

Acknowledgements

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Bisous à tous...



- a way of re-enchanting the world.

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Cheese store “La Délicatesse”

Wednesday 26th May, 2010, I spent the morning with Henri, member of Slow Food Volca’Niac, at his cheese store. He opened “La Délicatesse” (this is a fictitious name) eight years ago, in the centre of the French city Clermont Ferrand. In the store there were several counters filled with different types of cheese. In the corner closest to the entrance the counter was filled with “chèvre” - goat cheese. Henri explained why he had such large amounts of goat cheese during this period. The goats normally give birth during the first three months of the year, so the period from February to October is the season where they give the most milk and therefore the traditional season for the cheese. It is however possible to find goat cheese in the stores at almost any time of the year now. Christmas is especially a time of year when the demand increases, even though it is strictly speaking off season. Henri doesn’t like that the producers and merchants always follow consumer demands. It can lead to a loss of traditions, he says. In his store he prefers to respect the traditional seasons, therefore, round Christmas-time he is obliged to explain to his clients why he doesn’t sell them what they want. The clients are very often surprised to hear that their demand is off-season. The consumer’s lack of knowledge is a negative consequence of a market increasingly following the consumer’s demand, according to Henri.

He buys the cheese in large quantities from the producers and matures them in his own store before selling them. The cheeses are kept in two different refrigerators. The temperature in the first one is kept at 6 °C, and there is a ventilation-system that causes a de-hydration of the cheese. Every week he and his staff empty the shelves and clean the refrigerator. Then, every single cheese is turned in order to keep the humidity-equilibrium inside the core of the cheese. Inside the other refrigerator the temperature is between 10 °C and 12 °C and the humidity in the air is 90 % in order to avoid de-hydration. Some of the cheeses are in direct contact with the wooden shelves while others are placed on mats of straw. This is because they react differently in contact with different materials. “In a way, this is how the cheese is speaking”, Henri explained.

The shape and the size of a cheese is not something accidental. While guiding me through the store Henri enthusiastically describes the physical, geographical and historical peculiarities of

the different types. When a cheese has a bigger circumference than height it is called a “meule”, which means a stone mill, and when it is higher than its circumference it is called a “fourme”. The explanation of the sometimes impressive size of a cheese is to be found in the conditions that farmers have been living under for several hundreds of years. During summer time the farmers took their cattle to the mountain pasture where the making of the cheese took place. The big distance to the nearest towns and markets involved a need to store the cheese over a long period of time. Henri gives me an example. The cheese Comté comes from the mountains called Jura. It weights up to 50 kg and it takes up to 600 L of milk to produce it. This size permitted the farmers to store it for a long time before going to the market to sell it. Actually it needs between 8-12 months of aging time to develop the right taste. In the region of Jura, the farmers used to cooperate to collect such huge amounts of milk. In the region of Auvergne, on the other hand, there were longer distances between the farms and consequently more difficult to cooperate. The cheeses Cantal and Salers are results of this situation - with farmers working separately. On his own, the farmer could make one small cheese from the milk that he collected every day. After several days he had a lot of small cheeses. He would cut them into pieces, mix them and add salt. Then he could press it as a big cheese and store it for a long time. The Salers weighs around 40 kg and needs at least 9 months of aging time.

During the ripening period we could say that the money invested in the cheese-making is literally being locked up in the refrigerator along with the cheese. Some producers are now launching smaller cheeses to the market, cheeses that don't need the same ripening period and therefore yields a more rapid profit. This is successful because it involves not only a more circulating capital for the producer but also certain plainness to the consumer. Henri mentioned the St. Nectaire as an example of the consumer's wish. It's a regionally well-known cheese, it has its origin from the town St. Nectaire, it belongs to the category “pâtes pressées non-cuites” and it has the shape of a stone mill. Many visitors in the region would like to buy a St. Nectaire as a souvenir. For them, it's more interesting to buy an entire cheese rather than just a piece, but at the same time it will occupy a lot of space in their suitcase. That's why a Petit St. Nectaire, measuring 13 cm in diameter instead of 21, and weighting 600 grams instead of 1.7 kg, is an interesting offer for them. The back-side of this offer, according to Henri, is that the visitors might miss the fact that this is not the traditional way of making it. The knowledge of why it was traditionally made in a certain way will also gradually be forgotten, he explains. In the case of the “chèvre”, for instance, people are now used to buy it

whenever they want to, so they have forgotten that there's normally a limited season for this type of cheese.

The celebration of limited seasons, preserving traditional modes of food production and communicating knowledge about where the food comes from, and the way it has been produced, are some of the goals of the movement Slow Food. As the name of the movement bears witness to, the members emphasise a certain time aspect in relations with food. Large, well matured cheeses and artisanal modes of production imply a notion of "slowness" which is higher valued than the high-speed, profit oriented characteristics of industrial food production. In the next "bite" of this foretaste I will call attention to some of the other values and preferences shared by the members of Slow Food, and indicate some of the social aspects of the act of eating.

Taste community

Tuesday evening, 2nd February, I took the metro through the city of Lyon together with Adèle and Marguerite. We chatted about random subjects as we approached the place where Slow Food "Les Canuts Ecervelés" was having their meeting. Adèle had brought a piece of cheese to share with the others at the meeting. She asked us if it caused a bad odour from her purse. We assured her that it didn't. Marguerite was in a situation quite similar to mine; she was also doing research on the movement, but from the perspective of agricultural studies. I asked her if she knew many students who have joined the movement.

- *"I think that many students cannot afford it", she said. "People who are members of Slow Food are people who buy organic products and locally grown food".* (Implicitly she was saying that these products are more expensive than other alternatives.)

- *"Not necessarily", Adèle added quickly. She had been a member for one year.*

- *"Maybe not", Marguerite responded, "but you do have a preference for these products".*

Philippe came from his office by bike. Together we went to a place called "Communauté du Goût", or "taste community". It is a relatively small and quite particular place. It is a club for food enthusiasts and a shop where you can buy food articles and fine wine. In order to buy something you have to register as a member of the club. I had already paid the € 10 registration fee, but this evening the founder of the place was not there, so I didn't buy anything. The shelves in the small room were filled with cured and fresh meat, salmon, goose-

and duck livers, pasta, dried herbs and spices, French and Lyonnais specialities, fruit juices and bottles of wine. Philippe called my attention to a package of cured ham marked “Porc noir de Bigorre”. He told me that this is one of “les Sentinelles”, presidia products in English, products that have been about to vanish, but have survived with the help of Slow Food. Saving rare products and a diversity of flavours is one of the goals of the movement.

Slow Food in Lyon uses this place as a meeting place at least once every month. We went upstairs to an intermediate floor called mezzanine. It was informally furnished with a small coffee table, a sofa and some footstools. Besides myself, 8 other people came to the meeting, and everyone had brought something to eat or drink. They overloaded the small coffee table completely as they placed everything. Philippe welcomed everyone and started to talk about the program of the evening. Simultaneously, the food was sent between us to be tasted. As I sighed over the taste of a delicious pancake, I was told about the French tradition of eating pancakes the 2nd February (the meeting date). The tradition originates from a religious celebration called “la chandeleur”. Among the other foods to be tasted were sausages of pork meat, home-made by the father of one of the members, the cheese St. Nectaire and a Chardonnay wine (2001) from the region of Beaujolais, north of Lyon.

- *“This is what we like to do together”, a woman named Isabelle explained me. “To share, taste, eat, drink and talk”.*

This particular evening they had invited a gardener to come and talk about a vegetable called “cardon”. Charlotte served us a puff pastry she had made, with this particular vegetable as the main ingredient. The “cardon” is related to artichokes, and it was imported to the Rhône valley by the Romans. Neither the green type from Vaulx en Velin nor the white one from Villefranche sur Saône, two areas surrounding Lyon, has received the respectable appellation AOC. The green type tends to disappear compared to the white type, which is produced in larger quantities in the south of France. Most of the “cardon” cultivated in the surrounding areas of Lyon are delivered directly to restaurants. Another reason why it is hard to find this vegetable in regular stores is because it is difficult to keep presentable. It turns black very quickly unless it is carefully packed. The people present assessed whether Slow Food should participate in the job of saving seeds from this vegetable, in case the cultivation should fall dramatically. They also talked about inviting a farmer who cultivates this vegetable to come to Lyon. Then, he could teach them the principles, the “savoir-faire”, of growing “cardon” in their own gardens.

Introduction

“The encounter of man with the world, which takes place inside the open, biting, rending, chewing mouth, is one of the most ancient and most important objects of human thought and imagery. Here man tastes the world, introduces it into his body, makes it part of himself.” (Bachtin 1984[1965]:281)

This paper is an anthropological reflection on food and eating. As the quotation above indicates, it will deal with the act of eating as man’s encounter with the world. According to what you eat, and where, when and with whom you do it, there are multitudes of ways of introducing the world into the body and incorporating it. My angle of incidence will be the international movement Slow Food. More specifically, my writings will be based on empirical data gathered throughout my fieldwork with two local chapters of Slow Food in France. The focus will not be with conditions particular to France. I will rather pay attention to features that are common for many societies where there is enough food to make considerable choice about what to eat, often referred to as the Western world.

In very general terms, then, what does the world look like regarding food and eating in Western societies in the age in which we live? As already noted, most people have enough food. Unfortunately, it is true that poverty does exist, but the overall situation is not featured by a day-to-day struggle from hand to mouth. Consequently, most people exercise considerable choice concerning what to eat. The food abundance has a lot to do with the intensive agriculture and industrial food production that became increasingly widespread after the Second World War. Gradually, more intensively exploited farms and fisheries fed the population. The effectiveness about this agricultural development permeated -or forced - more and more people to abandon agriculture and find other occupations.

The fact that more and more farmers left their soil led to the situation where fewer people are directly connected to the production of food, while most people buy their food in nearby stores or supermarkets. There, the selection of food is not restricted to what the local surroundings can supply. Thanks to trade agreements and world-wide transportation systems, countries with cold climatic conditions can import exotic fruits and vegetables at any time of the year, while other food articles are sold and transported from the Nordic to the southern countries. Not only food articles, but also food culture in more general terms, are being exchanged across regional and national borders. Scandinavian people are eating sushi,

Mexican foods have transgressed the borders of Mexico a long time ago, and French croissants may be as important in the everyday life of an American as in that of a French person. When searching through the shelves of a supermarket, therefore, the choices are extremely multiple. The selection includes also a growing number of pre cooked dishes, quick alternatives to the home made meal. The popularity of these kinds of products is quite illustrative of the high speed life that many people in our own times live. Many people choose the microwave or boil-in-bag alternatives in order to reduce the time needed for cooking, and “save” time in order to spend it on other activities.

