the information you asked for. If they answer generically or do not answer at all, you will know a thing or two about how keen is this company to have a good relationship with the customers, and how transparent they are when it comes to ethically-sensitive information.

3. ETHICAL ISSUES RELATED TO FOOD

Now that we know how to investigate on a product, let us see *what* we need to investigate. Once again, if we think about the variety of activities that are connected to the food industry, we understand that there are many ways in which the latter can impact on society: there is a lot of money that circulates, there are workers involved, there is land being occupied, animals being exploited, resources used and often wasted, and so on. We cannot reasonably list every single problem connected to this vast universe of activities, but we can do our best to list the main ones and to identify some key-words and concepts that illustrate them.

3.1. RESPECT FOR CONSUMERS

In fact, since we mentioned transparency in the previous paragraph, we can start here. From the quantity and the quality of information you will get from the packaging, the official website and your direct communication with the company, you will see how much the latter is willing to share and how much consideration they have of you. Transparency is indeed an ethical value. Therefore, the first issue worth to be mentioned is respect for consumers: does the company provide clear information on its products and its policies? Does it behave fairly with consumers? Do we have clear information about the company's structure, employees, business practices, waste management, type of production, packaging, the product itself, etc.? Remember that these companies rely on your money to survive and prosper. Most of all, they have our trust in regard to what they give us to eat and drink. They should deserve this trust, and treat us respectfully by making no mystery of what they do and how.

3.2 POWER AND INFLUENCE

The second ethical issue has to do with the company's power and influence and how they are used. Especially when the company is big enough, there is a chance that it may not only produce food, but also have other activities that, directly or indirectly, can raise controversy, over the quality of the product, our perception of it, and other things as well. To begin with, the company may also own a newspaper, a TV channel or another medium, and therefore be in the position to spread misleading information. If a company produces, say, alcoholic drinks and owns a TV channel at the same time, there is a possibility that this channel's programs will create a more positive image of alcohol, overlooking its risks.

Also: does the company have some political influence? Does it finance a party? Does it feature any top-manager who is also employed by the government (perhaps by the ministry of health)? In cases like these, there is a risk that the company will try to affect governmental decisions to favour its own interests rather than the citizens'.

Power and influence can also be exercised through so-called "smokescreens", that is, activities that conceal the company's true goals. Classic examples are parallel business activities that promote a product while pretending to do something else: subliminal advertisement, such as product placement in movies and TV programs; laboratory research financed by the company itself, aimed for instance at proving that an unhealthy product is not so unhealthy after all – and so forth.

When we talk power, we may also talk hard, military power of course. If you are against war and oppression, you may not be pleased to discover that the same company you buy food from is also involved in producing weapons, or manufacturing provisions for military forces. The company may also have considerable business in countries with dictatorial regimes, or anyway countries that violate human rights. Also it may be registered in a tax haven, that is, one of those countries with immoral tax conditions, that are usually possible because of suspicious/

illegal investments (most drug traffickers, for instance, hide their money in such places).

3.3 WORKFORCE

Thirdly, we may wonder about the conditions of those who work for the company. Is the working environment acceptable? Are the salaries decent? Are layoffs justified? Are safety requirements met? In a way, the best criterion to assess a company's behaviour, here, is to check that it treats its employees the way we ourselves would like to be treated as workers. Very often, cases of mistreatment of employees are in the news, or are shared on social media. In the latter case, however, pay attention to double-check the reliability of the source: the internet is great, but there is plenty of fake news spread around.

In the next paragraph, we shall mention something more about labour conditions, with specific reference to developing countries.

3.4 DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The fourth significant ethical issue concerns the way the company behaves with developing countries. Sometimes raw materials of a given product come from these countries, sometimes the production is located there (think about how many "European" products are in fact "made in Thailand", "made in China", or elsewhere). In such cases, are the materials and the workers paid fairly, or does the company exploit the usually-challenging financial conditions of those countries to pay immorally-low prices and salaries? What about the land where the product or its raw materials are produced? Was the land acquired to the detriment of local inhabitants? Were forests wiped out? Is the company relocating polluting production processes in those countries, exploiting the fact that there may be more permissive environmental regulations? Where and how do they dispose of waste?

3.5 ENVIRONMENT

Since we introduced ecological questions, the fifth important ethical issue has to be the environment. How does the product and the company impact on nature? What is the **Ecological Footprint** of the product and of its packaging? Were polluting procedures employed in the production (e.g., use of pesticides)? How polluting were they, in relation to standards and regulations? What is the company's legal history in terms of their obedience to environmental laws: were they ever fined or sued for such reasons? What about transportation? Does the product come from very far? If yes, is there a local alternative? We know we do not produce things like papayas in Europe, so we may have a lighter conscience in knowing that our papaya had to come all the way from South America or Pacific Asia, but what about a bottle of mineral water coming from a foreign country, when also our own country, if not our own city, produces it? If the product came for abroad, how did it get here? By plane, by truck, by ship…? There is a huge difference in the amount of CO2 produced by the different means of transportation. The worst one is by far the airplane: 1 ton of transported products produces 582 grams of CO2 every km. Much better are trucks (92 g/km), trains (23 g/km) and ships (13 g/km).

These are not marginal issues. You may be surprised to learn that almost half of a product's energy consumption goes actually in the transportation (see Fig.2)

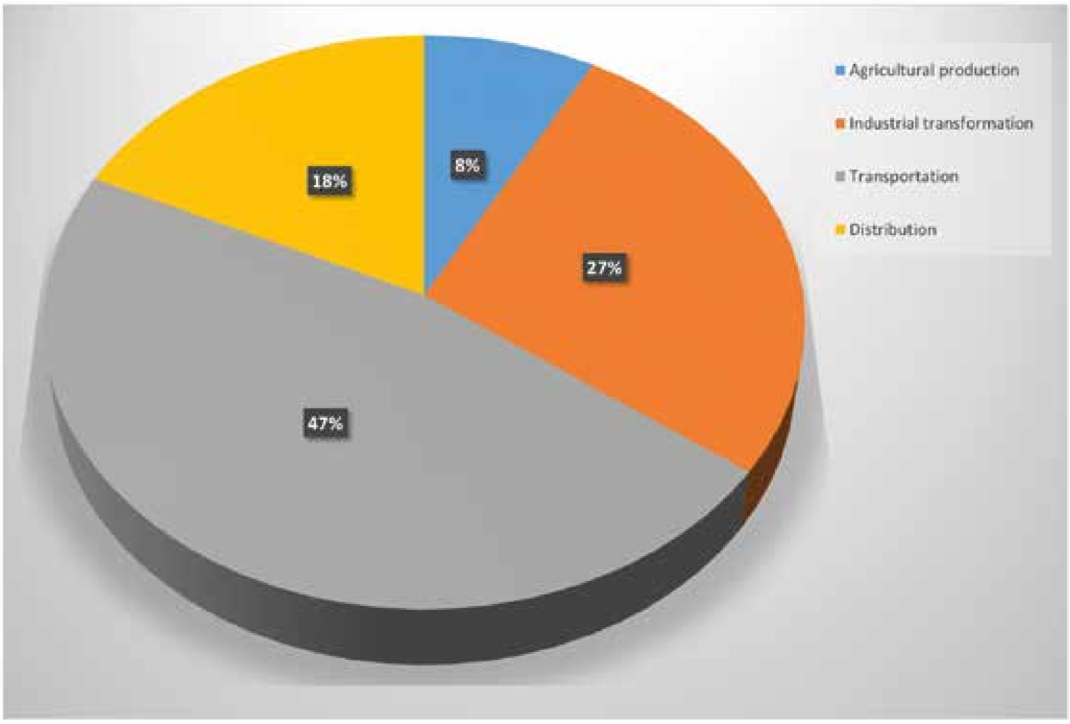


Fig. 2. Energy consumption in the four main stages of food production. As you can see, transportation ends up being, by far, the most energy-consuming process.

And, finally, packaging is one of the most important environmentally-sensitive topics: not what we eat, but what contains it. We always tend to underrate this aspect, and when we buy some posh biological products, hoping to help reducing the pollution, we tend not to notice that some of them are actually so fancily-packaged that they are probably more anti-ecological than the humbler and cheaper regular product. Just think about this: 40% of our domestic garbage comes from packaging. Again: almost half! So, in pondering the ecological pros and cons of a product, we should really take into account what and how much packaging goes with it. We should be able to discern an essentially-packaged product from an excessively-packaged one, and of course we know that some materials like paper and glass are more environmentally-sound than plastic or aluminium.

3.6 ANIMALS

The last important ethical issue to consider is the exploitation and the killing of non-human animals, in one way or another. In the course of history, unfortunately, human beings have devised hundreds of ways to abuse other animals. How much of that is legitimate or necessary is up to our individual conscience and values, of course, but the following are some of the questions you may ask yourself or the company about the given product you are examining. First, does the product as such (or components within it) derive from animal killing or exploitation? Each of us has their own threshold here: a vegan of course will not tolerate just *any* employment of animals in a product, a meat-eater may be fine with meat in general, but perhaps uncomfortable with the type that comes from intensive farming, etc. Second, does the company engage in production processes that directly kill or abuse animals, such as animal testing or animal workforce? Thirdly, what about indirect abuse, such as deforestation practices that are not just damaging a given area but also the animal species inhabiting it?

4. CONCLUSIONS

There are of course many more questions that we may address, but hopefully we have mentioned enough of them to realize how dense a discussion we may initiate on the ethical impact of food in our society. Whether you find those issues relevant or not, or whether you will become a critical consumer or not, after reading this chapter, is entirely up to your own values and conscience. The key-word here is “awareness”. It is important that we realize that eating and drinking is something we need, something we enjoy, but also something that is relevant to the world and to the problems within it.

FOCUS 1

The ethical reasons of veganism

Of the numerous eating habits and lifestyles, one that seems to be particularly connected with ethical issues is veganism. “Vegan” describes a person who has renounced any animal or animal-derived product. That means, in simple terms, no meat, no fish, no eggs, no dairy products, and to most vegans, no honey either. The word has recently become a label for any item or action (therefore, not just eating), whose production or implementation did not involve, at any stage, the use of animals. For this reason, we find expressions like “vegan cosmetics”, “vegan shoes”, “vegan lifestyle”, “vegan activism”, and the likes.

A marginal phenomenon until the late 20th century, veganism has become increasingly popular in the last 10-15 years, and by now the average amount of vegans, in most countries, ranges between 2% and 5%. Since we mentioned statistics, you may be interested to know that the majority of vegans in the world are female in gender (ca. 65% on average, with peaks like 74% in USA); they tend to be liberal-leftist politically (over 50%, against a 10-15% of conservatives and a rest that declares to be neutral politically); they are about 5% more educated than meat-eaters, they are more likely to be found in urban than country areas, with prevalence in big cities; and they are on average more inclined to secular and/or atheist views on religion.

Fig. 3. A vegan meal with sweet potatoes, guacamole and fried mushrooms (Photo by Nitsan Simantov, CC BY-SA 4.0)

Still statistics tell us important information on why people become vegan. In a survey conducted in 2014, the respondents were asked to indicate one or more reasons why they had chosen this lifestyle. Predictably, the majority (69%) indicated "health" as their main motivation. Indeed, whether we may agree with this or not, veganism tends to be perceived as a healthier lifestyle, especially for adults. At the same time, the close second, settled to 68%, was the concern for animals: for a consistent amount of people, the question of animal killing is a decisive factor for their choices. Not only: 59% indicated a concern for environment, and 29% mentioned social justice and world hunger. That means that, out of the six main ethical issues we have discussed in our chapter, veganism seems to address at least three of them: animals, environment and developing countries. Let us see how.

- **Animals.** According to official sources such as the Food and Agriculture Organization, the **animal industry** is calculated to be responsible for the killing of ca. 70 billions of land animals per year and an estimation of 38 to 128 billion of farmed fish (wild fish is estimated by the trillions - in both cases the counting is less accurate than land animals). That means that, by gross approximation, we are in the vicinity of 5,000 animals killed every second. To the killing as such, vegans also add their contrariety to the conditions in which animals are kept, especially in intensive farms, where most of them are confined in small spaces, deprived of any possibility to express their biology, and exploited in various forms.