My approach

As the name bears witness to, Slow Food is a reaction to the “temporality of speed” (Parkins and Craig 2006:50). It is also a countermeasure to some of the other features about the world as described above. Slow Food is an international non-profit member-supported association founded in 1989. It has more than 100 000 members, connected in 1 300 local chapters called *convivia*, spread in 150 countries (SlowFood 2011). The movement has its origin in Bra, in the region of Piedmont, Italy. The earliest step towards its foundation was a politically left-oriented group of food lovers who called themselves *Arcigola*. One particularly charismatic and witty person among this group, Carlo Petrini, became the founder and president of Slow Food. Among other utterances, he has claimed that:

“[The movement] operates for the safeguard of and the right to pleasure, for the respect of the rhythm of life of the human being, and for the harmonious relation between the human being and nature” (Petrini and Padovani 2006:85).

This basic goal is sought through matters concerning food. The movement works for the opportunity to eat “good, clean and fair food” (SlowFood 2011). This implies three strategies in particular; the movement runs a foundation for preservation of bio-diversity (SlowFoodFoundation 2011), and it furthers the consumption of locally produced food and organic food. Slow Food ideology gives particular emphasis to the importance of searching knowledge about the food you eat.

What is the connection between good, clean and fair food, and Petrini’s description of the movement’s vision? For instance, what has locally produced food to do with the right to pleasure? What has good food (in the sense of good taste) to do with a harmonious relation between human being and nature? In what way can a foundation for preservation of bio-diversity be a safeguard of pleasures? What is the connection between organic food or fair

food and respect of the rhythm of life? The main task of this paper will be to answer questions of this character. Throughout the text, I hope to give an account of the connection between good, clean and fair food and the above-mentioned image of how the world should look like.

Above all, this approach brings me to look at food as something we might think of as ‘a way of re-enchanting the world’. This involves a twofold perspective on food; how the knowledge about the food affects the food experience, and simultaneously how the food experience influences our understanding of the world we are living in. I will write about several aspects about Slow Food members’ relationship with food. It includes a look at how and with whom they eat, that is, an elaboration on the social dimension of food. Further, it includes an account of the kind of food they prefer, and why. This leads me to write about food as a central part of the creation of human’s sense of self. It also leads me to write about consumer behaviour as an element of the process of creating who we want to be and how we want to live our lives.

The menu

This paper consists of an ‘8 course menu’. There are two starters; theoretical and methodological reflexions. First, I give an account of other perspectives and earlier anthropological writings on food, and place my own approach within these traditions. Then, I give an account of my personal motives for choosing food as the focus of my master thesis, before I describe the locus of my fieldwork and the process of gathering empirical data. I hope that these two chapters will give the reader an appetite for the continuation.

In the first main course, I give an account of the connection between food and temporality. I claim that slowness is a presupposition for the re-enchantment of the world; we have to take time to attend to the enchantment. The implementations of slowness in everyday life, however, do not necessarily mean to actually slow down the pace and pressure at work and every day activity. For many, the slow temporality remains a desire and goal rather than actual reality. It seems that the importance lies with the consciousness that there are alternatives to speed, and food is the medium to communicate the idea of slowness. Temporality is a returning theme, all the way from the production of the food, to the distribution, cooking and finally to the eating. It culminates in the act of sharing the table – the very manifestation of slowness. The act of eating together is the social dimension of slowness. The following chapters draw attention to other dimensions about it. As the paper proceeds I hope to show that the notion of slowness can be considered as synonymous with re-enchantment.

The main ingredient in the next course is distinctiveness. Searching distinctiveness is a second dimension of the notion of slowness. Slow Food is a phenomenon situated in a context featured by globalization processes. I claim that their ideology is based upon an interpretation of a society getting more and more homogenized and standardized. I will argue that this understanding is similar to certain “disenchantment tales”, as explained by Bennett (2001). As an undertaking of bringing enchantment back to the disenchanted world, I will argue, Slow Food works to preserve diversity and distinctiveness in our food and the world we are living in.

In the fifth course, I want the taste of enjoyment and the taste of ethical commitments to be equally prominent, in order to give a balanced taste experience. Bennett claims that the mood of enchantment is presupposed by a “joyful attachment” (Bennett 2001:12-13) with ethical implications. Pleasure is a very central idea in Slow Food ideology, and it seems that the pleasures are most sincere when they involve some ethical commitments. Such commitments seem to be yet another dimension of slowness. This dimension is expressed through the focus on environmental concerns, captured in the term “eco-gastronomy” (SlowFood 2011) and exemplified through the preference for organically and locally produced food. Solidarity is also an expression for ethical commitments. The notion of solidarity is best captured in the event called Terra Madre, and through the aim of turning consumers into “co-producer” (SlowFood 2011).

Local food has another aspect about it, besides the environmental one; it is situated to place. In this course of the menu, therefore, the plate is connected to place. Connecting food items and traditions to their respective geographical origin is an important part of the notion of slowness. With the help of Douglas’ theory (2002 [1966]), I will argue that food reflects the way we understand the world. Food situated to place creates awareness and valuation of place, as opposed to the understanding of the world as one, singular space. I claim that Slow Food ideology communicates a worldview best understood as “foodview” (Trubek 2008). This view implies making connections between taste and place; a connection that is put in concrete forms through the French notion of ‘terroir’.

Every self-respecting French chef serves some cheese before the dessert. As the saying goes, some of the French cheeses take an acquired taste. Slow Food has often been accused for being a high society club for connoisseurs with acquired tastes. In this chapter I will deal with food as a way of communicating social status, that is, food as social marker. I will argue that

the quest for “taste education” in Slow Food ideology (SlowFood 2011) renders the members well-equipped with a vocabulary for talking about food and taste. In my interpretation, this knowledge and vocabulary reminds of Bourdieu’s concepts of “cultural and educational capital”, principles people use to situate themselves in the social space (Bourdieu 1984). However, I will not equal “slow” eating and consumption to a matter of class identity. Consumption revolves about creating who we want to be and how we want to live out our “image of the good life” (Friedman 1994:150). I claim that the knowledge and vocabulary developed through “taste education” works first and foremost to enchant the total experience of food, and subsequently re-enchant the world.

The dessert will be served as a composition called ‘food for thought’. There, I will make some concluding remarks about my approach to the subject of food and eating, and I will sum up the main points throughout the paper. Towards the end, I will make some remarks on other possible perspectives on Slow Food. I could have paid more attention to other aspects of the movement, or discussed the act of eating from slightly different points of view. I will, however, argue that the approach I settled with best reflects the empirical data I gathered. Now, there’s only one thing left to say: please grasp your knives and forks; bon appétit!

1. Theoretical reflexions

Several factors determine what we eat

Humans are known to utilize a wide variety of sources of nutrition. In fact, we are quite “omnivorous” creatures (Anderson 2005:11-39). Hence, we have a broad starting point when theorizing about people’s relationship with food. The most banal utterance one can make in this regard is that food is a matter of life or death; we eat to stay alive. Our body demands a minimum intake of calories in order to maintain its processes like brain functions, respiratory and digestive apparatus, an erect posture and striding walk. Further, our body depends on a variety of vitamins, amino acids, carbohydrates, and several other nutrients, which we have to provide through a variation in the food we eat. At the same time, we cannot eat whatever we find. At least, our digestive system won’t be able to make use of it. We need to eat something our body is capable of digesting.

Besides our biological needs, what other factors determine what we eat? “[E]nvironment and economy have been the main shapers of foodways for most people over most of history” (Anderson 2005:82). The fact that humans adapt to their environmental surroundings, have created great differences between the dietary regimes of Arctic areas and African savannahs, for instance. Some people have survived on seal and whale meat, whereas others on termites. Further, people tend to maximize the nutritional profit with the accessible means they have. In cash economies, the cheapest plants and animals to grow, or the ones that will obtain the best market prices, are preferential. Access to land and labour are some of the important variables in this regard. One of the possible perspectives on food, therefore, is to see the way people eat as an adaption to ecological or economic factors. Following this track might lead to a rather one-sided view, according to Anderson. “Foodways” cannot be wholly understood as “all ecology”, like Harris does, or uniquely as political economy, “as the Marxists hold”, he claims (Anderson 2005:7).

Biological, environmental and economic factors alone, then, are inadequate to explain why we eat what we eat. They are important determinants, but “culture fine-tunes the actual patterns of behaviour”, as Anderson argues (2005:73). He calls attention to the freedom of choice we have regarding food. It is true that too many people in the world don’t have the privilege to choose what to eat. What is worse, the very poorest don’t even have enough food to stay alive. However, even in scant times, people tend to let social, symbolic or religious systems

structure their dietary regime. “Starving people will eat anything available, but anyone above the desperation threshold exercises considerable choice” (Anderson 2005:6). Actually, humans tend to eat only a very limited amount of the variety of nourishment accessible to us. Hence, the focus of many anthropological reflections on food has been to understand why we eat precisely what we eat. At this, we move on to analyzing “the sociocultural meanings of food and eating” (Lupton 1996:1)

Perspectives on the social and cultural meanings of food

Lévi-Strauss, viewing culture from a structuralist perspective within anthropology, treated food practices as a language (Lévi-Strauss 1967). He emphasized especially the opposition between raw and cooked food. He argued that they represent the binary opposition between nature and culture, whereof cooked food represents a transformation of nature into culture (Lévi-Strauss 1970). Douglas, another anthropologist publishing on food, was influenced by the structural approach. In *Purity and Danger* (Douglas 2002[1966]), she illustrates a theory of pollution, by reference to the Jewish dietary prohibitions as described in the book of Leviticus. In the dietary laws she found the classification of three environments; land, water and air. She interpreted the prohibitions as a kind of taboo on anomalous creatures. These are the creatures that are difficult to classify, because they live in two, or even all three, habitats. Rational behaviour involves classification, and the food we eat takes part of our system of classification, according to her arguments.

These works are important because they illustrate the significance of culture in our classification of something as edible or not. However, the perspectives represented by Lévi-Strauss and Douglas have been criticized for being static; not able to explain possible changes over time, and for not considering broader social, political and economic context (Lupton 1996; Caplan 1997). Mintz, on the other hand, writing on a single food item – sugar – includes both power relations and historical changes in his perspective (Mintz 1986). He illustrates how the production of sugar includes a power relation, since it was originally built upon African slavery, while the consumers of sugar were primarily people in the West. His historical account tells of an increased consumption of sugar in the West, particularly from the mid-seventeenth century (Mintz 1986:74-150). It happened parallel to great changes in Western people’s eating habits, where the consumption of sugar was transformed from a luxury to commonplace food item. Mintz’s approach includes an interesting macro

perspective, but it is possible also to diminish the analytical scale when looking at food and social relations.

Bourdieu, in *Distinctions; a social critique of the judgement of taste* (Bourdieu 1984; Bourdieu, Østerberg et al. 1995[1979]), elaborated on food habits as a way of creating social distinctions. He discussed food, furniture, music and art as markers of good and bad taste. He argued that the upper classes use the concept of good taste in order to differentiate themselves from the lower social strata. In his perspective, food works a medium that says something about the social status of the eater. “Anthropologists and sociologists are concerned with the symbolic nature of food and eating practices” (Lupton 1996:7). Sociological theory and analysis, therefore, have more than once turned out to be interesting angles of incidence in anthropological writings on food, and Bourdieu’s theory has been one of the most influential since its publication.

If we diminish the perspective down to a micro level, several interesting fields of investigation open up. Scholars like Caplan (1997) and Lupton (1996) pay attention to the changeable, contextual and often contradictory meaning of food on the individual level. They write about the relationship between food, embodiment, subjectivity and identity. Their main point is that people construct their sense of self through the food they eat, and similarly through the food they don’t eat. Additionally, “the self” is a jig-saw puzzle of many identities, and they tend to change over time as we develop through different stages in our lives. Subjectivity is not a static entity, but rather something changeable, undergoing a constant process of negotiation. Subsequently, the food works as a marker of different identities, more or less important to express - all depending on the context. For instance, when passing from childhood to adulthood, many youths underline the liberation from their parents’ regulations by eating junk food their mother used to deny them at home. Later, many young people move far away from home in order to complete their education or find a job. In situations where we meet people from other regions or countries, our own national or regional identity might become very important for us to communicate, almost as to assure that we don’t “lose ourselves”. We then start to long for the dishes our mother used to make, the dishes we so desperately wanted to liberate ourselves from. In yet another situation, our national identity might be insignificant, while we wish rather to draw attention to our gender. For instance, a girl who’s dating a boy might well order a small salad even though her stomach is rumbling with hunger, just to appear moderate and feminine. He, on the other hand, expresses his masculinity better by ordering a rare steak than a green salad. Acknowledging people’s

agency is an important point in this perspective on food. According to Lupton, this is to take a “social constructionist approach”, which is placed within the post structural theoretical orientation (Lupton 1996:12).

From the 1980’s, an awareness of the senses has increased within anthropological writings. Howes (2003; 2005), Serementakis (1994) and Stoller (1989; 1997) are important contributors to this development. This is an interesting and important domain for further theorizing, not least when writing about food, because food is a highly bodily and sensuous matter. An awareness of the senses can be reflected in a vivid manner of writing ethnographies, for example. Descriptions of colours, odours, sounds and tastes make it easier for the reader to enter into the native’s point of view that the writer is trying to explain. It can also be reflected by paying attention to the powerful effects that sensuous experiences have over people’s lives and interaction. Take for instance sense memories, which hide within our unconsciousness until the day it is awoken by some sensuous stimulus. Then, we experience how powerful and all-embracing it is. One fragrance may have the power to set you decades back in time, to create nostalgic memories of the loving care of your grandmother and other emotional remembrances. Another interesting extension of the awareness of senses is to focus on how taste and other sensuous experiences of food are central to cosmologies, worldviews and ways of life. Then, we are talking about “gustemologies” (Sutton 2010:215-217). Trubek’s (2008) study of the notion of *terroir*, how taste is considered connected to place in France, falls into such a perspective on food.

My own approach deals with the meaning of food on an individual level, similar to the perspective of Lupton and Caplan. In accordance with their writings, I understand the act of eating as a central part of our self-construction. In addition to creating ourselves we are also expressing who we are towards other people. Food is an excellent medium to express our identities. In my writing about food as social marker I will employ some of the terms in Bourdieu’s theory on social distinctions. Besides the fact that we express our identities towards others, creating who we are is a process dealing with our innermost emotions. I will emphasise the sensuous aspect of food and eating, similar to the perspective taken by Howes, Serementakis and Stoller, when I argue that food affects us at the most private level, in our deepest feelings. Additionally, I will focus on food habits as a reflexion of our understanding of the world. At this, I build upon arguments in Douglas’ and Trubek’s theories. As already noted, I will argue that Slow Food is a reaction to a world interpreted as a disenchanted place.

Experiencing food as prescribed by Slow Food ideology is a strategy for bringing some enchantment back to our existence.

Food as a way of re-enchanting the world

Throughout this paper, then, the principal argument and analytical tool, so to speak, will be the idea that food can be a way of re-enchanting the world. The statement is based upon Bennett's arguments in her book *The enchantment of modern life* (2001). Here, she presents different ways of viewing the world we are living in, and the world as it has been understood by thinkers throughout history. For instance, she describes how the world was rendered intelligible by the Renaissance physician and alchemist Paracelsus (1493-1541). He "combined the idea that plants and animals are powerful agents with the idea of a heavenly Creator who made each earthly thing for a purpose" (Bennett 2001:35). This way of understanding the world, based on the omnipresence of a divinity, gives the experience of enchantment, according to her arguments. "To be enchanted is to be struck and shaken by the extraordinary that lives amid the familiar and the everyday" (ibid.:4) Further, she links the experience of enchantment to other worldviews than the version of Renaissance Christendom. She takes the philosopher Kant as an example. In accordance with the formation of Enlightenment, he wanted to reject the notion of divine purpose and tried, rather, to explain nature in mechanical terms. But that doesn't mean that his worldview is not enchanted, claims Bennett. She identifies "the voice of reason" (the moral law) in Kantian philosophy as something of a marvel and in possession of creative power (ibid.:42).

Several thinkers and writers throughout history have, however, stated that the world is no longer enchanted. Bennett refers to these kind of theories as "disenchantment tales" (Bennett 2001:56-90). In these theories, two main forces are normally identified as leading to disenchantment. The first one is modern science, because it is reckoned to be taking over the authority of magic in explaining the world to us. Even in cases where science has not provided an explanation, it is believed that in future, when sufficiently developed, science can give an explanation to them as well. Hence, the argument goes, in modern society everything is -in principle- explainable in scientific terms. Strangely enough, modern religion is identified as the second force leading to disenchantment, or rather modern religion's general tendency of moving away from magic while increasingly focusing on ethical, calculable strategies of salvation. This adds an understanding that individual conduct, which subsequently raises ethical questions, will influence our destiny. To sum up: "Disenchantment

does not mean that we live in a world that has been completely counted up and figured out but rather that the world has become calculable in principle” (ibid.:59).

There are both positive and negative valuations about the disenchantment process, Bennett (2001) continues. She points to the French philosopher and Enlightenment writer Voltaire as an example of the first standpoint. He was very critical toward the quest for enchantment. With the story of *Candide* he describes with a lot of wittiness and satirical humour how superstition and naive positivism work to conceal the reality. Further, he claimed that people in powerful positions exploit this way of hiding the truth, in order to maintain current power relations. In his eyes, therefore, the world is better off as sober-minded and disenchanted. From his arguments Bennett points to what she names “the charge of elitism – that is, only effete intellectuals have the luxury of feeling enchanted, whereas real people must cope with the real world” (Bennett 2001:10). In connection to food, then, is there a latent expression of social inequalities in the re-enchantment process? This is a question I will attend to in the chapter about food as social marker.

The German sociologist and political economist Weber had a different understanding of the disenchantment of the world, or “die Entzauberung der Welt” as he named it (Weber 1990[1922] : introduction by Egil Fivelsdal). In his writings about the rationalized modern society, he interpreted the rationality itself as a positive thing. The process of rationalization, however, has some unwanted side effects, according to Weber. He claimed that the increasingly calculable world leads to a feeling of meaninglessness and finally the feeling of the world as an “iron cage” (ibid.). Among the elements Bennett emphasizes about Weber’s narrative of disenchantment, is the notion of the modern world in contrast to a “bygone, golden age”. Further, she points to the idea that processes like that of rationalization is particularly intensified in modern age. This acceleration of change is believed to bring suffering to human beings, as they start to feel alienated from society, and so the golden age becomes an “object of longing and desire” (Bennett 2001:63-64).

Bennett proposes a counter story to these disenchantment tales. She asks: “But what if [...] the world is not disenchanted, that is, populated by dead matter and fragmented selves?” (Bennett 2001:80). Her proposition is to open the eyes to an “enchanted materialism” (ibid.:92); to realise that the world is a marvel even though most of the elements of it can be explained in scientific terms. Everything, from the way different atoms connect to each other and creates a variety of molecules, to the way human beings sense these substances, and later

think about them in order to make them intelligible, is quite amazing, according to Bennett. In this connection she talks about a material complexity, but she also mentions a social and institutional complexity, which she claims to possess equally enchanting forces. She refers to the ingenious writings of Franz Kafka in order to explain what she means. The term “Kafkaesque” is usually read with a Weberian understanding (ibid.:105). That is, when Kafka describes the complexity and stupidity of the bureaucracy, it is interpreted as irrational, exhausting and alienating. Bennett, on the other hand, reminds us of the fact that the principal characters, in spite of all, seem quite attracted to “the ambiguous charm of institutional complexity” (ibid.:106). For instance, we sense that K. is somehow drawn to figure out the prevailing logic (if there is one) of the village surrounding *The Castle*. He is enchanted, even though quite exhausted, by the social complexity he is encountered with. Bennett recapitulates her statement as follows: “My contention is that enchantment never really left the world but only changed its forms” (ibid.:91).

The spell-binding effect of food

Why have I chosen to employ Bennett’s theory in my writing about food and the movement Slow Food? Why do I use her theory in order to claim that food is a way of re-enchanting the world, when she herself rejects that the world has ever even been disenchanting? I have deliberately chosen the term re-enchantment, even though it involves a minor separation from Bennett’s arguments. It is not because I feel that the world consists of dead matter and fragmented selves; I agree with Bennett that I am quite often struck by the marvels in the world! It is rather because I try to grasp the viewpoint of my informants. Immediately, I underline that neither do they conceive the world as a dark and meaningless place, but, and this will emerge throughout the paper, they express a feeling that there’s something missing in the world we are living in. To support my contention, I will quote Parkins and Craig, social theorists and themselves members of Slow Food, when they give an account of why they categorize Slow Food as a movement:

“Of the many definitions offered of social movements, it is still perhaps Blumer’s which best captures our sense of Slow Food: ‘Social movements,’ Blumer proposed, ‘can be viewed as collective enterprises seeking to establish a new order of life... [which] derive their motive power on one hand from dissatisfaction with the current form of life, and on the other hand, from wishes and hopes for a new system of living’” (Parkins and Craig 2006:32)

I interpret the connection between dissatisfaction, wishes and hopes as similar to Weber’s longing and desire for the golden age that is lost. In the case of Slow Food, what is considered

lost, or at least threatened with extinction, is the time to enjoy the pleasures of the table, the diversity of food around the world and the connection between the eater and the production of the food. These things affect the way they look upon the world and leads to questions about human existence. There's not only something missing in man's relationship with food; there's something missing in the world in general. Slow Food aims at reviving what they consider lost. This undertaking, I will argue, is a strategy of re-enchanting the world. Although Bennett rejects to use the term re-enchantment, she would agree with me in the following: "Enchantment is something that we encounter, that hits us, but it is also a comportment that can be fostered through deliberate strategies" (Bennett 2001:4).