Fig. 4. Pigs in an intensive farm.

- **Environment.** The impact of the animal industry on the environment, in terms of pollution, deforestation and other processes, is also a major concern for vegans, as we have seen. There are actually many ecologically-sensitive issues pertaining to the effects of this industry, and we cannot list them all here. To make just four examples:
  a. the greenhouse gas emission per kilogram of meat reaches peaks of 68.8 kg of CO_2, while no vegetable – with the sole exception of coffee (10.1 kg CO_2e/kg) – exceeds 3-4 kg CO_2e/kg;
  b. the Ecological Footprint of an animal-based meal exceeds of the 500% that of an equally-nutritional and equally-balanced vegan meal. The livestock sector produces about 15% of global greenhouse gases, which is roughly equivalent to all the emissions of every car, train, ship and aircraft on the planet;
  c. 88% of our water footprint is embedded in our food production, but there is a significant difference in how much water the meat industry requires, as compared to vegetable cultivation. While the water employed for vegetables' production ranges from 14 (for carrots) to 201 (for asparagi) gallon per pound, the meat industry demands a minimum of 518 gallon per pound (chicken) and a maximum of 1846 (beef);

d. the percentage of deforestation of the Amazon rainforest due to meat production amounts to 65-70% of the total.

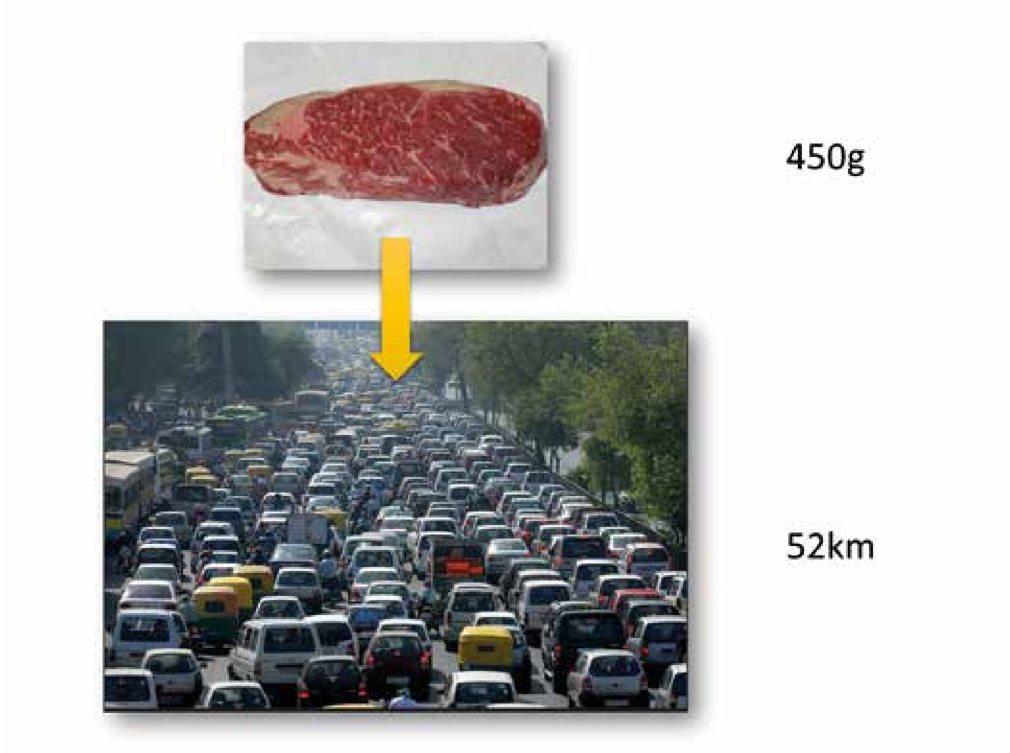


Fig. 5. A simple example of the ecological impact of the meat industry. The production of one steak (450 g) produces the same amount of pollution of a car driven for 52 km.

- **Developing countries.** The datum on deforestation is also significant in terms of how vegans perceive the animal industry as a threat for human beings as well, particularly developing countries. But even more than that, animal production occupies remarkably more land than a nutritionally-equivalent amount of vegetable products. On the same amount of land and in the same time span needed to produce 1 kg of meat, for instance, a range of 150 to 200 kg of vegetables could be harvested. One kg of animal products requires about 12 to 32 square meters to be produced. One kg of any fruit, vegetable or cereal will not exceed 2.

In fact, of all the land used to produce plants, up to 80% of it is used *not* for human beings, but to feed the cattle that will be eventually slaughtered to produce meat, amounting to ca. 30% of the whole Earth's land mass. In such a condition, vegans maintain, the question is not just stealing land to local communities: it is also, and mainly, that a world going vegan would have 17 times more land, 14 times more water and 10 times more energy to feed starving people.

IS OUR NATURE TO BE VEGAN OR CARNIVORE?

A recurrent argument that vegans and meat eaters exchange in their not-always-friendly debates is whether or not human beings should be considered “naturally” inclined to eat meat. Vegans say that originally human beings were not eating meat, and that is true. Meat-eaters say that adapting to meat and hunting were decisive factors in developing the *Homo sapiens* as it is now – and that is also true!

What to do, then? Perhaps, this discussion is actually not very relevant, and should not intervene in our decision to quit or continue eating meat. We are neither naturally vegan nor naturally carnivore. What we are is the following:

1) We are – like any other animal species – an EVOLVING species. During our evolution we have been and eaten many things, and we changed and adapted in consequence of many factors. Our real nature, quite simply, is “evolution”, and that has changed and will keep on changing our habits.

2) Our evolution has proved that we are **POLYPHAGOUS**. It means we can eat many types of food without really dying from them. Some foods are better than others, of course, but we can eat a lot of different stuff. We cannot eat everything (that is why **omnivore** is a misleading word, and polyphagous is probably a better one), but we are very flexible. For the same reason, we are not obliged to eat any food in particular: meat is neither poisonous for us, nor is it indispensable. Animals who absolutely *cannot* eat meat are “**herbivores**”. Animals that *must* eat meat are called “**obligate carnivores**”. We are neither: we are polyphagous.

Beverages

Iassen Zahariev

INTRODUCTION

"Taste" can mean many things. This requires some preliminary provisions before we set off analyzing various beverages and their relationship with the culture and communication of taste. When talking about "taste", we mean any of the following:

- Taste as one of the five senses – sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste;
- Taste as an amalgamation of sensory qualities, which we discover in a certain item – food or drink (e.g. taste of strawberry);
- Taste as the ability to assess something as beautiful or ugly, appropriate or inappropriate, valuable or cheap. We say about someone that they have good or bad taste, based on whether they can make such distinctions.

Taste, in its third sense, is called "aesthetic taste". It is an individual capability, but it's also social capital (Bourdieu, 2000). What does that mean? It's a fact that we share similar preferences as others. This holds true for music, art, fashion and, of course, food and drink. Imagine the difference between people who visit fast-food joints and those who only consume raw fruit! Taste is not only an individual capability, but also a collective phenomenon. We could imagine people split into different groups, based on their tastes. If you share the collective preferences of a certain group, you would most likely belong to that group. And vice-versa – if you want to become part of a certain group, you will have to teach yourself certain taste, based on the group's preferences. Cultivating taste, however, is not an easy task. Imagine how difficult it is to learn to distinguish good wine from low quality wine, or culinary art from cheap pottage! This takes education, time and money. This is why taste turns out to be "social capital". People invest in taste, and, in turn, it repays them by allowing them access to certain societal groups.

In the following subchapters, we will analyze some well known beverages and their link to taste in its third sense. Our exposition will follow the same simple structure: we will first look at the essence of the beverage, and its history. Then, we will look at what social groups it is used and what its role is in terms of taste.

1. ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES AND TASTE

Alcohol is an organic compound. There are many different types of alcohol, some of them – such as methanol – being especially poisonous, even in small quantities. Alcohol, used in beverages, is called ethanol and its chemical formula is C_2H_5OH. Ethanol is a natural result of the process of **fermentation**, where certain yeasts transform sugar into alcohol. It can also be manufactured by **distillation**. **Distillation** allows for producing liquids with a much higher alcohol concentration, compared to **fermentation**.

Alcohol is the most widely spread drug on the planet. It is in no sense harmless, although its moderate use has a pleasant effect on our mentality and communication. In larger quantities, it can lead to consequences, which are especially harmful to the human body. The likelihood of becoming **addicted to alcohol**, as to any drug, should not be underestimated. This is why its consumption is a practice, which requires not only a healthy organism, but also certain social skills.

Who drinks what, when and how? The answers to these questions could tell us a lot about not only the specific beverages in question and their use, but also about the preferences of people and about customs in different societies.

2. WINE

2.1. HISTORY AND SYMBOLISM

Wine and beer are the most ancient alcoholic beverages in human history. The reason behind this is the fact that **fermentation** spontaneously occurs in fruits or grains with a high enough sugar content. There are many beverages known in history, which result from the natural **fermentation** of fruit juices. Wine, however, is only made from grapes, which comes from the species of vines, known as **vitis**. The wine grape vine is called vitis vinifera and all possible wine grape sorts belong to that species.

The oldest archaeological proof shows us that people started making wine around 8000 B.C. This means that wine appeared around the time humans settled down. This is the time when the nomad tribes slowly settled and started developing agriculture and livestock breeding. Wine was part of the cultures of Mesopotamia, Babylon and Egypt. At first it was used in various rituals and was only consumed by the highest ranking social layers – priests, shamans, kings and their entourage. The connection between wine and religious rituals is due to the narcotic effect of alcohol on human psychology. People believed that it helps them contact the world beyond.

The production and use of wine slowly spread through Egypt, Asia Minor and the Mediterranean. Drinking wine was a status symbol even then. This can be witnessed in many images and inscriptions that remain from ancient Egypt. From Egypt and Asia Minor, wine enters Hellenic culture as well. In ancient Greece it became an everyday beverage, accessible to a wide range of people. Wine trade brought profit and prestige. The cult to Dionysus, the god of wine, became one of the most popular cults in ancient Greece, after which it carried over to Roman civilization, where Dionysus is known as Bacchus. Thanks to Greeks, and then Romans, winemaking spread all across Europe.

During the Middle ages, wine still held an important role – not only in the day-to-day life, but also in Christian religious symbolism. In the pagan cultures of Greece and Rome, wine was a symbol of the intoxication of life, the madness of love, prosperity. In Christianity, this symbolism transferred onto the persona of Jesus Christ and the hope for salvation. In the sacrament of the Communion, wine symbolizes the blood of Christ and is a key element in the connection between man and God. Little wonder that the major producers of wine in the Middle ages were monasteries and monastic orders.

Wine spread beyond the borders of Europe after the Age of Discovery in XV century. After the Industrial revolution of the 19th century, wine production was also industrialized. This made the beverage even more accessible, and today wine market is part of the global economy.

2.2. WINE AND TASTE

Wine has always been a status symbol. There are several reasons for that. It is evident that wine used to be much more expensive, compared to other alcoholic beverages, such as beer. This is due to the long technological process, which begins at the vineyard and finishes at the storage site. Before the appearance of the distilled, highly alcoholic beverages, wine contained a higher proportion of alcohol compared to beer, which made it a preferred choice, due to its stronger alcoholic effect.

The taste of wine is also an important factor, which turned it into a more sophisticated beverage, compared to all others.

Due to the different grape varieties and the different techniques of wine-making, its taste is exceptionally complex and diverse. Different wines have different taste, and their quality and taste can vary widely. The skill to distinguish different nuances and elements in the aroma and taste of wine, combined with the skill to "taste" its quality, is an art in and of itself, which, even in antiquity, set apart the people with a high **social status**.

In 20th and the beginning if 21th century, wine has become ever more accessible for ever larger groups of people. The social profile of wine-drinkers is now harder to determine, although some US researchers claim that the leading group of wine connoisseurs is comprised of middle-aged, well educated, upper-middle-class people (Charters, 2006).

Drinking wine, as a social practice, is made more complex by the fact that it is traditionally combined with food, which raises the issue of combining the right wine with the right foods. In cultures, where wine has been known for millennia, its consumption with certain foods is part of culinary tradition. Still, the appearance of new wines and foods in the global age makes this issue valid again. What sets wine apart from other beverages in the consumer society is that wine requires a certain level of education in order to be understood and consumed in a socially acceptable manner. It is considered bad taste when wine is mixed with non-alcoholic beverages or drank from paper or plastic cups. It is also considered unacceptable to consume aged red wines together with salads rich in vinegar. For the educated European, the taste of wine is an aesthetic subject matter, which should not be corrupted by any additions or inappropriate combinations. These examples may appear obvious to the European, for whom wine is a part of ordinary culture. This, however, is not so for cultures, for whom wine is a novelty, and who literally have no "taste" for wine.

FOCUS 1

Wine in China

In China, during the last decades, there has been an increased interest for wine, since it is perceived as a symbol for success in the fast-growing middle class; however, most consumers still do not possess the required social experience. It is not unusual in China to consume exceptionally expensive French wines mixed with Coca Cola. To the educated European, this is equivalent to a crime; however, in other cultures, diluting wine with soft drinks seems to be as acceptable as mixing vodka or gin. In fact, China is now the largest global wine market in the world, due to the large number of people who live there. It appears, however, that the largest wine market is not well prepared for wine. This is why contemporary wine marketing and most wine brands are especially sensitive when it comes to educating their consumers.

The situation described above tells us a lot about the fact that wine is the beverage, which requires suitable culture and communication the most. Choosing and consuming wine requires aesthetic taste and knowledge, which are acquired through different forms of education. There is no other drink, which is the main topic for so many magazines, handbooks, educational seminars, specialized academic and university courses. Wine tourism is indicative for the variety of the means of communications. This sector of hospitality focuses on a few important matters – wine as a product in the context of its origin and production, marketing, advertising, education and, naturally, business.

3. BEER

3.1. HISTORY

Beer is the other alcoholic beverage, which results from natural **fermentation**. Humans started producing beer after they learned to grown grain cultures, from which it is prepared – barley and wheat. Beer was certainly well known in Mesopotamia and Egypt, as many archaeological artefacts prove.

The technology of producing beer takes less time than the technology for making wine, and has always been more accessible due to the wider distribution of barley and wheat, as compared to grapes. The drink has a lower alcohol content than wine. This particularity of beer has set its lower **social status** from antiquity. It has always been more accessible and cheaper, and was consumed by larger number of people, compared to wine. In times when water was often a source of pathogens, beer was valued as a relatively harmless drink. This is due to the heat treatment that the drink goes through during the production process, but also to the fact that alcohol is an antiseptic.

Beer production flourished in medieval Europe. During the early middle ages, the main centers of production were the monasteries, who owned plenty of land and resources. During the late middle ages, more and more independent brewers appeared, who slowly displaced monasteries as centers of production. These were most frequently the owners of pubs and taverns. Slowly, bear production fell under taxation laws in different countries, as during the 16th century the first licensed brewers appeared. One of the first examples for this is the purity law for beer of 1516, approved by Wilhelm IV, duke of Bavaria. This law sets requirements for both the raw materials, from which beer can be made (water, barley and hops), and also the rules for trade and pricing.

The spread of glass bottles during the 18th and 19th century plays an important part in the proliferation and trade of beer. Simultaneously, the production process was improved, thanks to various discoveries, which raised the quality, clarity and shelf life of beer. As urban population grew and the industrial revolution unfolded, the first large breweries appeared, who produced and sold great amounts of quality beer at low prices.

3.2. BEER AND TASTE

Large breweries in the late 19th and early 20th century faced the need to create new means of communication and distribution. Local brewers took a step back to the large brands, who conquered the national markets with all the means advertising provided. During the 1950s, large breweries in the US and Europe started using an ever growing set of advertising and marketing tools, in order to link beer consumption and mass sports. TV turned out to be the best media for the objective. Beer, naturally, does not lead to peak sport performance, but it did become an integral part of sport experience for the mass audience. Thanks to more than half a century of advertising and marketing, beer became a part of sports "consumption"– and to such an extent that today watching football or baseball is somehow "naturally" accompanied by beer.

The relationship of beer with sports culture creates a special attitude and a certain competitive taste for the drink. Different brands compete and rival in the same way as different teams do. It is expected that the fans of a given beer are just as loyal to the brand as they are to their favorite team. This way, advertising beer has more to do with the preferences and expectations of the audience, than with the qualities of the drink itself.

An interesting change in the production and consumption of beer took place in the mid-80s – first in the US, and then elsewhere. This is the appearance of the so-called "**craft beer**", which marks a real sort of brewing revolution in the past few decades. **Craft beer** meets the needs of the audience, which doesn't want to identify with the major brands, and which does not necessarily associate beer with sports.

The taste of artisan beer is the main element of consumer interest. Thanks to this "**craft** revolution", the attitude towards the taste of beer changed considerably. It is no longer the mass, monotonous and cheap product, which is available anywhere. **Craft beer** brewers and aficionados created a new culture, which values variety, experimentation and local culture. This leads to the need for educating and informing the consumers and merchants, much in the same way it holds true for wine culture. The first organizations for educating beer specialists – similar to **sommeliers** – appeared in the 90s. These beer **sommeliers** are known as **cicerone**.

FOCUS 2

The trend of craft beer

Craft beer *returned the interest to small, local* breweries, *where beer is made in small batches and with a very special attention to quality. For a few decades, the number of so-called "micro"* breweries *in the US, Canada and Europe grew at a remarkable rate. To illustrate the growth, we*

> *could note that in the late 1980s, there were fewer than 500* breweries *registered in the US, which managed to satisfy the market. In 2016 there were more than 5000* breweries, *while in 2019, they are already over 7000*!

4. VODKA

4.1. HISTORY

As opposed to wine and beer, vodka is a spirit, produced through **distillation**. In alcoholic **distillation**, fermented liquids are heated up until the alcohol begins to evaporate. After that, the vapors are cooled down, until they condense into a liquid, which has a much higher alcohol content than the original. There is historical evidence that ancient Greeks knew this process. It is not, however, known if they ever used it for producing beverages. This also holds true for Arab alchemists, thanks to whom the word "alcohol" was assigned to liquids, resulting from **distillation**. Between 11th and 14th centuries, an increasing number of alchemists in Europe describe the process and the resulting liquid, which many called "aqua vitae" or "water of life". After 15th century, **distillation** became even more widespread in different parts of Europe, as the technical means improved and the resulting substances became valued not only as medication, but as intoxicating drinks.

Vodka was first made by the Slavs in 15th century. It is controversial whether it was the Poles or the Russians who made it first. The word "vodka" is a diminutive form of "water" and is a common term in most Slavic languages. The drink is usually made from grains, potatoes or molasses.

During 15-16th century, Russian tsars realized how important vodka is for economy and monopolized its production. Since the population got **addicted** to the beverage, it became a fast-moving good, which brought immense profit to the state. The Russian economy was literally dependent on vodka production and trade, just as a majority of the population was **addicted** to the drink. For several centuries, thanks to the state policies, vodka became a steady part of the life and economy of the Russian empire.

Today, vodka is still a traditional and widespread beverage in Russia, Poland, the Baltics and the Nordic states. During 19th century, mixing vodka with various alcoholic and soft drinks became popular in Europe and America – what is today called "cocktails". Vodka was the preferred basis for many different cocktails, which helped make its way around the world. This is why vodka can be found in virtually any bar or restaurant today.

4.2. VODKA AND TASTE

The main metaphor for vodka is fire. During the **distillation** process, the original liquid has to be heated up, which was originally done by fire. The resulting liquid is flammable – i.e. "fiery", and the taste of vodka – as typica for hard alcoholic drinks – reminds of burning. As opposed to other spirits, such as whisky or gin, vodka has a relatively weak taste. Similar to water, vodka appears tasteless. This way tasting vodka is oftentimes reduced to feeling warmth or burning, without experiencing any other taste characteristics. In this sense, vodka's taste is "pure" since it contains nothing but the sense of burning.

Due to the lack of specific taste differences, vodka manufacturers face the need to identify their products via other means. Some manufacturers stress on the quality of water they use, while others rely on history, bottle and label design, or the precision and number of distillations. Vodka advertising has become part of pop culture, where celebrities take an important role.

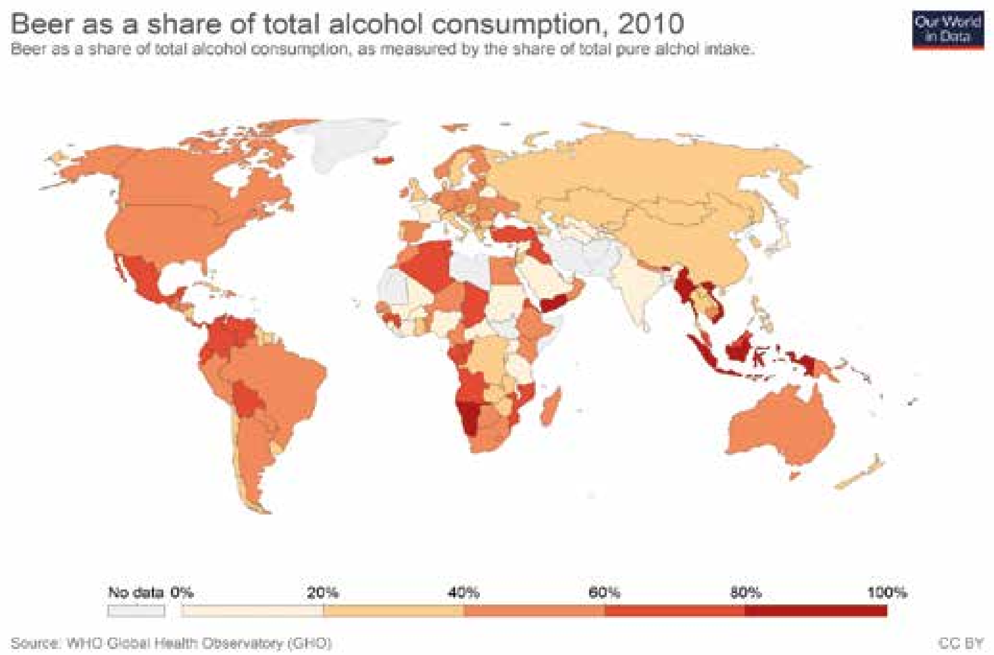
Similar to all other beverages, vodka is used in different manners, depending on social context. Inebriation comes more quickly, when compared to wine or beer. Back in tsarist Russia, vodka was preferred not only by the common folk, but also by nobility. Then, as today, the quality was distinguished based on the raw materials and the purity of the distillation. Traditionally, the lower social strata drank vodka in order to quickly reach intoxication, and not to experience taste. This way vodka plays the role of nothing more than a narcotic, whose main goal is to help the consumer to experience temporary pleasure and to forget the burdens of everyday life. Even then, however, vodka is combined with certain foods and is consumed according to specific rules. It is poured in small glasses, then drank instantly (as a shot). Afterwards, the burning sensation in the mouth and throat is subdued by small bites of food. People of higher social status would drink vodka much the same way, but the drink itself, as well as the food, would be of a higher quality. The pattern was the same, independent of the fact that some would consume the drink with caviar, while others could only afford rye bread.