Additionally, Bennett's description of the sensuous characteristics of the state of being enchanted led me to the decision that her theory fits quite well with writing about the spell-binding effect of food. In "a brief phenomenology of enchantment" she argues that the state of being enchanted is a highly sensuous experience (Bennett 2001:5). Colours, odours, sounds and tastes, all kinds of impressions become embodied, and affect the way we experience being in the world. She notes, for instance, the connection between enchantment and the French verb *chanter*; to sing (ibid.:6). Further, she argues:

"Enchantment includes, then, a condition of exhilaration or acute sensory activity. To be simultaneously transfixed in wonder and transported by sense, to be both caught up and carried away – enchantment is marked by this odd combination of somatic effects" (Bennett 2001:5)

The explicit connection to the senses makes her theory a fruitful gateway to writing about food, because the act of eating is also a highly sensuous experience. We need only to take a look at Seremetakis' description of her Greek childhood memory of a particular type of peach, in order to understand the power of sensuous impressions over human mind: "It was well rounded and smooth like a small clay vase, fitting perfectly into your palm. Its interior was firm yet moist, offering a soft resistance to the teeth. A bit sweet and a bit sour, it exuded a distinct fragrance. This peach was known as "the breast of Aphrodite"" (Seremetakis 1994:1). Sensuous impressions can stick with you and create a sort of secret chamber of memories. Smelling the same fragrance or tasting the same thing works as a key to unlock these sleeping memories. "Nothing brings back a place, time, or occasion more powerfully than a scent or taste" (Anderson 2005:130). Despite their power, the sense of smell, taste, hearing and touch have been categorized as "so-called lower senses" in Western thinking following the Enlightenment (Stoller 1989:8). In the "visual intellectualism", the sight have been thought of as more important than the other senses, and dry principles and facts have been more valued

than juicy sensuous descriptions (ibid.). The sense of smell, taste, hearing and touch are at odds with the rational, calculable world view. The lower senses belong rather to the mystical world view. Therefore, they play a significant role in the undertaking of re-enchanting the world. As a fundamental part of my argument, then, I state that the sensuous qualities of food have the power to spell-bind us, indeed the power to enchant us.

2. Methodological reflexions

Personal motives

Choosing food as focus in my master thesis was a rather obvious choice. It is one of my great passions. I finished my education as cook in 2002. Then, I worked as a cook for four years before I started my university education. The choice of location was also a quite natural one. I wanted to go to France in order to explore the famous French cuisine. In an anthropological examination however, the interest rests not on the food per se, but rather on the social aspects about it. Hence, I wanted to study a social fellowship dealing with a particular interest in food. The movement Slow Food became an interesting starting point for me. I contacted the president of Slow Food's local group in Lyon. I had particular interest in going to Lyon since the city is known as the gastronomic capitol of Europe. We agreed that I could come and spend time with the members in Lyon, during their meetings and activities.

In addition to letting my passion decide where to go and what to study, I also wanted to use my former education as a cook during my fieldwork, for reasons I will explain in the passage concerning gathering data. I contacted the national office of Slow Food in France, situated in Toulouse, to ask if there are any restaurants in France that follows the principles of Slow Food ideology. I described my intentions and asked if they could forward my mail to all the local groups in France. After a while, I received a mail from the owners of a small restaurant in the region of Auvergne, two and a half hour's drive from Lyon. The owners, a married couple, are members of Slow Food's local group in Auvergne. They offered to let me work at their restaurant for free board and lodging.

Locus of my fieldwork

Because of the conditions already described, I ended up doing a threefold fieldwork. Hence, my empirical data is gathered from three different arenas; Slow Food's local group in Lyon, the local group in Auvergne, and the restaurant "Chez nous" (this is a fictitious name).

The local groups are called "convivium" in the singular and "convivia" in the plural. It "is a word drawn from Latin, suggestive of both gathering and conviviality" (Petrini and Padovani 2006:55). The name of the convivium in Lyon, "Les Canuts Ecervelés" refers to the city's history as an important capitol of the silk-industry in Europe. "Les Canuts" was the name used for the silk-weavers and "cervelle" is the French word for brain. One used to say that the

workers in the silk-industry didn't need a particularly large brain capacity to fulfil their duties. Actually they said that the workers had brains like an un-ripened cheese. In some of the traditional Lyon restaurants called "bouchon" you can order the dish "La cervelle de Canut". The dish consists of potatoes, fresh cheese, garlic, parsley and bacon. The term "Ecervelés" can be translated to brain-dead, and the name of the convivium, then, is a self-ironic joke meaning "the brain-dead silk-weavers". "Les Canuts Ecervelés" has about 30 members. The president of the convivium, Philippe, characterizes 10 to 15 of them as particularly active. The members are aged 20 to 65, but the average age is 30-40 years. The convivium was founded in 2002. There have been two other presidents before Philippe. He became a member in 2003/2004, after he read an article about the organization. According to him, the members have in particular one thing in common; when they have been travelling and trying to discover other cultures, they have been missing the culinary aspect of the places they visited. They have found it difficult to get to know the distinguished gastronomic traditions around the world, an experience which served as a motive for joining Slow Food. The convivium have made an agreement of what they think is the most important ideas of Slow Food ideology. The summary consists of the following 10 headings: biodiversity, vigilance, path, specialities, curiosity, conviviality, questioning, local, co-producer and pleasure. These are my translations. Please find the original, French version enclosed¹. Some of these notions will be further discussed throughout the paper.

The convivium in Auvergne, "Volca'Niac" took their name because of a geographic particularity. Auvergne is a volcanic area, with Le Puy de Dôme as the biggest volcano in the chain. In addition to the name, they have also distinguished their snail-logo with a silhouette of Le Puy de Dôme on the back of the snail. As of 4th of July 2010, there were 48 members in "Volca'Niac". Béatrice is the president of the convivium and she was also one of the founders. In 2007, the head office in Slow Food France, situated in Montpellier at the time, received three applications from different persons in Clermont Ferrand. These were inquiries whether Slow Food had any activity in the region of Auvergne. The head office noticed the interest from this area and made sure to put these persons, namely Béatrice, Charles, Clovis and Marie, in touch with each other. The creation of Volca'Niac took place the same year, 2007. Of the 48 members there is a core of particularly active members, consisting of 10 to 15 people, as in the case of "Les Canuts Ecervelés". While spending time with "Volca'Niac" I got familiar with their "12 slow gestures". This is a list of things one can implement in

¹ Attachment No. 1 : Charte du convivium

everyday life in order to put Slow Food ideology into practice. The 12 gestures are: take pleasure, celebrate the seasons, think globally - eat locally, eat something that you have cultivated, meet the people who work as producers, be curious, choose consciously, eat variously, eat wholly, raw, non-transformed, cook, be sparse, transmit your passions, your taste and your discoveries. This is my translation. Please find the original, French version enclosed².

Throughout the paper, when I mention the names Robert, Constance, Thierry, Lena, Jeanne, Mathilde, Catherine and Emma, these are members of “Volca’Niac”, and I have already mentioned Henri, Béatrice, Charles, Clovis and Marie from the same convivium. I have also already mentioned Philippe, Adèle, Marguerite, Charlotte and Isabelle from “Les Canuts Ecervelés”. All the names are pseudonyms. Several other members have been important informants during my fieldwork, and have contributed to my empirical data, but I do not find it necessary to mention them by name. I wish to emphasise that even though I tend to speak of members of Slow Food as a homogeneous group, this is not the case. Regarding age, education, occupation, marital status and whether or not they have children, there are individual varieties between them. Further, regarding their commitment to Slow Food, there are individual interpretations of the movement’s ideology that might be reflected in slightly different ways of putting it into practice. However, they express a conformity regarding their relationship with food which permits me to speak of some common values, ideas and principles.

In addition to being members of “Volca’Niac”, Robert and Constance are the owners of the restaurant “Chez nous”, situated next to a small village, 40 minutes from the city of Clermont Ferrand. I lived together with them while I worked at the restaurant as a cook. I worked on average five days a week, the only exceptions being when I went on excursions with “Volca’Niac”. Robert and Constance opened the restaurant 19th March 2009. He is the chef and runs the restaurant on daily basis, while she has another full time job in Clermont Ferrand. She helps in the restaurant on certain evenings and weekends. In November 2005 they sold their previous restaurant. They had been running this well respected restaurant for 14 years with 7 employees; it implied a stressful workload for both of them. After 14 years they wanted to change their lifestyle. When they had sold the restaurant, they also decided to sell their house in Clermont Ferrand. They started to search for a new place to live, and went

² Attachment No. 2 : Les 12 gestes “slow”

to look at several houses. They had been searching for more than one year when they went to look at an advertised house in the countryside. As they drove up a hillside, with a great view to the right side, Constance saw a house right in front of them. She spontaneously exclaimed that it's a house like this one they should be looking for. To their great joy it actually turned out to be the house from the advertisement. It was a restored farm from the 18th century with a big vegetable garden. It sufficed with a rapid guided tour before they signed the contract.

I wish to emphasize that "Chez nous" is not explicitly connected to Slow Food. In some countries, like Italy for instance, Slow Food have published restaurant-guides, and a Slow Food café in New Delhi, India, has the international movements blessing to use their logo (Petrini and Padovani 2006:146). However, Slow Food France does not want to be used for commercial purposes. They are vigilant regarding restaurants using the snail logo or asserting to be a "slow" restaurant, because the movement have not developed a control system that permits them to verify such claims. Most of the customers at "Chez nous" had never, or barely, heard about the movement. The majority of them came to the restaurant because they were familiar with Robert's good reputation as a cook from his previous restaurant.