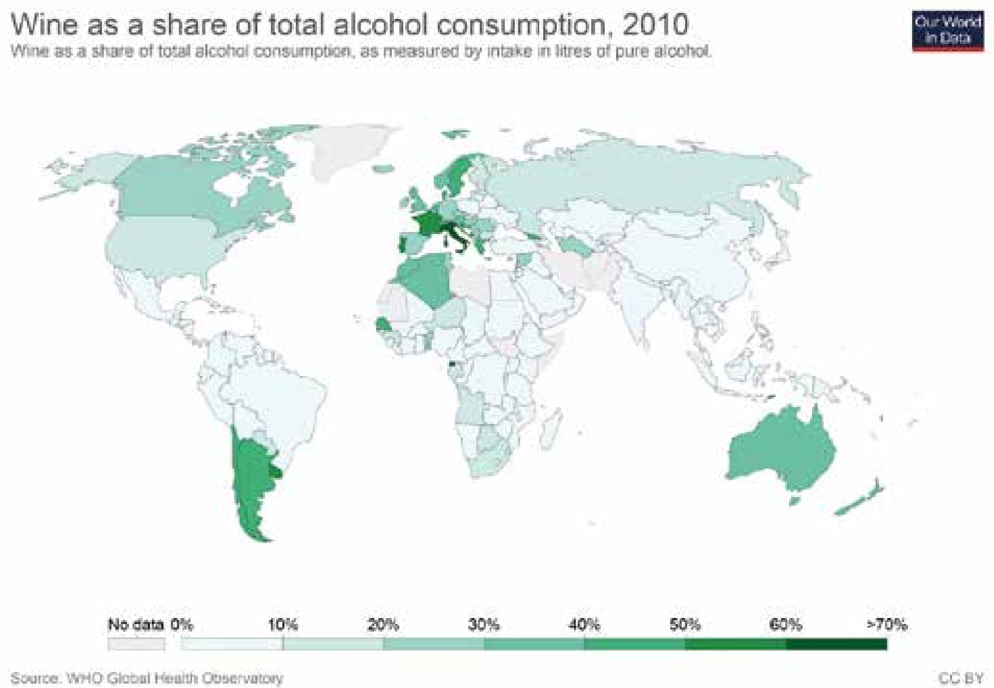
Lacking a specific taste makes vodka a universal basis for many cocktails. This is one of the reasons for its wide spread in West starting in the 19th century – not as a "pure" drink, but as a basis for many different cocktails. This way drinking vodka has become more complicated and has reached far outside the context, typical for the Slavic and Nordic peoples. Cocktail connoisseurs created their own drinking culture. Cocktails are not simply a mix of different beverages, but rather an expression of aesthetic and social tastes, which sometimes rest on complex cultural and historical contexts. The consumption of various cocktails during all the 20th century is invariably connected with literature, cinema and fashion.

FOCUS 3

Alcohol's consumption in the world

Alcoholic maps of Europe, based on WHO data (https://our-worldindata.org/alcohol-consumption).
Consumption of beer, wine and spirits as part of the total consumption of alcohol in different countries.





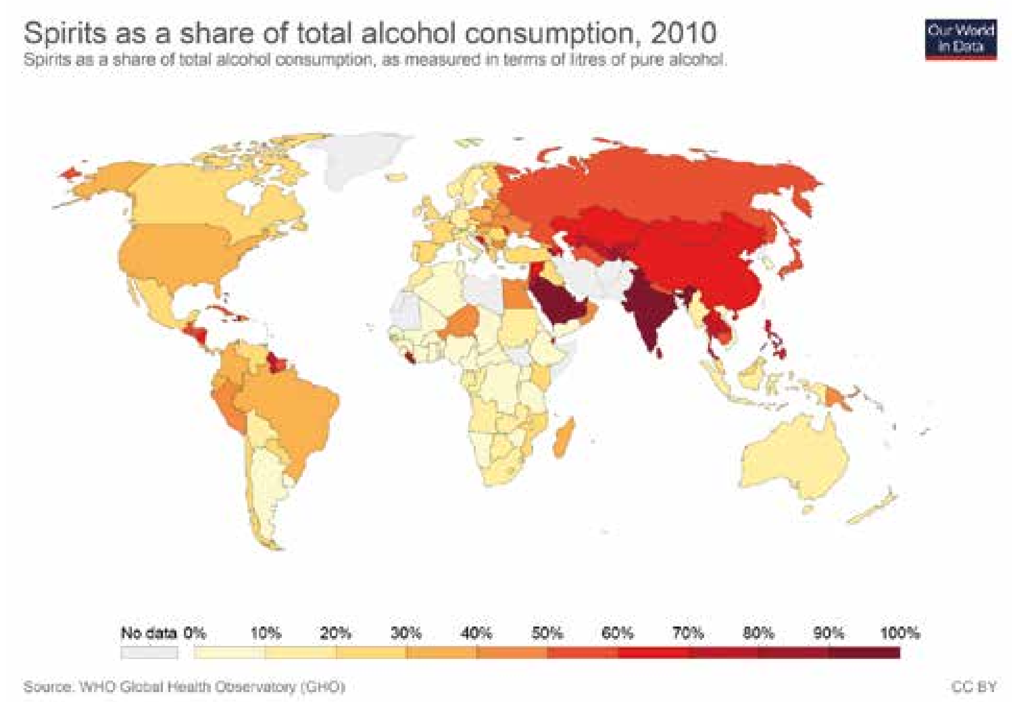


Fig. 1. Manca didascalia

5. TEA

5.1. HISTORY

Tea is prepared from the leaves and flowers of the *Camellia Sinensis* plant. The beverage originates from China, and it's difficult to pinpoint the exact time of its appearance. Legends say that 5000 years ago, a stray leaf fell in emperor Shennong's cup of hot water. This way, by force of mythological chance, he discovered the beverage.

Of course, legends are far from historic facts. The first evidence for tea as a beverage date from the Han dynasty, 2nd century B.C. Still, it is possible that tea was known as a medication much earlier, around 10th and 9th centuries B.C. In writings by Confucius, tea is mentioned alongside other herbs. Initially, it was used as a medication, which can be seen in medical texts dating from the 3rd century. In the 9th century, Buddhist monks from China carried it over to Japan, from where the herb quickly spread across all of Asia and became a daily drink.

During 10-15th, knowledge and techniques for growing tea developed further. Different states of fermentation were discovered, different varieties, drying methods, cutting and storage means, which lead to a variety of types of tea, and a diversity of preparation methods. Still, it is important to note that all types of tea (white, yellow, green, black, oolong, etc.), independently of the sort, origin and way of processing, are made from the same plant.

Tea arrived in Europe as late as the early 17th, as it was the Dutch who first brought it from China. During the same century, tea slowly made its way from China to Russia. By the end of 17th, it spread throughout Europe, initially as a medicine and finally as a daily drink.

Tea gained prominence during the 18th and 19th centuries, especially in Great Britain. The *East India Company* provided the main import from China, and the beverage became so popular that it became a staple of British culture from the period. This made the British market strongly dependent on China. The Chinese, on the other hand, kept the technology and methodology of growing and processing a secret for a long time. It should be noted that not until the 19th century did Europeans understand that green tea and black tea come from the same plant (The Cambridge World History of Food, 2000).

By the early 19th century, tea was already one of the most important imports in Great Britain. It seemed logical that the British look for other sources, as not to be as dependent on the difficult Chinese import. India turned out to be a good place, due to its suitable climate, and due to the fact that the British controlled the region. This way, by the middle of the century, the British managed to uncover the secrets of growing and processing tea, and began their own production in the vast territories of India and Sri Lanka.

Globalization in the 20th century turned tea into the most widely spread and easily available non-alcoholic beverage in the world. Unlike many other non-alcoholic drinks, tea is not only practically harmless, but also carries various benefits for human health, which is an additional source of interest. There is hardly another drink in the world, which, like tea, is a staple for so many cultures.

5.2. TEA AND TASTE

Due to its widespread, tea and its various uses are part of a wide range of national cultures. The social use of tea is the subject of hundreds of studies, and the variety is so wide that we can only look at a few of the more significant examples – from the Japanese tea ceremonies, to the afternoon tea in Victorian England.

The first teahouses appeared in China in the 7th century and slowly became important social and cultural centers, where people went to meet, eat, drink tea and communicate. Chinese teahouses flourished between the 16th-18th centuries, and were the stage for various events, such as dances, Chinese opera, poetry recitals, etc. Even today, tea is the national beverage of China, and modern teahouses, although not as important, still fulfill the same social functions.

Apart from being the center of social life in China, tea is also important for **ritual** practices of the Buddhist monks. It was a habit for them to drink tea before meditation. This practice underwent an interesting development in Japan, where tea spread in the 9th century, initially through Buddhist monks. It became an important part of Zen Buddhism, as during the following centuries the elements of the Japanese tea ceremony took shape. The Buddhist monk Myōan Eisai/Yōsai (1141-1215) introduced the practice of preparing green tea, which was first ground to fine powder.

Slowly, this method of preparing tea started being used outside of the context of religious practices. By the end of the 17th century, tea was so widely spread that it became part of daily life in all Japanese social strata. The Japanese tea ceremony became an important ritual, which concentrated philosophy, tradition and aesthetics. This way, tea drinking in Japan is simultaneously a daily tradition, but also a ritual practice, which cannot be reduced to mere consumption. There is probably no better illustration of the relationship between a drink or food with a deep social, historical and aesthetic context. It is not only the tea that is important – the tea ceremony also concentrates on the tools, timing, motions during preparation and serving. Due to this, tea culture in Japan requires special education, but also specific skills, which demonstrate refined taste.

Fig. 2. Japanese tea ceremony
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Outdoor_Tea_Ceremony.jpg

Tea occupies a central niche in Russian culture as well, which also has its peculiarities in terms of tea consumption. Russians use the so-called "samovar" – a metal kettle, in which water is heated. At the top of the samovar, there is a small teapot, where a very strong tea is steeped. A small quantity of the concentrated tea is poured in a cup and is then diluted with water from the kettle. In the past, samovars were heated by means of coals, whereas today they are mostly electric. In the 18th and 19th centuries, tea drinking quickly spread through Russian culture. It suffices to open the pages of some Russian classics, such as Dostoyevsky or Chekhov, for one to see how important tea is for Russian social life.

Fig. 3. Samovar
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Samovar_2.jpg)

No less important was tea for Great Britain and its colonies. Tea drinking became a fashionable tradition around the middle of the 17th century, thanks to King Charles II and his wife – the Portuguese Infanta Catherine de Braganza. By the mid-19th century, tea had become a main social practice in the English bourgeoisie. The so-called "afternoon tea" became a main daily ritual. The central place of tea-drinking in English society is reflected in art and literature from the period. "It's always tea-time" is a notable phrase by the Mad Hatter in Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland" (1832-1898).

One of the main drivers of the "afternoon tea" was the society of the bourgeois dames, for whom it was unacceptable to drink alcohol. Their presence in the famous English clubs, where alcohol was consumed until late night, was strictly forbidden. Their appearance in the newly emerging coffee houses was also undesirable. This is why the ladies turned the late afternoon tea into a regular ritual and focused British social life around it. They would dress up especially for the event, and socializing was accompanied by light snacks and sandwiches. This is when the taste for spiced and enriched teas was cultivated – such as the ever popular Earl Gray, which is black tea with bergamot.

At the beginning of the 21th century, tea is still the most widely consumed non-alcoholic beverage in the world, and it is expected that its popularity will grow in the following decades.

FOCUS 3

Boston Tea Party

On December 16th, 1773, in Boston, Massachusetts, which was a British colony at the time, a protest was organized, which entered history as the "Boston Tea Party". The residents of Boston, who had dressed up as Native Americans, dumped into the harbor all the tea delivered by the East India Company, as a protest against the monopoly and the taxation of tea by Britain. This was the motive and the cause of the war for independence of the United States.

Fig. 4. Currier and Ives, The Destruction of Tea at Boston Harbor, 1846
https://www.wikiart.org/en/currier-and-ives/the-destruction-of-tea-at-boston-harbor-1846

6. COFFEE

6.1. HISTORY

Coffee is a product of the *Coffea* plant, also known as the coffee tree. The plant looks more like a bush, whose beans, after roasting, are ground to different types of coffee. There are different varieties of *Coffea*, but the most well known are *Coffea Arabica* and *Coffea Canephora (Coffea Robusta)*, known simply as "arabica" and "robusta".

The plant comes from Ethiopia, where the tribes most likely used the beans by simply chewing them, without processing them in any way. The first to use coffee as a drink were the Islamic Mystics in Yemen around the beginning of the 15th century. The Sufis discovered the refreshing qualities of coffee, which helped them stay awake during long nightly prayers. They found a way to roast, grind and brew coffee, and consumed it in a form much the same as the one we know today. Thus, the coffee beverage itself was actually born in Yemen and during the following centuries spread throughout Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. The Sufis carried the drink to the main Islamic centres, where it became especially popular during the Ramadan, due to the fact that coffee reduces appetite and refreshes. Very quickly, legends appeared, linking coffee and Muhammad; in one of them, it was Archangel Gabriel (Jibril) who personally disclosed the secrets of coffee to the Prophet, so that the faithful can replace the forbidden and sinful wine with it. In fact, "coffee" comes from the Arabic "qahwah" – a word, which originally meant "wine".

No doubt, coffee and its spread would not be possible without Islam and its rise in the Middle ages. Coffee quickly became a daily drink in the Muslim world. Around the middle of the 16th century, the first coffee shops appeared. Due to the fact that the beverage requires roasting, grinding and brewing, its spread went hand in hand with places where this process could be demonstrated, after which the coffee was served, ready to be consumed. This is how coffee reached Istanbul, thanks to two Syrian merchants, who in 1555 opened a coffee shop, where to present and sell the new dink (The Cambridge World History of Food, 2000). This discovery quickly changed the daily life in the Muslim world. In Muslim culture, where alcohol is forbidden, the coffee shops became the center of social life, where men met and talked, played backgammon, ate and, of course, drank coffee.

Coffee inevitably penetrates from Muslim culture into Western Europe, mostly through wars, diplomacy and trade. The Venetian and Dutch merchants are quite possibly the first to transport the beverage into Europe at the turn of the 17th century. Initially, coffee was perceived as an exotic medicine against all sorts of ailments. Around the second half of the century, coffee was popularized thanks to Venetian, English and Dutch merchants, and thanks to diplomatic contacts between the Western European states and the Ottoman Empire. One of the legends states that after the unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1683, the

Ottoman troops left behind bales of coffee. The brew appealed to the Viennese, and so they became some of the first Europeans to use it as a refreshing beverage. Independent of the legend, however, the first Venetian coffee shop opened in 1629, and the first one in Oxford – in 1637.

Thus, around the end of the 16th century, throughout Europe, the coffee shop was shaping up as an important element in public space. It became a major social focus, where people would gather to communicate. This holds true even today, and not only in Europe. During the 18th and 19th centuries, the coffee shop became a central part of the urban environment. Drinking coffee was now a daily practice, and even some private, commercial and even political issues were discussed over a cup of coffee. European coffee shops became a platform for people to express their political and social discontent. During all of 19th and 20th century, different groups of people with common political and artistic attitudes would gather in certain coffee shops, with which they would closely identify. There, they would organize and unite, sharing their tastes, their ideas, worries and plans.

FOCUS 4

French revolution and coffee shops

On July 12, 1789, Camille Desmoulins – a French journalist and politician, made a speech to his friends and supporters at the French Cafè Foy, calling for armed rebellion. The effect was so strong that Parisians organized spontaneously, which lead to the Storming of the Bastille two days later, on July 14, 1789. Of course, even today historians argue about the historical laws, the reasons and the processes, which lead to the French Revolution. It is notable, however, that the start of one of the most important events in modern history can be traced to the public space of the coffee shop!

The industrial revolution and the urbanization of the 19th century, followed by globalization in 20th century, turned coffee into one of the most widely spread and well-known products in the world. Coffee democratized people's daily life around the world, since it is just as easily accessible and just as preferred, no matter what their ethnic, religious or **social status**. We will look at some of the most important moments in the modern "taste" of coffee in the following pages.

5.2. COFFEE AND TASTE

Europeans changed the way coffee is roasted, brewed and prepared. Turkish coffee, which is boiled and served without filtering the grounds, is not well liked in Europe. Coffee was now being filtered and strained, and in many places it was being consumed with milk, honey and other ingredients. The way it was roasted was also changed, which resulted in a different taste. Still, until the 19th century the consumption of tea was prevalent, especially in Great Britain.

The country, where coffee impressively overtook tea, is the United States. The thirteen English colonies, prior to the Revolutionary War, traditionally shared the British preference for tea. After the end of the War, the Americans increasingly drew back from tea and preferred coffee. The emancipation of Americans from English culture was just one of the reasons. Another factor lay in the friendly relations with France and the free trade with its African colonies, where a lot of coffee was grown. This reduced coffee prices in the US and turned coffee into an accessible commodity.

In US cities, coffee shops grew much slower than they did in Europe and the Middle East. Coffee was purchased together with the other food items for the household, and was roasted and prepared at home. Merchants quickly took over the niche, and by the end of the 19th century started selling roasted and ground coffee, ready to be brewed at home. At the same time, the establishing and distribution of easily recognizable brands took place. Preparing coffee became part of the household chores of American homemakers, and the main place for drinking coffee was at home.

The ways coffee was transported, traded and prepared, changed radically in the 19th and 20th centuries, mostly due to technology. Raw coffee lasts longer, but is unsuitable for sale to the end customers, because it then requires a long and hard process, to be prepared for consumption. It needs to be roasted, ground and then brewed. In the 18th century, the methods and means used, were exceptionally diversified. Everyone would roast, ground and brew coffee as they thought best. Once roasted and ground, however, it would quickly lose its aroma and its flavor, which made it unsuitable for long hauls, and decreased its shelf life.

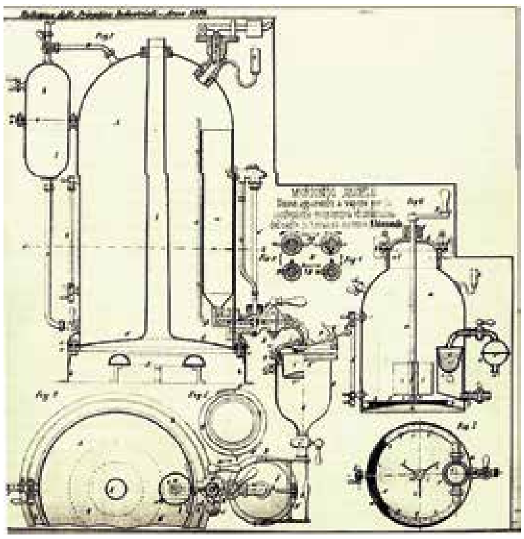


Fig. 5. Espresso machine schema, patented by Angelo Moriondo, Torino. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Espresso-machine-first-patent-angelo-moriondo.jpg

In Europe, coffee shops took care of preparing the coffee and carried out the entire process – from purchasing the raw coffee, all the way to serving the hot brew. The invention of the espresso machines in Italy in the 19th century was the beginning of a real revolution, as they significantly strengthened the flavor of coffee and reduced the time needed for its brewing. Prior to that, customers would have to wait a long while for their coffee, and the taste was much weaker, compared to espresso. Another important invention was the coffee percolator, which changed forever the way coffee was prepared at home.

Together with faster deliveries and with the use of new packaging technologies, the trade and delivery of roasted and ground coffee was now possible. The first brand of roasted, ready-to-brew coffee, was *Osborn's Celebrated Prepared Java Coffee*, which appeared in New York in the 1860s. At the beginning of the 20th century, vacuum packaging was the technology, which allowed to preserve the flavor and taste of coffee for a long time.

All these inventions went hand in hand with the global increase of coffee production. In the 19th and 20th centuries, Latin American countries, and mostly Brazil, became world leaders in production and export of coffee. Industrial production, together with global demand and supply of coffee, made this beverage one of the most popular products in the world. Just like tea, coffee has its central place in the daily life of various cultures around the world. One of the ways to get to know them is to actually take a look at how they drink their coffee, what kind of coffee they prefer, and where it belongs in their day-to-day culture. This, however, is a task, which extends far beyond the covers of our book.

GLOSSARY

Glossary

Added value (brand equity)

When a company has positive brand equity, customers willingly pay a higher price for its products, even though they could get the same thing from a competitor for less. This added value may concern practical benefits, but most often it comes from emotional, aesthetic or idealistic associations, which the brand management succeeds to create through the proper use of the brand mythology. The brand added value is transferable on other product or service categories, but it may result in negative brad equity if hazardous managerial decisions are taken.

Aesthetic experience

A particular kind of experience that calls on us to use our judgement of beauty with regards to a work of art, or an object, an individual, a landscape, involving each of our senses and our perception more generally.

Alcohol addiction

A disease also known as "alcoholism" involving both mental and physical dependence on alcohol.

Alcoholic distillation

A process in which alcohol is initially heated and evaporated from a given alcoholic liquid, and is then cooled down and condensed, thus increasing its concentration.

Alcoholic fermentation

A natural biochemical process in which certain yeasts transform sugars into alcohol (ethanol), energy and carbon dioxide.

Animal industry

The totality of food industries that involve the use and exploitation of animals: meat industry, dairy industry, egg industry, etc.

Aspectuality

The notion of *aspectuality* comes from linguistics and indicates the point of view on a process while in progress. The sight on a space or an actor in a story, or the recognition of the temporal phase of an action (initial, central, final) are both examples of *aspectuality* procedures.

Authenticity

In marketing perspective it signifies uniqueness of the product or the one coming from the source (the original manufacturer or the first one in the industry, the most experienced one, etc.); it is not a simple opposition of counterfeit (illegal) rather of a product that is imitation of shape, design, features, attributes, etc., and it is nothing new, although the manufacturer uses advertising to claim so.

Avatar

This is a projection of the self (of one's own image, of one's own identity) within virtual communities and online places for meeting, discussion and playing.

Basic values

Basic values are the values that makes an object attractive for someone who aims to achieve it, since she/he mirrors her/himself in those same values, and base her/his own identity according to them. *Basic values* can be defined *existential* or *final values* as well, and they do not depend on the object instrumental use. *Basic values* push the individual to undertake every form of action, communicative, material or cognitive. See also use values.

Benefit-cost ratio

It indicates the overall value we receive according to our needs for the money we spend for particular product which we evaluate as the best offer to cover these needs. As far as we sacrifice part of our budget (or just money we have in the pocket at the moment) on one option amongst all the offerings available in the market, we look for the right choice in a given situation. At least in theory, McDonalds menus provide the biggest quantity of calories for their price in comparison with any other food providers, but it does not mean that clients always go there since some of them demand of a good service as in fancy restaurants, special ethnic or exotic food, larger variety, etc., and they are ready to pay extra for it.

Bildungsroman

This is a literary genre that sees the protagonist's development towards maturity and adult age, while detailing their historic origins.

Blogosphere

This neologism refers to the collection of online blogs and the online conversations and interactions it facilitates.

Boycotting

The act of intentionally restraining from buying, using or generally dealing with people, organizations or products. Boycotting is most of the times done as a form of social protest:

by boycotting a certain food or brand, we express our disapproval towards what the product or the brand stands for.

Brand

Brand is what we know about a company, represented by a name, logo, slogan, etc., in terms of 1) what products and services that company offers, 2) the essence of the mission, vision and style of the company; 3) of emotional, aesthetic and often idealistic consumer concerns that the company stands for. In other words, the brand is the emotional relationship between the consumer and the product/service, built through strong, favorable and unique brand associations.

Although the *brand* can be confused with the *logo*, the word *brand* has a larger meaning and generally indicates the set of artifacts aimed at communicating the brand identity. In this sense, one can talk of *brand identity* as well. E.g., Nike stores design shows the same structure and brand philosophy which underlie the same company products and adverts.

Brand agent

Brand agent is the tangible promoter of the *added value* that given brand provides to its followers and customers. It may be a charismatic visionary and founder of a company as Coco Chanel or Steve Jobs, or a great athlete, associated with a brand as Michael Jordan, but it can be the product itself like the mythical bottle of *Coca Cola* or the *Harley Davidson* motorcycle, and even a place like *Disneyland*.

Brand culture

Brand culture results from the successful implementation of the company's brand strategy. It consists in shared values, consumer habits and rituals, use of symbols, etc., which influence the everyday life of company's employees and customers. Brand culture is beyond the control of the company and present-day lifestyles are shaped by the impact of the great brands. Thus we have fast food culture, fashion culture, internet culture, travel and mobility culture, etc. all resulting from the impact of influential brands.

Brand loyalty

Brand loyalty is when the brand benefits from the consumer's positive feelings and dedication to buy the same branded products, services or experiences regularly in the present moment and in the future, regardless of changes in the environment or competitors' activities. It can be demonstrated by additional consumer behaviors, such as word of mouth support and advocacy.