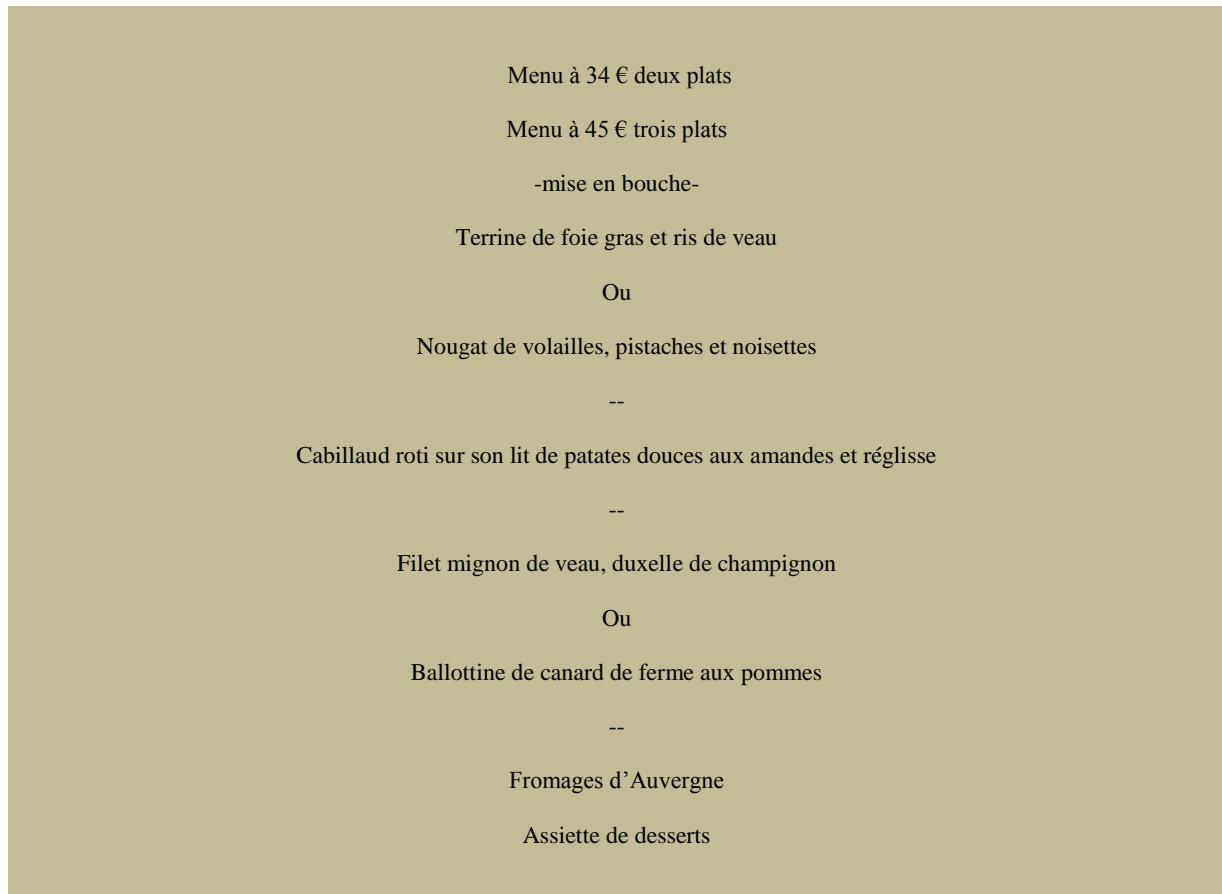
In the process of planning and creating the restaurant, Constance and Robert wished to follow the philosophy of Slow Food by using products from the surrounding areas. For instance, they talked with the farmer using the grazing land right next to the restaurant for his cattle. They asked him if he could provide the restaurant with meat. The farmer agreed, but he could only offer boxes of 10 kg of meat, consisting different parts of the animal. Robert wanted rather to buy exclusively one part of the animal, like the entrecote, so he could serve the same dish to all of his clients. It would have been strange for the clients if one of them got to eat one part of the animal while another one would have to eat something else. The farmer could not make such an agreement. If he sold all the best parts to Robert, his other customers would have to put up with the remaining parts. Robert and Constance also went to talk with a breeder of chicken in the nearby area, but the sight of the hygienic routines on this particular farm scared them off from dealing with this farmer. However, at the end of my fieldwork, a cultivator of different vegetables and fruits from a nearby village came to the restaurant and wanted to sell some green beans. Robert seized the opportunity and he expressed that he wanted to establish collaboration with this producer. It showed that it is possible to provide local products in some cases, but it isn't always easy to make an ideal fit reality.

Aged 58 years old, Robert considers the restaurant a tranquil ending of his career. For him it was important to create a small restaurant where he could deal with the workload without employing anyone. The restaurant is directly connected to their private house. The dining hall and the kitchen of the restaurant are combined in one room measuring approximately 48 m². The maximum capacity of the service is 18 customers and the restaurant is open exclusively when somebody has made a reservation. It means that Robert can foresee his workday and even his workweek in a completely different manner than he could before. He is very happy to be able to close the restaurant one or two days during the week, when there are no reservations, and spend the days working in the vegetable garden. Further, the restaurant is only open when lunch is served, around noon, and during dinner-time, from around 8pm until the guests leave. However, this is not something unique for this restaurant. In France, all the restaurants are open only during lunch-time and dinner-time; they are generally closed between 2 pm and 7 or 8 pm. To eat at fixed hours and taking your time when eating are important elements of the culinary culture of France in general, but the idea of a slow meal is even more emphasized at “Chez nous”.

There are several elements contributing to the easygoing, slow atmosphere of the restaurant. First of all, the restaurant is nicely situated far out in the countryside with nice panoramic views. It gives a notion of being cut off from busy everyday life. It actually occurred several times during my fieldwork that the clients telephoned the restaurant and asked for directions, because it was badly sign posted and hard to find. In addition, the size of the restaurant and the integration of the kitchen in the same room as the dining-hall give a quite particular touch to the eating experience. It invites the guests to calm down, take a break from all other things but the meal and to spend a lot of time in the act of eating. In general, the customers are seated about three hours when having a meal, whether it's for lunch or for dinner. There are only two tables. The big table is placed closest to the kitchen and the smaller one being used only when the number of clients requires it. This means that when there are less than ten guests, all of them are placed next to each other, at the same table, no matter if they know each other or not in the first place.

Robert composes a new menu once or twice a week, and he offers the same menu for lunch and for dinner. It is written on a large blackboard hanging on the wall next to the refrigerator. The following example gives the customer the choice between a duck-liver paté and a cooked meat farce of poultry as a starter. Depending on how hungry the customers are, they can choose to have two or three dishes. If they take the big menu, they will order the cod as a

second dish, before choosing between the tenderloin of veal and a meat farce of duck as the third one. The menu is always accompanied by a selection of cheeses and an assortment of desserts at the end.



Gathering data

“The unique method of yielding data through long-term “participant observation” [distinguishes] anthropology from other social sciences” (Holy in Ellen 1984:14). The aim of participation is to interact and immerse into the life of the natives. Observation means that the researcher interacts on the basis of what she or he finds theoretically significant (ibid.). My role as participant observer among the members of Slow Food means that I have spent as much time as possible with them, in their activities as a group, in order to grasp their viewpoint on food and eating. Every person has a large variety of different social statuses, and all of them imply different expectations to how we should interact socially (Eriksen and Frøshaug 1998:56). When I spent time with my informants, I focused on their status as “slowfoodians”. Even though I got a lot of information about their other statuses as well, such as family membership, working situation and so on, this information has not been my primary

focus in the process of writing this paper. Since I lived together with two of my informants, Robert and Constance, I immersed in their lives to a far greater extent than with the others. I got to know them as my employers, as friends, as the parents of their children and even as my own surrogate parents. However, it is their statuses as restaurant owners and members of Slow Food that are of interest for this paper. As of my status as a working cook, it has affected my role as researcher, and how my presence was defined and made intelligible by my informants. As Ardener underlines, “many anthropologists find it necessary to find a regular task which is comprehensible to their informants” (Ellen 1984:113). The fact that I had a job made my presence more easily comprehensible to my informants than my role as student of anthropology.

The fact that I was personally very engaged in the job as a cook, transcribed my role as a researcher “not as that of participant observer but of observing participant” (Holy in Ellen 1984:29). It means that the level of analytical distance is reduced, while the level of participation is likewise increased. This is not exclusively a positive thing. A high level of distance makes it easier for the researcher to stay critical. Asking questions might not even occur to researchers who are completely integrated into the society they study, because of the “take for granted”- tendency of the things we know too well. At the same time, researchers may be asking all the questions in the world without getting any answers, unless the natives have confidence in them. Additionally, a lot of information reveals itself naturally, without the need for any questions, when the researchers allow themselves to leave the analytical distance. Therefore, I did allow myself a very high level of participation when I worked at the restaurant, even if it meant a lack of analytical distance in this particular situation. During the time I spent with the other members, I had a more balanced apportionment of participation and observation.

I have performed interviews with some of the members. The object has been to understand their personal motivations for joining Slow Food. Except for one written interview, where the themes and the order of questions were fixed, the interviews have been “partly structured” (Thagaard 1998:89, my translation). The themes of topic are determined by the researcher before the interview begins. Simultaneously, the succession of the themes is decided through the interaction between researcher and respondent. There is also flexibility to go more thoroughly into the themes that seems to evoke the most engagement with the respondent. Thagaard also describes an even less structured type of interview. It resembles a conversation between researcher and respondent, where the informal circumstances give the respondent

increased control over the communication. Hence, the researcher can let the respondents define what is important from their point of view. I found this method fruitful on several occasions, especially when the members were gathered as a group. During some of the meetings, I used a question or an assertion to create a discussion. I recorded these discussions so I would have the opportunity to listen to them in retrospect. I discovered that my informants challenged each other's meanings and gave each other ideas that led to interesting information, maybe even more valuable than if I had prepared fixed questions.

I wanted to use my former education as a cook in the process of data gathering because I thought it would be an excellent opportunity to obtain physical contact with several aspects that have to do with food. I wanted my body to experience the subject of my research as much as my mind. Through the role as a cook one is in close touch with the act of transforming raw materials into a finished product. Cooking is a highly sensuous activity. It includes touching different materials, smelling them, hearing the sounds while peeling, boiling or frying them, seeing the variety of colours and finally tasting it. By opening my senses to the field, I took the approach of scholars like Howes (2003; 2005), Classen (1993), Stoller (1989; 1997) and Seremetakis (1994). They argue that social theorists should supplement their intellectual approach by engaging their senses in the examination. All experiences of the field, which situate themselves inside the body of the researcher, unites into an "embodied knowledge", as Desjarlais terms it (1992).