Brand manager

A Brand manager is responsible for creating and developing a brand strategy for a company's target market. Measuring the outcomes of the brand performance over time is also a duty of the brand manager. As the "brand guardian" he maintains brand integrity across all company marketing initiatives and communications, often managing the brand equity over a whole product or service portfolio.

Brand storytelling

The art of connecting the hearts and minds of customers to shared values and ideals that define the "sacred truth" of why the brand exists and who benefits from its existence. Compelling brand stories serve to remind us of something sacred and valued about ourselves rather than promoting some new product feature or additive.

Calorie

Coming from Latin *calor* ("heat"), the term is used to refer to a unit of heat energy, expressing the energy-producing value in food when oxidized in the body.

Category

A product category is all the products offering the same general functionality. The category analysis is an evaluation of a product category to define its strengths, weaknesses, etc.

Chromatic

Visual dimension that relates to the colours and the way they convey certain meanings – for instance in a work of art or in a plate – even linked to other visual and non-visual dimensions.

Commensality

The practice of eating and drinking together at the same table.

Communicative pact

A *communicative pact* consists in a set of implicit rules that affects the relation between an *Enunciator* (an image of the speaker inside the text) and an *Enunciatee* (an image of the message receiver inside the text). E.g., the exclamation "Stand up!" assumes a hierarchical *communicative pact* where who talks is higher than who listen. By contrary, the sentence "How do you do?" assumes an equal pact amongst the speaker and the receiver of the sentence. *Communicative pacts* can be equal, hierarchical, cognitive, emotional, etc.

Competence

With this term I refer to a particular moment in the tale, when the hero equips themselves with a subject of use, a tool (for example, a magical object) that allows them to acquire the necessary *savoir faire* and *power* with which to carry out their mission.

Contrasts

There is a *contrast* anytime one can perceive different characteristics or dimensions between some elements. In a painting, e.g., a strong contrast can be given by different colours such as light and dark ones. Similarly, in gastronomy, different flavours can create *contrasts* (sweet and savoury) as well as different textures (soft and crunchy).

Counterfeits

Counterfeit consumer goods are goods, often of inferior quality, made or sold under another's brand name without the brand owner's authorization. Sellers of such goods may infringe on either the trademark, patent or copyright of the brand owner by passing off its goods as made by the brand owner.

Craft beer

Beer with a specific style, brewed in small breweries and small quantities, with a very high quality of the raw materials. Similar to hi quality wines craft beers are considered works of arts.

Critical consumerism (or critical consumption)

The act of buying or not buying a product,on the basis of our ethical values. A critical consumer will not only buy a food product because it is tasty, or healthy or affordable, but also because it bears characteristics that are in line with their cultural beliefs.

Critical, valorization

Critical valorisation represents the logic negation of utopian valorisation. It occurs anytime a text – such as an advert – aims to deny the *existential value* of a product. As a result, the *critical valorisation* attempts at making "objective" the values it brings, e.g. by giving measurable reasons. That is, for example, a car presented as a good choice in terms of fuel consumption. In the food sector, the subjective component of taste makes the *critical valorisation* of products difficult to enact.

Cruelty-free

Any product that does not involve abusive practices on non-human animals, such as killing or testing.

Cult brand

There is a fundamental distinction between Cult Brands and all other product brands. Cult Brands are perceived through the brand mythology system. Ordinary product brands do not. Brand mythology uses storytelling to involve the brand with ethical values based on ecological concerns, social justice, family values, creativity and self-actualization, etc.: a set of ideals that, thanks to the brand, make their consumption valuable beyond the functional attributes of the product or service.

Cultural heritage

The inheritance of both physical artefacts (*tangible heritage*) and immaterial attributes (*intangible heritage*) of a group or society that is inherited from past generations.

Deconstructing

Deconstruction is the contrary of construction. In this book we do not use the word *deconstructing* in a physical but abstract sense. Indeed, the communication analysis does not want to frame a unique and universal meaning of messages once for all, but rather reconstructing the deep structures by which an expressive configuration can provide a number of meanings (and why not other ones). *Deconstruction* aim is to identify those deep structures that generate meanings.

Design

Industrial design, often shortened to *design*, was born in the early 1900s as a new approach toward object creation. This approach contrasted with craftsmanship for a strong attention to rationality in all the design phases: from the object use project to its reproduction. The word has gradually begun to be used for multiple fields and artefacts (graphic design, web design, food design etc.) not necessarily linked to industrial production. At the same time, the philosophy of design moved from the initial positivism to a comprehensive attention about objects aesthetic. The word *design* aims at highlighting a work-method which bases the artefact building on a pre-existing project (no matter how the project and its concept are).

Developing countries

Countries with a less developed industrial base and more challenging human conditions. While the threshold of such indicators varies according to the criteria employed, and therefore the list of such countries may change depending on the source, it is generally accepted that the majority of developing countries are in Africa, Asia and South America.

Discount (store)

Discount is a reduction in the usual price (list price) of something. Discount store is a retail store that sells products at prices lower than those asked by traditional retail outlets. Discount stores that specialize in a specific assortment of goods within a retail category are called “category killers.”

Economy size packaging

A larger size, containing greater amounts of a given product – laundry detergent, soap, toilet paper, shampoo, milk, etc.

Effect of meaning

Each text enacts its own communication strategies that are meant to guide the reader toward a precise interpretation path. Thus, in a TV series, a gloomy music in the background together with the view of a dark room can produce a *meaning effect* of suspense. A lot of fruits inside a wicker basket produces a *meaning effect* of freshness.

Eidetic

Word that refers to the basic shapes of the visual dimension (lines, surfaces etc.) and to the way they convey certain meanings. Basic shapes can be combined with or opposed to different shapes (curved lines against straight lines, for example).

Environmental (or ecological) footprint

The impact of human activities measured in terms of the area of biologically productive land and the amount of water required to produce the goods consumed and to assimilate the wastes generated.

Espresso

Both method of preparing coffee and the final drink that was made using this method. Espresso method of brewing coffee was invented in Italy. It requires the usage of a special machine that pressurizes small amount of nearly boiling water through freshly grinded coffee. The process takes less than a minute and pressure used approximates nine bars. The result is a shot of coffee with intense and deep aroma also called "Espresso".

Esthesic

Dimension related to the sensory perception. E.g. the scents described by sommeliers in a wine tasting session, or any taste perception related to food.

Ethnic food

An ethnic group's or a country's cuisine that is culturally and socially recognised (and so cooked, eaten, discussed, …) by consumers outside that group or country.

Fair trade

Label that is applied to brands or products that support fairer economic conditions for workers and traders in developing countries: better salaries, higher import-export fees, etc. Examples of "fair trade" foods include sugar, chocolate, coffee, tropical fruit, and others that are typical of certain areas of the world like Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Farce

A theatre and film genre of an exaggerated comedic character that is often crude and with a popular feel.

Feed conversion rate (or ratio)

A rate measuring the efficiency with which livestock convert animal feed into body mass or weight gain.

Figural and figurative

Two ways of depiction that (in visual languages) are determined by the different amount of traits used to depict a world object. A *figurative* image has a standard number of strokes that easily allows to recognise a world object, whilst a *figural* image has the least strokes possible in order to allow multiple interpretations.

Figurative semiotics

Figurative semiotics is a semiotic analysis field which describes how we relate meanings to certain stimuli (visual, verbal, gustatory etc.) starting from combining several traits or strokes in formants. If we recognize a dog in a drawing it is because our brain brings together certain strokes (those that define the ears, the muzzle, the eyes) that differentiate it from a wolf or a cat (different ears, muzzle etc.)

Figures

A figure is an expressive configuration – of any kind (verbal, visual, etc.) – that brings a meaning which is understandable and recognisable thanks to the "world knowledge" that society shares. The theme of freedom, for example, can be expressed through several figures (the flight of a bird, a broken chain, etc.), and each of them conveys further meanings (the flight of a bird evokes "environment" but also "religion", while a broken chain could refer to "slavery").

Flavourful

By *flavourful* we refer to that *language of taste* that interprets food purely through its qualities as perceived by the senses, which are recognised thanks to their articulation through contrast. A dish can therefore be understood by the fact it is made up of a contrast: for example, a contrast between crunchiness (on the outside) and softness (inside), as in the case of a supplì.

Follower

A social network user who is registered in the page of another user in order to see messages from them and follow their updates.

Food journalism

A flourishing area of journalism devoted to food trends, habits and novelties.

Food miles

This refers to the distance a product has travelled from the moment it is produced to the moment it reaches the consumer. Short supply chains aim to reduce this distance by, for example, proposing local food consumption and a reduction of commercial intermediaries.

Food processing

The process of transformation of food from one (usually simpler or raw) form into another, usually more complex. Examples of processed food include canned products, dried meat, flours, etc.

Food safety

The set of criteria ensuring the proper handling, preparation and preservation of food in order to prevent food-borne illnesses.

Food security
A condition existing when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. The contrary condition is defined as food insecurity.

Food trend
A new direction in which food habits are developing or changing.

Foodie
A personal with a refined interest in food, who eats not out of hunger but because of her/his interest in food.

Foodways
The practices related to the production, consumption and sharing of food shared by all the members of a particular society or culture.

Form
In everyday language, *form* refers to the aesthetic configuration of an object (its shape). However, in the communicative, and in particular linguistic, context, the same term refers to the action produced on a specific matter. This action is both material and abstract. For instance, we can think of the form of gastronomy as the way in which a culture articulates their own universe of ingredients (how they are transformed and cooked) and, at the same time, as the ensemble of values and meanings that the same culture gives to food.

Formant
In visual semiotics, a formant is a small set of visual strokes/traits which links to a basic meaning. E.g., a square with a triangle on the top, in a draw, it might constitute a formant (i.e. a small set of shapes) that means “house”.

Fourth wall
The fourth wall is an imaginary ‘wall’ situated in front of a theatre’s stage, through which the public observes the action taking place in the world of the dramatic piece being performed. The term is also used in film to indicate more generically the boundary between the fictional world and the audience.

Function
In communication sciences, the concept of *function* has to be split in a practical component, for example regarding how an information is transmitted, and in a symbolic or mythical component, which concerns the cultural and identity aspects related to the message meaning.

Fusion cuisine
A cuisine effectively combining elements of different culinary traditions. The prototypical example of fusion cuisine is the

Tex-Mex cuisine, which mixes South-western United States foodways with Mexican culinary culture.

Gamification

It signifies the use of game or gamelike principles and elements in various situations in marketing aiming to attract attention, to simulate participation and (mostly) to build and improve consumers' engagement. Some usual examples are rankings based on particular consumer's activities that generate points in a loyalty card, badges or avatars as visual signs for some achievements, quiz participation providing gifts from a brand or manufacturer, and so on.

Globalization

The process of international integration and connection between countries, which occurs globally, affecting many aspects of culture and society, including food.

Glocal

Term that derives from the union of the global and local words and indicates a reality that fuses identity, traditions, local characteristics within a global socio-cultural and political-economic system (see also glocalization).

Glocalization

The process of simultaneous occurrence of universalising and particularising tendencies in contemporary sociocultural systems.

Glorious proof

In narratology this term refers to the main task undertaken by the hero, aimed at redressing the balance within a story. Once this task has been carried out, the story can come to an end.

Greenhouse gas

A type of gas that traps energy from the sun causing the so-called "greenhouse effect", that is the warming of the Earth's surface and air above it. Typical examples of greenhouse gases are water vapor, carbon dioxide, and methane. To a reasonable extent, these gases are useful to keep the planet's temperature high enough to make life possible. To the excessive extent of nowadays, the emission of greenhouse gases is the primary reason for global warming.

Halo effect

it refers to positive impression (general image) of a person, material object or entity, that can lead to exaggeration of its features, benefits, capabilities, actions, etc., as well as to better opinion, attitude and feelings in other areas. For example, intensive advertising usually generates positive impression of manufacture's leading position in the market or at least of its superiority in terms of quality, tradition, know-how, etc.

Hard discounter

It refers to store or store chain that offers food, beverages, detergents and some other everyday commodities mainly on a self-service or low-service basis, usually under its own label/s or the cheapest manufacturer/suppliers' brands. Very often its assortment (the mix of the products offered) is wider as variety of product categories, rather than deeper of modifications and types than the expected in the other retail formats. In terms of management it relies on small profit per product, but bigger and faster turnover, as well as on direct contacts with the suppliers that allows it to negotiate lower end prices than average in the market.

Herbivore

An animal that, by biological constitution and at its current state of evolution, can feed exclusively on plants. Examples of herbivorous animals include mammals like cows and gorillas, birds like geese and parrots, reptiles like tortoises and iguanas, etc.

Hipster culture

A part of the contemporary pop-culture that affects packaging by use of natural, soft colors and materials, cleaner shapes and art elements, typical for the distant past, in order to make it more stylish and original.

Human body

Generally defined as the physical structure of men, it is nonetheless undiscernible from the cultural and social dimension, which regulate and confer variable meanings on it.

Hybridization

In globalization theory, the process of cultural and ethnic mixing to produce new forms (in the case of food, plates or cuisines).

Hypertext

A hypertext is a collection of documents related to one another through keywords. It can be understood as a net, with the documents being the knots. The main characteristic of a hypertext is that it can be read in a non-linear fashion, any online document could be 'next' depending on the keyword chosen by the reader as a way of connecting them. It is possible to read all the documents linked to a particular keyword within a hypertext. The choice of a different keyword leads to a different document being opened: within the hypertext infinite reading paths are possible.

Identity

Virtual construct, individual and collective, with specific characteristics, which is used and referred to for deciphering a multiplicity of phenomena and to stand out from other realities.

Impulse purchase

(Or impulse buying) An unplanned decision to buy something. It disrupt budget plans people have to save money. In supermarkets, for example, they place their goods prominently at the checkout aisles. Shoppers see them and make instant shopping decisions.

Inchoative

Time aspectuality that focuses on the initial moment of an action (whether it takes place in the past, in the present or in the future: e.g. "Maria is going to eat an apple", but also "Maria was going to eat an apple"). Similarly, breakfast is the meal that marks the beginning – that is the *incoative phase* – of a day.

Intensive farming (or intensive agriculture)

A form of agriculture that aims at maximizing the productivity and minimizing the space. That is usually possible through a strong employment of chemicals, mechanization and automation of work, and therefore a higher emission of polluting substances. In the case of animals, intensive farming implies also a drastic reduction of comfort and welfare.

Interactivity

It expresses the possibility to interact (communicate) with the packaging, or to do something with it, which is different from its main functions, via various kinds of tools – QR or barcodes, pictures, reshaping it manually and so on.

Interface

In a general sense, the interface is the object part that interact with another object or a human. This part is a point of contact and separation at the same time. The interface has a primary importance in design, as it allows to use and enjoy any object. In a communicative perspective, the interface is the space of *translation* between the technological and human two languages. In the case of a mobile phone, for example, the display-interface plays a crucial role of mediation and translation between the electronics of the internal circuits and the human touch and gestures on its external surface.

Intermedial

That expresses itself through various communicative channels and means, sometimes concurrently.

Iterative

Time aspectuality that focuses on the repetition of an action (e.g. "I do breakfast everyday").

Locavorism

A movement of people preferring to eat food grown or farmed as close as possible to the places of sales and preparation.

Logo

The word *logo* is an abbreviation of *logotypes* that indicates the graphic element that marks any products in order to distinguish them from different or non-marked ones. The *logo* usually has both a visual component and a verbal one, and it has a primary importance in the marketing world as the sign that everyone links to a *brand identity*. The bitten apple of the Apple logo, for instance, not only links to the well known Apple products, but also to a precise concept of technology innovation built around each customer daily life.

Lovemark

A brand that holds a particular emotional or symbolic value, and that is particularly beloved beyond any purely commercial relationship.

Ludic-aesthetic, valorization

Ludic-aestethic valorisation represents the logic negation of practical valorisation. It occurs anytime a text – such as advert – aims to deny the *utilitarian values* of a product. That is, e.g., a car presented as beautiful or nice to drive. In the food sector, this effect is obtained by insisting on the pleasure that food gives.

Market leader

A company that has achieved a dominant position - either in scale or influence - within its field.

Market positioning

It signifies the hypothetic 'place' that a brand occupies in the consumers' minds based on the difference and distinction of given branded product compared with the competitors' offerings (who, when and how uses it, what valuable features and attributes the product possess, etc.). The management tries to build and maintain an integrate, suitable and stable image (unique vs. mass, luxurious and exceptional vs. affordable and down-to-Earth, connected with a particular client's profile vs. other clients' groups, etc.) via the all of the marketing mix. The intended outcome of the strong positioning is a psychological advantage of the brand over the competition generating consumers' preference, higher quality perception, and, eventually, higher level of loyalty.

Marketing mix

A specific combination of 4 elements: *product, place, promotion* and *price*, that companies use to implement their targets for marketing. Also called the 4 P's of marketing they are the four pillars of a successful marketing strategy. Together, they get the product in front of the likeliest purchasers at the right price.

Material culture

This word comes from anthropology and highlights the way people made artefacts (weapons, dishes, sculptures etc.) not only reflects their usage, but overall the social sense they take on. Archaeology, especially prehistoric archaeology, can reconstruct the past societies functioning and culture only thanks to what objects implicitly "tell".

McDonaldization

Term introduced in 1983 by George Ritzer, who uses fast food chains as a metaphor for more general trends characterising contemporary American society. The term refers to the homogenization of American food and culture, highlighting how speed, convenience and standardization have replaced creativity and experimentation in cooking and the variety available in choice, both within and outside of the food realm.

Media ecology

Given the fact that the packing is a medium of information, the term refers to the set of the elements combined together on the packaging in order to communicate a brand, quality and quantity of the product, additional features, etc., since by the pack design the manufacturer tries to provide as much information as possible without being overburden, visually unpleasant or inconvenient.

Megatrend

A widespread trend capable of refiguring public discourse in every area of society.

Merchandising

The activity of promoting the sale of goods at retail. According to American Marketing Association, merchandising encompasses "planning involved in marketing the right merchandise or service at the right place, at the right time, in the right quantities, and at the right price". Merchandising activities may include the determination of quantities, setting prices, creating display designs, establishing special offer and other point-of-sale methods.

Neophilia

Literally, "love for the new". In food studies, the term is used to refer to people's inclination to explore new foods and diets. It coexists with neophobia.

Neophobia

Literally, "fear for the new". In food studies, the term is used to refer to people's aversion towards new foods and their fear of the potential risks associated with new food sources. It coexists with neophilia.

Network TV

TV channel or schedule targeted to undifferentiated audiences. See, by contrast, thematic channels.

NGO

Acronym for Non-Governmental Organization. An NGO is a non-profit organization that operates independently of official/governmental institutions, usually with the purpose to address social or political issues.

Nutritionism

A paradigm assuming that the nutritional value of a food is the sum of all its individual nutrients (proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins) and other components. This idea developed over the last century, becoming established in the post-war period thanks to the expansion of the mass food market, the improvement of living standards in the Western world, and the development of the food industry.

Object of value

This term refers to the object searched for by the hero. Once recovered, their mission is complete.

Obligate carnivore

An animal that, by biological constitution and at its current state of evolution, can feed exclusively on other animals. The adjective “obligate” is added in order to stress the need for nutrients that are only found in meat and cannot be replaced by other foods. Contrary to popular beliefs, there are relatively few species of animals that are “obligate” carnivores (while of course more flexible carnivores are higher in number). Examples include wild and domestic felines, birds like hawks and eagles, fish like trouts and salmons, etc.

Omnivore

An animal that, by biological constitution and at its current state of evolution, can feed on both plants and animals. The term can be slightly misleading, due to its etymology (from the Latin *omnivorus*: “able to eat everything”): since most omnivorous animals, despite their flexibility, find numerous plants and animals toxic and sometimes lethal, a preferable term could be polyphagous.

Omnivore’s dilemma

The fact that humans, as omnivores, seek and explore new potential foods (neophilia), but remain wary of them until these are proven safe (in a material, but also symbolic sense) (neophobia).

Packaging

It is a physical cover of products that embraces science, art and technologies to enclose, advertise and protect them during their transportation/distribution, storage/warehousing, merchandise/sale, and consumption/use. The type of the material it is made of, overall design, information it bears, size, useful features and language used reflects the essence, quality and quantity of the product, its brand, the type of retail it is offered in, the situation of use and usage, the type of clients it targets and the particular governmental requirements.

Palm oil

An edible vegetable oil produced from the pulp (the so-called "mesocarp") of the fruit of the oil palm. Widely employed in numerous forms of food processing, it is mostly produced in developing countries. Palm oil is currently object of controversy, due to its production causing deforestation, loss of natural habitat, and threat to endangered animal species such as the Orangutan and the Sumatran tiger.

Plastic semiotics

Plastic semiotics analyses languages from a deeper and more abstract point of view, by taking into account the constituting dimension of their expressive configuration. In visual languages, these dimensions are: eidetic, chromatic and topological. In food matter, aspects such as primary tastes (sweet, salty, bitter etc.), texture or sensations such as astringent.

Polyphagous

An animal that, by biological constitution and at its current state of evolution, can feed on both plants and animals. Due to its etymology (from the Greek *polyphagia*: "to eat many things"), the term could be a more precise definition for animals like the human being, who can indeed adapt to feed on *many* (but not all) plants and animals.

Post

A text or message published on a blog, social platform or online discussion group.

Practical, valorization

There is a *practical valorization* anytime a text – such as an advert – aims to present a product as a means to achieve a purpose. That is, for example, a car which is promoted as a means of transport. In the food advertisement, e.g., a *practical valorization* consists in highlighting the nutritional value of foodstuff, rather than its identity values.

Primary function

The *primary function* stands for the material transformation function of the tool. E.g., moving people around is the *primary function* of a car. Quite often, however, functions that seems to be *secondary functions* can become primary, i.e. a car which represents a status symbol.

Private label product
Product that is sold under a brand name (generally managed by a distributor) but manufactured by an outside company. Brands using a third-party to manufacture private label products have control of the brand packaging, prices and marketing, without owning the production facilities.

Processing
See Food processing.

Product placement
Promotion strategy that involves the display of products inside television studios, movie sets, TV series, etc. Many times, e.g., branded foodstuffs are placed on the pantries shelves of cuisine programs, in order to promote them.

Product portfolio
a combination of products of one company. For example, grocery store chains have varying store sizes, leading to a variation of the goods that they offer in each of them, depending on their location: in central city locations, the stores are smaller, while they are much larger in the outskirts, and have a much larger variation of products; some chains also have separate brands where they offer different products, or offer items at lower or higher prices. This way the buyers learn that a given chain is "more expensive" and has a better assortment of products, while another chain is "closer to the people" and its prices are meant for people with limited resources.

Production disciplinary
This is the part of the PDO, PGI and TSG regulations that describes, as if it were a kind of recipe, which steps must be followed in order to achieve a typical product suitable for certification.

Reality-effect
Some texts enacts specific procedures in order to reproduce the reality inside them and, doing so, make the users believing that what they are looking at, reading or listening is true (whether it is the case or not). For example, statistics and sources citations, in a journal article, are usually meant to generate a *reality-effect*, as well as the use of many details in a description or in a draw, etc. From this point of view, reality is an effect of meaning or, in other words, a consequence of accurate communication strategies.

Regimen of meaning
A particular system governing people's choices, not necessarily as a rule imposed by an external authority but rather as

a set of collectively shared criteria, and the meanings associated with such choices.

Regional cuisines

Kitchens of a specific territorial area that offer food and food practices that are geographically and culturally connoted.

Retail

The industry that distributes services and durable and non-durable goods to customers. The beginning of the supply chain includes commodities and other raw materials. Manufacturers create the product. The middle of the supply chain is wholesale sales. They distribute the goods and services to retailers. The retailers sell them to the consumer.

Rituals / Religious rituals

A social or religious ceremony with a fixed set of actions or/and words. Rituals are of a great importance in most of the religious systems presenting and symbolizing important parts of their content. Different beverages were used as a part of various religious and social rituals. For example the Communion in Christianity and drinking Champaign wine during wedding ceremonies in Europe.

Road movie

This is a genre of film in which the plot development predominantly takes place over the course of a journey, literally on the road.