Before I began the fieldwork, I read about Slow Food. I found information about the movement on the internet (SlowFood 2010) and in books (Parkins and Craig 2006; Petrini and Padovani 2006). These have been valuable sources of information about the background and foundation of the movement. Written material has also been one type of data I have gathered during my fieldwork. Advertising materials, programmes from meetings and seminars, and other written information has supplemented my field notes in a remarkable way.

The question of objectivity

As already mentioned, both the focus of this paper and the locus of my fieldwork are coloured by my personal motives. I am therefore obliged to reflect upon my position as researcher. I am confronted by the "blurred" separation "between the observer and the observed phenomena", which Holy characterizes as more problematic for the social than the physical and natural sciences (Ellen 1984:14). The question of objectivity is a large and continuously ongoing debate, especially within the social sciences. It is too comprehensive to give an entire

account of in this paper, but I would like to express my standpoint in the debate by referring to Cerwonka and Malkki's *Improvising theory; Process and temporality in ethnographic fieldwork* (2007). In the chapter called *Nervous conditions* they give a representation of the exchange of e-mails between the two of them during Cerwonka's fieldwork in Melbourne, Australia. These e-mails reveal that the anthropologist is not an objective person, stripped for personal feelings and interests. However, this is not an inhibition for doing research, they ascertain. They argue for the validity of "interpretive modes of knowledge production as an alternative to positivism" (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007:2).

For them, and I agree, the fieldwork is a "hermeneutic process" (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007:2). Empirical details are not only gathered, but also interpreted by the anthropologists. Because anthropologists are people, they are always coloured by their own perception, their own understanding of the world. The knowledge produced from the fieldwork, then, will always be influenced by the anthropologist's background and the type of person he or she is. In order to claim that this knowledge has scientific validity, the anthropologist must engage in a "process of tacking between theory and empirical detail" (ibid.:4).

Every characteristic about me as a person influenced how other people responded to me, and the fact that I worked as a cook during my fieldwork is central for the type of information I got. I do not share the positivist ideal of objectivity, and I think that it can never really be reached. I agree with Cerwonka and Malkki when they refer to both Gadamer and Heidegger, and claim that:

"[A]n object or phenomenon can *only* be understood from a particular vantage point. [It] means having a sociohistorical location, but it might also be understood as the set of priorities, questions, or even hypotheses one inevitably brings to bear [...]" (Cerwonka and Malkki 2007:26).

My particular location, my point of view, then, has coloured my knowledge production, but through the hermeneutic process of tacking between the whole (different theoretical perspectives) and the bits and parts (empirical details) I claim scientific validity to this knowledge.

Challenges and difficulties during my fieldwork

The greatest challenge during my fieldwork has been the language. I had been studying French at the university for one year before my stay in France. In addition I took an intensive language course during my stay in Lyon. I had 20 hours of lessons per week from the 2nd to the 26th February 2010. Still, I experienced great difficulties the first two months when having a conversation in French with my informants and in the gathering of information. However, during my stay in Lyon I spoke mainly English. The president of the local group in Lyon, Philippe, spoke English fluently. He was present at all the meetings I participated in, so I could always ask him for a translation when I talked with the others. Of course, the conversations I had in French at that time bore witness of me being a novice in the language. I didn't have the vocabulary to ask thorough questions and engage myself in profound debates. I needed a lot of time to understand what the others were saying and to formulate my own sentences. On the other side, my ears were very alert to new words during this period. I experienced positive consequences of this during one of the meetings held at Philippe's office. The three persons participating in the meeting (besides myself), were having a conversation in French. As I didn't understand the dialogue in its entirety, I concentrated on recognizing single words. I became aware of one word they kept repeating very often. The word was "charte". After the meeting, I asked Philippe what this means, and it turned out to provide me with important information. "Charte" means agreement, and as already explained, this agreement between the members in Lyon contains the ten points they considered as the most important ones in order to sum up Slow Food's ideolog³. He printed them out for me so I could take them with me and translate them properly when I had a moment on my own.

After I moved to Auvergne, the first phase of getting to know the members in this local group was still very marked by my lack of command of the language. During all of my fieldwork, I never formally used an interpreter. Luckily, some of the members in Auvergne too spoke English. Especially one of them, Lena, was very helpful with translations when I didn't understand. As a consequence of my language difficulties I didn't perform any thorough interviews in French during the first three months of my fieldwork. When I wanted to discuss certain questions in depth, I did it with my English-speaking informants. If I had only counted on the voices of the members who spoke English, it could have ended up giving me a distorted view of the situation. That's why I made great efforts to improve my French. It is to

³ Attachment No. 1: Charte du convivium

a great extent thanks to the situation in the restaurant that I succeeded. When working with Robert at “Chez nous”, I had no choice but to speak French. He didn’t speak English. Constance spoke a little English, but the main conversation in every situation with my hosts took place in French. So did the conversation between the guests and myself. The fact that I was situated in the same room as the guests (I will explain the restaurant concept in further detail in chapter 3) led to a lot of small talking between Robert, the guests and myself. Of course they were curious to hear about me, a strange Norwegian student in anthro- what did you say? I got lots of opportunities to practice my French in these situations. Hence, I experienced a great deal of improvement during my fieldwork. Gradually, I started to understand the conversations taking place between the others, even when they didn’t talk slowly in consideration to me. I participated more and more in the conversations and asked gradually more interrogating questions. At the end of my stay I also interviewed my informants in French.

Since I worked at the restaurant during my fieldwork, I was confronted by another challenge. It occupied a lot of my time. From time to time, I was worried that I didn’t spend enough time together with my other informants. For instance, I missed the opportunity to go with the members of “Volca’Niac” to visit a producer of the famous cheese called Gaperon because there were a lot of reservations in the restaurant. On other occasions, Robert and Constance gave me the weekend off in order to participate in activities and weekend-trips with Slow Food. If I knew that I was leaving them with a heavy work load, I was troubled by conscience in regard to my obligations at the restaurant. I had a few of these dilemmas during my fieldwork, but all in all it didn’t cause too many problems. Altogether, there were many advantages about my particular combination. For instance, several of my informants came to eat at the restaurant. In consequence, I got to ask them about the correlation between the restaurant concept and Slow Food ideology. Additionally, my presence in a restaurant kitchen, in close connection with the guests, led to experiences that I would not get if I had made other priorities during my fieldwork.

3. The shared table as a manifestation of slowness

“Under the sign of the snail, we will welcome lovers of food culture and those who still love the enjoyment of easygoing, slow pleasures. The snail *is* slow” (Petrini and Padovani 2006:72).

Several aspects about the age in which we live are featured by speed. Eriksen describes several examples in *Tyranny of the moment; fast and slow time in the information age* (2001). He argues that historical inventions like the development of the written language, the art of printing, monetary economy and the invention of the clock has formed some standardized, common denominators permitting further developments and inventions taking place. During the last two centuries the world has witnessed, for instance, the invention of the steamer, the railway, the telephone and the increasingly efficient industrialization of production. The continuous introduction of new technology, and the “time-saving” quality of this technology, has taken place in an increasing rate of speed, he argues, and the pace is still growing in the post-industrial time, or the “information age” (Eriksen 2001). We travel faster, we can connect with other people faster (internet permits us to send a letter anywhere in the world within seconds, instead of waiting days or weeks for the post system), we get the latest news faster, and the technological inventions we are using to do things and exchange information faster, like computer programs, are becoming still faster. This acceleration influences our understanding of fast and slow time and affects our experience of being in the world. The desire for slow time in the ideology of Slow Food, expresses a feeling that there is something missing in our hasty information age. “In a temporality of speed, we would contend, there is no time for wonder or generosity, no time to attend to the enchantment in daily life” (Parkins and Craig 2006:50). As opposed to the temporality of speed, therefore, there is a need for temporality of slowness in order to re-enchant the world, and Slow Food uses food in order to create the notion of slowness.

The desire for slowness

Does everybody in modern society wish for slowness in their lives? Parkins and Craig are discussing the subject of temporality in *Slow living* (2006). They call attention to the relativity of slowness, and to the fact that the notion of slow is presupposed by the notion of speed. From the nineteenth century, they argue, inventions like the railway for example affected people’s experience of the relationship between time and space, and introduced

increasing speed to everyday life. Hence, slowness started to emerge as a positive value. Slower travel like horse transportation could be newly appreciated because it became a choice; a slow alternative. The concept of slowness as a choice reminds us that not everyone wants to live a slow life. For instance, young people often dream of and seek out activities and lifestyles featured by excitement and speed. Further, there is a difference “between choosing to live slowly and having slowness thrust upon one” (Parkins and Craig 2006:42). Elderly people and unemployed or disabled persons might not have the choice. In these situations, if the days already go by at a snail’s pace, there will be no need to demarcate certain times, activities or spaces as slow.

The demarcation of slowness, then, is a way of embracing a scarcity. Many people in our own times have a large number of commitments to manage in their daily life, which might give the feeling that time is scarce. When everyday life is featured by high pressure at work or other commitments leading to a temporality of speed, the need to demarcate certain spaces or times as “slow” becomes more urgent. We develop a need to ascribe certain times with higher status and lift it up as “quality time” (Parkins and Craig 2006:45-46). Members of Slow Food do not stand out from this picture. Of course, there are individual differences, but like most other people they have jobs, family lives, social and political commitments, they are accessible through e-mails and cell phones, and they consult their appointment book before arranging a meeting. The implementation of slowness in their everyday life remains therefore a goal and desire rather than actual reality (Parkins and Craig 2006:36). Barbara Adam’s distinction between “non-temporal” and “temporal” time is fruitful in this connection. The first can be measured; it is repeatable, quantifiable and it is something we are running out of, whereas temporal time “is created in ceaseless emergence” (Adam 1995:52). The latter is “a mode of experience rather than a form of measurement” (Parkins and Craig 2006:40). We subject to the “non-temporal” time when we organize our interaction according to the calendar and the clock, but there are still multiple ways of *experiencing* time. It seems that the notion of slowness in Slow Food is best understood as the consciousness that there are alternatives to speed. Food is the medium through which they communicate the notion of slowness.