Santoku

Japanese knife with a pretty thick and slightly curved blade, suitable for transforming greens and vegetables by slicing, dicing and chopping. Indeed, the word santoku means "three uses" or "three virtues".

Sashimi

Traditional Japanese plate with raw fish. The fish preparation for this dish requires very high skills on fish choice, cleaning, and individual bites cut, and the final dish has an extremely refined aesthetic. The knife is its main preparation tool.

Schedule

The *schedule* is a plan that summarizes the programs that a television channel will broadcast for a time.

(Shelf) stopper

An eye-catching signage placed in front of a product to bring it into the spotlight. Advertising in front of products is the final opportunity to seduce consumers, more commonly known as "last metre communication".

Semi-symbolism

Semi-symbolism is a basic meaningful configuration where a couple of expressive traits has a mutual relationship with a couple of contents. Such relationships between expression and content couples cannot be considered as stable and universal. For instance, in a traffic light, the permission to move on and the oblige to stop are green and red. Yet the red colour, outside "traffic light" configuration, does not necessarily mean "stop".

Service
It refers to a set of processes, technologies and/or people' skills, knowledge experience, tools required and acts channeled to provide value/benefits in the form of non-physical goods to the consumer (banking, car repairing, baby-sitting, security, education, transport, TV-signal providing, etc.). Services are intangible, perishable and inconsistent in nature, but highly flexible and customizable that makes them even more valuable.

Service à la russe
This is a way of dining that ensures the courses are brought to the table in sequence. It is an alternative to service *à la française* in which all the food is bought to the table at once.

Service mix
As services' role in the mature economies has increased, the mix has gained another 3 important elements – *process, people* and *physical evidence*. Some experts also add *performance* – or the actual "realization" of the service, so that customers are truly happy. Food delivery and restaurant business in general are quite common and successful types of services, where the *processes* are all the organizational phases (ingredient delivery, shift planning, cutting, cooking, cleaning, technical service, etc.), *people* are restaurant managers, waiters, delivery personnel, while *physical evidence* can vary from staff uniforms, to menu design, to the standard interior design for a certain restaurant, all the way to the open kitchen solution, where patrons can observe the work in the kitchen area.

Singulative
Time aspectuality that focuses on the oneness of an action (e.g. "the glass fell to the floor").

Slimming diet
A diet aiming at weight loss.

Social influencers
Social media users who propose themselves as influencers of public opinion in their field of expertise.

Social status
The value that someone has in the society. The social status indicates the position that someone holds in the social hierarchy.

Sommelier/Cicerone
A sommelier is a wine steward who is in charge of serving and advising the customers in a restaurant. The sommelier is

well educated in wine and its pairing with food. Cicerone to beer is the same as sommelier to wine. Cicerone is also known as "beer sommelier".

Spin-off

A *spin-off* is a television program which originates from another successful one. This is the case, e.g., of "Celebrity Masterchef", born as an offshoot of "Masterchef." Also, in the TV series genre, this is the case of "Better call Saul", whose main character comes from the previous well-known serie "Breaking Bad".

Spontaneous purchase

Any purchase we make which we had no intention to do (it was not in our shopping list) before entering a given point of sale (supermarket, kiosk, restaurant, etc.). Usually some particular advertisements (poster, 'discount' sign), merchandising stimulus (two related products stand closer to each other on the shelf or the product is put on display separated from the main stock volume) or information provided by the staff serves as an incentive to buy something more that we planned. One of the most effective positions for generating spontaneous purchases are cash-desks where great variety of goods is available (sweets, batteries, chewing gums, etc.) during the period we spend waiting to pay.

Status symbol

Symbol of social status, a sign of certain position in the social hierarchy.

Supply chain

The supply chain is the network of activity, technology, single and collective actors that contributes to the production and commercialisation of a finished product.

Symbolic

Although there are several different definitions of symbol, the word symbol usually refers to a sign that one can recognize with ease, due to its efficacy and cultural value. The crucifix, for example, is the main symbol of Christianity. Then, more generally, we speak of a symbolic function of something referring to the meanings that go beyond its functional use. The symbolic function of food, for example, is that which goes beyond its strictly nutritional dimension.

Synaesthesia

From the Ancient Greek *σύν (syn)*, "together", and ***αἴσθησις*** *(aisthēsis)*, "sensation"; perceptual phenomenon in which the stimulation of one sensory or cognitive pathway automatically and involuntarily involve experiences in a second sensory or cognitive pathway.

Synaesthetic
See Synaesthesia.

Table manners
The rules used while eating (such as speaking or keeping silent, making or not making noise while eating, minutely masticating foods in the mouth or directly swallowing them, etc.), which may also include the adoption of specific tools (such as cutlery, chopsticks, etc.).

Target audience
The segment of the audience at which a particular communication is directed.

Target group
The group of people a company tries to attract as clients; it requires high level of knowledge about age, needs, interests, income, marital status, education and media preferences of that people and affects the management decisions of how to build, develop, adapt and improve the whole marketing mix.

Tasty
We define tasty that peculiar *language of taste* that employs the formal recognition of flavours, dishes, gastronomic experiences. Every time we eat something, we refer to an implicit *encyclopaedia*, a cultural filter that uses sight, taste, smell and touch. This encyclopaedia keeps track, incessantly registering the substances and dishes passible enough to be considered *edible* within a particular culture, ordering them according to various hierarchies and logic. It is precisely the existence of this cultural filter that allows us to recognise foods when we see them, *anticipating* their meaning.

Terminative
Time aspectuality that focuses on the final stage of a process (whether this process occurs in the past, in the present or in the future. E.g., "Maria is finishing eating an apple", or "Maria was finishing eating an apple"). Similarly, dinner is the meal that marks the end – that is the terminative phase – of a day.

Terroir
When referring to food and wine, a terroir is the area of origin to which a product is connected. It is a space that is not only physical, but cultural and social, the result of an interaction between human and non-human elements.

Testimonial
In the advertising field, the *testimonial* is an individual – real, imaginary or specifically created – that embodies company identity and philosophy. Famous people (such as actors, singers, sportsmen) are often *testimonials* who lend their name and

face to a company, as well as their personal "brand" identity, in order to promote a product or a company brand. In this way, the promoted *brand identity* melts with the *testimonial* identity, and they end up with sharing both pros and cons of each other.

Text

This word indicates, in semiotics, a unit which can be identified, cropped and described according to the consistent meaning it produces. The *text* is the primary study object of semiotics. Semiotic *text* analysis purpose is to enquire the internal structure of *texts* and to explain how do they produce meanings. *Text* is therefore a generic term and can be referred to a verbal (a novel, a poem), visual (a photograph, a painting), architectural (a building but also a whole city), gustatory (a dish but also a meal).

Textural

This word etymology refers to fabric and to its hand feel. More generally, we say texture to describe the ensemble of physical sensations that a material display – like a surface – gives.

Thematic channels

Television channels with a thematic schedule. They target an audience with well-identified interests and characteristics (contrary to network TVs). E.g., thematic channels that focuses on gastronomy (Food channel), or thematic channels that propose several declinations of the reality show format (Real Time) etc.

Timeline

The graphic organisation used by social networks in which the most recent posts appear placed first, with the oldest posts moved progressively down until they disappear completely and are archived.

Topological

Visual dimension that concerns the flat surface on which the picture is and its internal organization due, for example, to its spatial composition.

Tou

The *tou* is a Chinese origin knife with a large, heavy and slightly-curved blade, with a small handle. Despite the *tou* shape reminds a cleaver, this Chinese knife differs for its kitchen purpose. The *tou* is used to slice and chop, quickly and precisely, vegetables and other solid materials.

Traceability

A food product can be described as 'traceable' when the consumer can clearly see its origins, its history, its processing and the journey it has taken to reach the shop shelf.

Trademark
A name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers. The trademark is used for legal protection, i.e. the trademark rights prevent others from making, promoting, or selling goods or services which have a name, symbol, or design that is similar up to be misleading to that of the original producer/provider.

Traditional, or traditional food
According to the official definition, traditional food products are those whose methods of processing, preserving and aging (the same throughout the area involved) have been consolidated over time for at least 25 years. However, contemporary reflections upon food and wine are leading us to see tradition as a process of continual evolution, looking to the future, rather than a mere conservation of **the past.**

Trend
It refers to a process of change that begins with trendsetters (individuals as designers or organizations as companies and particular groups of society) and moves into the mainstream or widespread consumption, interest, behavior and/or just knowledge; it is not limited to design and style, it also affect what we eat and drink, what we like to read, the movies we want to watch, and the other areas where we use the word taste to describe what we like. Eventually this change may even fall out of favor, that is why we say that there are fluctuations of the trends - they may fade away too fast (based on Vejlgaard, H., *The Anatomy of Trend*, 2008: 9).

Typical, or typical food
This term is used to describe a characteristic food with a strong connection to the geographic area from which it hails. Its unique nature can depend on many different elements: artisanal knowledge, the local selection and adjustment of flora and fauna, the climate, the chemical and physical characteristics of the land.

Typicality
Identification category of a product that summarizes the historical memory of the product itself, its tradition, a specific area of production, knowledge and preparation practices.

Umami (旨味 or うまみ)
Lit. "savoury pleasant taste", one of the five basic tastes (together with sweetness, sourness, bitterness, and saltiness). We taste it through specific taste receptors that respond to glutamate, which is naturally present in a variety of foods (e.g. meat broths and fermented products), and can also artificially added in the form of monosodium glutamate.

Use values

Use values make objects desirable, useful or necessary for someone. The objects linked to *use values* are used by individuals in order to reach a higher purpose, that usually corresponds to another object seen as a basic value. Doing so, individuals build hierarchies with the values (and the objects) they pursue.

Utopian, valorization

There is a *utopian valorisation* anytime the purpose of a text – such as an advert – is to present a product as an ultimate goal, or an existential objective. That is, for example, a car promoted as a personality expression, and therefore as a status symbol, rather than a mere tool. In the food sector, the *utopian valorisation* is often build by linking recipes and foodstuff to identity values, e.g. cultural values, tipicity, sense of belonging.

Valorisation (Strategy)

A *valorisation strategy* is a set of communication activities aimed at linking a product to an ensemble of determined values. Advertising is, for sure, the main process that market economies use in order to *valorise* any kind of goods. However, we can extend this concept on many other fields. Culinary blogs, for example, tend to *valorise* objects (healthy, greedy, balanced, etc.) in their own way. The *valorisation strategy* is crucial to build brand identities through a differentiation mechanism.

Veganism

The eating habit and lifestyle of renouncing any product that involved animal use or exploitation, for either health or ethical reasons. Nowadays, "vegan" is also a word that indicate the aversion to any kind of animal-derived product, not just food: clothing items, cosmetics, medicines, and so forth.

Vegetarianism (or Lacto-ovo-vegetarianism)

The eating habit and lifestyle of renouncing meat and fish, but still allowing egg and dairy products. Like veganism, vegetarianism too may be motivated by health or ethical reasons. People eating fish but not meat may still define themselves as vegetarians, but a more correct expression, in this case, would be "pescetarianism" or "semi-vegetarianism".

Voice–over

In film this is the voice off-screen that comments on the images.

Water footprint

A more specific case of environmental (ecological) footprint, the expression refers to the amount of water used to produce any good or service we use. Water footprint can be measured for a single process (e.g., the water footprint of growing corn), or for the totality of processes from the same source (e.g., the water footprint of a farm).

Web 2.0.

The Web phase following Web 1.0 that brought the possibility for users to interact with and modify the content of webpages.

Wine grapevine (vitis vinifera)

The grapevine used for production of wine, native to the Mediterranean region, Central Europe, and southwestern Asia, from Morocco and Portugal north to southern Germany and east to northern Iran.

World famine (or world hunger)

The global problem of scarcity of food, due to factors like war, poverty, crop failure, overpopulation, social injustice or government policies. The phenomenon implies malnutrition, starvation, epidemic, and increased mortality, and is particularly tragic in the so-called developing countries.

Yanagi

The *yanagi* is the main Japanese knife. It has a very narrow blade, only one side sharpened, according to a millennial metallurgical tradition. This knife makes very sharp cuts even on the softest materials. It is used both for cleaning fish and for cutting sushi and sashimi.