Food and temporality

In the story about the cheese store “La Délicatesse” in the foretaste, I wrote that Henri is concerned about producers making smaller cheeses in order to sell them more rapidly. Their traditional large size means that they have to ripen for a long time – which includes a notion of slowness. If we linger upon the taste of a cheese that has been matured for several months, the most important ingredient in the cheese is, precisely, *time*. When knowing its mode of production, then, this cheese awakes awareness that there are alternatives to speed. The cheese is charged with slowness, so to speak. I claim that food communicating a notion of slowness affects how we experience both the food and time. For instance, the emphasis on seasons, as explained in the story about the cheese store, works as a reminder of temporality. It opens for a dwelling about times’ eternal cycle and man’s place in nature and history. Parkins and Craig employ Urry’s concept of “glacial time” as “oppos[ed to] the ‘throwaway’ mentality of fast (food) culture” (Parkins and Craig 2006:41). In this sense, seasonal awareness is a mode of experiencing time with reference to eternity, so to speak. Eternity sure knows to put a slightly stressful morning in its right perspective and permits us to slow down and experience every moment of our lives with appreciation.

In Slow Food ideology, there seems to be a polarisation between food articles, based on the notion of temporality. Fast food is of course placed on the negative, high speed pole. Food from intensive agriculture and industrial mode of production also stands for a temporality of speed, while foods grown in a manner that is friendly the environment, and food articles claiming to be ‘artisanal’, ‘home made’ or ‘made at the farm’ according to the ‘traditional way’ stands for a temporality of slowness. From the producers’ point of view there is surely an aspect of building a brand which sells.

“In the increasingly crowded marketplace of goods, the more differentiated, unique, and somehow all-encompassing (of lifestyle, of values) the promise made through a brand, the more consumers will listen, take note, and, ultimately, buy, it is believed” (Trubek 2008:212).

Still, from the eaters’ point of view, the connection of these food articles to the notion of slowness influences the total experience of eating them. Caplan (1997) and Lupton (1996) elaborate on the way incorporation of food affects the sense of self. In accordance with their arguments, I claim that food charged with slowness affects the eater’s sense of self. Even though the eater is very much likely to have a high speed every day, the food will affect his perception of the rhythm of life.

Articulating slowness

Slowness is carefully articulated at “Chez nous”. Already when looking at the menu, written with chalk on the large blackboard, you get certain indications about the tempo at the restaurant. The idea behind the menu is not to let the customer choose between many different single courses (the principle called choosing ‘à la carte’), and then to serve it as rapid as possible. The idea is rather that everyone should have the entire menu – from appetiser to dessert - and this means to lean back and take the time to enjoy what is coming. Certain characteristics about the food, as well, indicate the notion of slowness. For instance, Robert very often uses a technique involving low temperature when he’s roasting meat like pork, chicken or Guinea hen. He covers the meat in plastic film and leaves it in the oven at a temperature around 80° C until it reaches a core temperature of 63° C. This means that it takes a long time to roast, but it also leads to a marvellous result, because it doesn’t dry out the meat. Hence, taking a bite of the juicy meat is figuratively speaking like ‘tasting slowness’.

Further, the total eating experience at the restaurant is featured by easygoing tranquillity. The size of the restaurant limits the number of customers, so there is rarely any stress during service. However, since there is no waiter or waitress (except the Sundays when Constance is working), Robert and I took care of everything from explaining the menu, taking the orders, cooking and serving at the same time. When we had several reservations, then, this implied some waiting for the customers. If Robert was occupied welcoming the last customers, while I was serving appetisers to a party of four, there was no-one to explain the menu and take orders from the people arriving last. The customers immediately got familiar with the fact that ‘in this restaurant you will not get your dinner in five minutes’! As the service proceeded, the cooking, serving and eating soon fell into a tranquil rhythm; the customers at one table had their starters while the others had their main course, for example.

People often tend to imagine that restaurant kitchens are like ‘Ramsey’s kitchen’ (if this television show is familiar to the reader), with maniac cooks running around screaming, ready to kill the next customer asking for some extra sauce. It was often commented, in a slightly surprised tone, that the atmosphere at “Chez nous” was the quite opposite. Robert and I rarely had to exchange many words in order to do our jobs; sometimes he told me to turn the fish in the frying pan, and I asked him which sauce he wanted me to heat first. Apart from this, we worked in silence. Additionally, Robert always took the time to talk with the customers. Quite often, people asked about ingredients and preparation techniques, and Robert was more than

happy to explain. He would often share his recipes, and the blackboard for the menu sometimes served its proper purpose, as educational tool. One time, he made a chalk drawing of what happens with the water molecules inside a piece of meat when you congeal it at -40° C instead of -18° C, whereof the latter is normal temperature in domestic freezers. Naturally, the molecules freeze more quickly to ice at -40° C. This means that they retain their shape to a higher degree. Congealing at -18° C tends to deform the molecules, and when you later take it out of the freezer, more of the melted meat juice escapes from the meat and makes it dry. Slow Food ideology emphasizes communication of knowledge about the food we eat, and this is an idea Robert puts into practice. However, the point I wanted to elaborate on in this chapter is the fact that taking time to explain recipes and preparation techniques; to exchange knowledge, leads to a particular atmosphere in the restaurant, one that articulates slowness.

Between the different courses there would always be some waiting; first of all because Robert and I were occupied preparing the following courses, but also because we intentionally created a slow rhythm. In order to highlight the feeling of slowness, there was an element of staging concerning the time dimension during service. This utterance needs to be exemplified. Sunday 30th May we had 14 customers; 6 people at the small table, and a party of 4 placed next to two couples at the large table. Constance was working with me and Robert, and that day almost all the customers came simultaneously, around noon. This permitted us to serve all the appetisers at the same time, then the starters, then the main courses and so on. It all went very well and efficiently. Before we knew it, Robert and I were ready to decorate the dessert-plates. Constance was just about to serve the cheeses, when she saw what time it was; 13.55. Do not finish the desserts too early, she told us, because it isn't yet two o'clock! The customers had stayed seated at the table for almost two hours, but Robert and I postponed the desserts for a while, and Constance made sure to take the time for some small talk while explaining the variety of cheeses she offered.

The shared table

In my interpretation, staging the use of time is a way of demarcating slowness. For a customer, the time spent at "Chez nous" has a different status than the time spent in several everyday situations. Everything from the placement far out in the countryside, the intimacy caused by the size of the restaurant, the menu on the blackboard, the slowly cooked meat and the proximity to the chef contributes to 'easygoing quality time'. However, of all the elements participating to this atmosphere, the large, shared table is the most explicit manifestation of

the temporality of slowness. The act of eating together has profound meanings, which implies that ‘the shared table’ is a potentially powerful symbol. In my interpretation, Slow Food’s emphasis on slowness culminates with sharing the table. If we take a look at the enclosed agreement for “Les Canuts Ecervelés”, we see that conviviality (convivialité) is one of the headings. The text under the heading says “we are happy to be gathered because we think that conviviality around the table is one of the keynotes of well-being”⁴. In Slow Food ideology, the slow pace of the snail is the metaphorical representation of the state of well-being. If slowness is the goal, conviviality around the table is the most important step towards attaining it. As will appear throughout this paper, there are several dimensions of the notion of slowness, and therefore also more than one step towards attaining this goal. Hence, eating together in convivial manners is not all that takes, but the shared table becomes an arena for re-enchanting the world. A good meal that pleases your senses, surrounded by a nice atmosphere and shared with interesting people can indeed be a source of enchanted moments.



The big table at "Chez nous"

⁴ Attachment No. 1: Charte du convivium

An awkward situation

On the other hand, eating together is an intimate and quite intense act; it can therefore also turn out to be a very tense and uncomfortable moment. The outcome really depends upon the people gathered around the table. At “Chez nous” the concept is to let people share the table, even if they don’t know each other in the first place. This idea most often leads to a very nice and convivial atmosphere, but it depends on the customers. The situation can have negative, as well as positive outcomes, like the episode that Robert told as an amusing story for some of his customers. The story tells of an evening when Robert had quite a few reservations. The large table was laid for one reservation for two people and another reservation for four, only with a little space between them. In addition, there was a party of 6 people at the small table. The customers arrived, not all at the same time. The people around the small table, and the party of four, were well seated and had started to eat when the last ones came. Robert welcomed and guided them to their seats. He remembers that, during the subsequent conversation with the other customers, it was revealed that everyone in the room had asked themselves whether these two people were a married couple or not. The woman was considerably younger than the man, so it was hard to decide at a glance if she was his daughter, wife - or maybe mistress.

The evening proceeded; everybody was eating. One man among the party of four (he was seated next to the man of the couple) wanted to open a conversation with his dinner partner. He asked where the couple came from. Without inviting to further conversation, the other man named his home village. It is situated not far from the restaurant, so local actualities, for instance, could have become a theme to talk about. Instead, as a response to the next question from his dinner partner, the man said: “look, my wife and I simply wish to eat in tranquillity”. Quite surprised by the answer, the first man excused his interruption and turned to his own party for the rest of the evening. Since the restaurant is very small, all the others in the room had heard the man refusing an initiative to open a conversation with the other people around the table. The consequence was a rather tense feeling in the restaurant during the rest of the dinner. Luckily, Robert says, the couple ate very quickly and left quite early. Immediately after the door closed behind them, a roar of laughter mounted from the others, and for the rest of the evening they had great fun talking about this strange episode.

Who eats together?

In *Around the Tuscan table*, Counihan discusses the notion of commensality, that is, the act of eating together (Counihan 2004:117). Sharing the table is a powerful means of creating social connection, because it can underline boundaries between “inside” and “outside”. Most often, those who share the table belong inside a group, in contrast to those who don’t share the table. The type of group is defined by when, where and how often one shares the table. Counihan’s examination is based on food habits among people in Florence, Italy, from the 1980’s to 2003. It shows that eating together is extremely important for the feeling of unity in the Italian family. The time around the table was considered a time when all the family members could really pay attention to each other. They could express their happiness and love for each other, leading to a feeling of security and confidentiality. At the same time, this was the arena where family members could express their everyday problems and sadness. The atmosphere around the dinner table could therefore also be tense, even hostile at times. In any case, sharing the table meant being intimate with each other.

In my interpretation, the situation of eating right next to strangers was too intimate to handle for the strange couple. They clearly were not aware of the concept of the restaurant, so they had expected a separate table where they could be anonymous and left in peace. For the sake of argument, even eating in a restaurant filled with hundreds of people means to be more ‘left in peace’ than a situation where everyone is visible – where no one really disappears and becomes anonymous in the multitude. At “Chez nous”, the couple were taken by surprise and were not expecting to participate actively in a social situation meant to create some sort of connection between the people sharing the table. It was obviously not their ‘cup of tea’ that evening!

Just how intimate the act of sharing the table might be conceived is perfectly illustrated by Counihan, through interviews with family fathers in Florence (Counihan 2004:131-138). When their daughters were dating young men, many of them were told by their fathers not to bring the boyfriend to the family table until she was sure that this was the boy she was going to marry. The act of eating together would incorporate her boyfriend into the family, and if she was to break up with him some months later, it would be too hard for all of them. Actually, the fact that the daughter might be going out with, and perhaps sleeping with, several boys before marriage was a less disturbing thought for the fathers than the idea of having to relate to the (possibly multiple) boys, as if they were part of the family. Sharing the

table with the daughter's boyfriend would mean to take the risk of establishing feelings for him, and later perhaps losing him.

Taking the time, and the risk, for enchanted moments

In Slow Food ideology, “the shared table is not confined to the home, but is discussed as a general principle or site of sociality” (Parkins and Craig 2006:116), and according to my earlier arguments I add ‘a manifestation of slowness’. To be gathered around the table as members of a convivium first of all confirms all of them as “insiders” of the same group, but it also demarcates ‘quality time intended for slowness’. During my fieldwork, both convivia shared food after the principle they called “Auberge Espagnole”. It implies that everybody brings something to eat or drink, and everything is being shared. The meal I described in the foretaste is an example of this principle. This is not “hospitality in a traditional sense”, Parkins and Craig notes, because no one is taking the role as a host; they are rather “locating hospitality in the public rather than the private sphere” (Parkins and Craig 2006:117). This might imply that the principle of the shared table applies not only outside the home, but also with strangers.

One of my first meetings with Philippe took place in a restaurant called “Bouchon Le Gare”. He had chosen the restaurant because it has some values in common with Slow Food ideology. First of all, “bouchon” is an old term for restaurants in Lyon, and they often served very substantial dishes in order to satisfy the silk weavers who came to eat after work. This restaurant worked to preserve these traditional peculiarities from Lyon's history. The “bouchon” was situated not far from Philippe's office, in a narrow street quite hidden from the traffic in the surrounding streets. There were curtains and placards in the windows, so it was impossible to look inside when passing by. Philippe noted how it created a feeling of taking a break from the city and work; even the cell phone took a break in there, because it received no signal in the narrow street between the high buildings. The restaurant staff refused to let the quick pulse of the city inside the restaurant, Philippe said. He told me the following little anecdote about some English-speaking people who wanted to be served very rapidly. “We're in a hurry”, they tried to explain. The chef, then, came out of the kitchen and replied “hurry (pronounced as Harry) is dead, he's been in the fridge for a week!” Philippe clearly expressed an admiration for this firmness of principles that lead to a very quiet atmosphere. The restaurant was quite small; approximately 20 seats on the ground floor and less than 20 upstairs. If you come here to eat, and you come alone, you'll be seated at the table in the

middle of the restaurant, Philippe told me. If there are other people also eating alone, they will all be seated at the same table. In this way, one can meet some nice people and have some interesting conversations.

Even though this restaurant is situated in the middle of the quite large city of Lyon, it has several things in common with “Chez nous”, situated far out in the countryside. A similar distancing from the city, with its connotations to high speed, is created by the curtains and placards in the windows. They create a demarcation of space where the temporality of speed is not welcome. Further, in both restaurants, people who are strangers to each other might end up eating together. In the shared table as a general principle, it seems that rather than letting the already defined group decide who one should share the table with; it is the shared table that decide who one should consider as “insiders”, at least during the meal. This principle involves taking the risk of feeling uncomfortable, as already illustrated with an example from “Chez nous”. You could end up feeling that the meal has no ending, including everything from awkward silence to ending up discussing a political dilemma where you have extremely opposing standpoints. Is it not better to eat alone, after all? Yes it is, if you want to have your safe, secure lunch break. If you’re looking for enchantment, on the other hand, you have to take the risk of surprising and disturbing yourself. Nothing ventured, nothing gained seems to be the driving force. Taking a chance, you can win the social pleasures associated with food and perhaps bring enchantment to the act of eating.

“The mood that I call enchantment is provoked by a surprise, by an encounter with something that one did not expect. Surprise itself includes both a pleasant, charming feeling and a slightly off-putting sense of having been disrupted or tripped (up). [Enchantment is] an uneasy combination of charm and disturbance” (Bennett 2001:104).

Spellbinding moments at the table

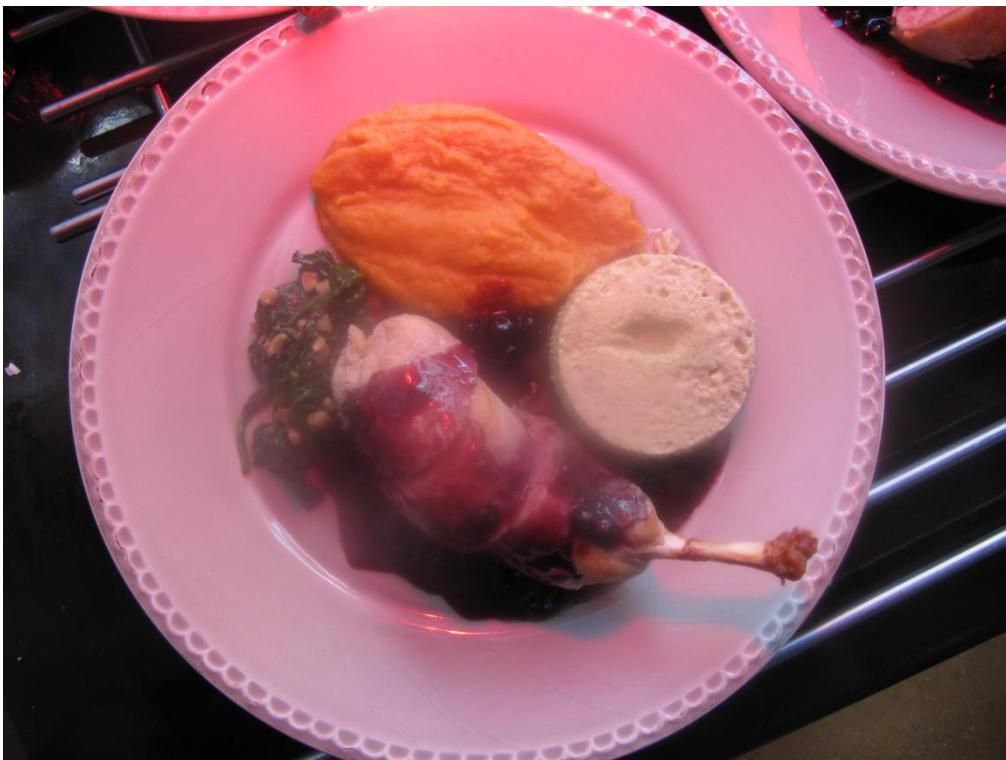
This combination filled the atmosphere at “Chez nous” every day. Almost every meal started with a certain apprehension. People were charmed by the rural and picturesque surroundings and the nice restaurant with the laboriously set table, but simultaneously they registered that they would have to share the table with people they did not know. Who should break the silence? What should they talk about? Most of the conversations started with comments on the food and the restaurant concept. It should be noted that many conversations never surpassed the rather shallow level of pure politeness. However, from time to time, as the one course followed the other, the odours from all the ingredients united and filled the small room,

one taste contrasted the other and sharpened the senses, the frying pan sizzling in the background - people seemed to 'find each other'. They talked about where they come from and what they do for a living. In some occasions they discovered that they have several things in common; they have common familiars or they work in the same profession. On other occasions they came from places completely unknown to each other, so they had to describe what it's like.

Additionally, of course, they talked about the performance of Robert and me. In a slow rhythm, we fried slices of foie gras, decorated plates, heated sauces and sautéed vegetables. There were days when I was not well enough prepared, so I had to go to the garden, during service, to get some salad. The garden was not big enough to cultivate everything we needed in the restaurant. Most of the vegetables we used were bought. However, the salad we served was often fetched from the garden. The sight of the bowl of fresh, green salad when I returned was always commented. "This restaurant is quite particular; it's not often one gets to eat something directly from the garden!" People would address the others around the table and say "you can really taste the freshness!" The commenting and the conversations almost always stopped when Robert and I decorated the plate of desserts. A complete silence filled the room, and all the eyes were fixed upon the creation of the grand finale. Many customers were completely spellbound during this session. On a grey slate we combined several small bowls and cups of different delicacies; a slice of brownie with dried apricots, a cup of strawberries marinated in mint syrup and a chocolate mousse with a taste of lemon. We always decorated with a sprinkle of icing sugar and something colourful like fresh berries (in the summer) or a French fruit flavoured biscuit called macaron. The excitement rose when we lit the gas burner to caramelize the sugar on top of the "crème brûlée". The flames seemed to heat more than the sugar covering; the atmosphere that had become gradually warmer since the beginning of the meal, now reached new temperatures. People looked at each other and raised their eyebrows in expectation of the pleasures soon to be served. When tasting the sweetness of every different delicacy, they sighed. Robert always recommended the customers to start with the part of the dessert having the most subtle taste; like the crème brûlée or fruits and berries. You should always save the things containing chocolate for the end, because it leaves a very strong taste in your mouth, and will prevent you from fully tasting anything afterwards. Finally, the blissful mood that followed when everyone had finished eating indicated that these people had actually shared a marvellous moment together.



The chef preparing the starters



Guinea hen served with purée of sweet potato, spinach with hazelnuts and red wine sauce



The board of cheeses from the region of Auvergne



Sweet temptations

4. So, what's for dinner?

Distinctiveness and diversity instead of standardized uniformity

“[L]ife in a disenchanted world is stamped with “the imprint of meaninglessness.” In this world, “there are no mysterious, incalculable forces that come into play, but rather...one can,...in principle, master all things by calculations” (Bennett 2001:8).

In order to understand Slow Food's disenchantment tale we need to contextualise the movement within the age we are living in. What features about it might give impressions of a disenchanted world? I claim that particularly two of Slow Food's projects, “the Ark of Taste” and the “presidia products” (SlowFoodFoundation 2011), can be seen as reactions to standardization processes. Further, these processes are believed to create a disenchanted world. I will argue that Slow Food's goal of preserving bio-diversity is a countermeasure to standardisation. The movement emphasises distinctiveness and diversity as a way of re-enchanting the dinner table – and the world.

The large M

The Slow Food philosophy became particularly concretized as a result of the opening of a McDonald's restaurant in Piazza di Spagna in Rome. It opened on March 20, 1986, and it was said to be the largest McDonald's in the world. The people reacting against it were not only worried about the quality of the food, but also about the way the large M would influence the facades of the old buildings. In spite of the debates it created, the McDonald's restaurant was allowed to stay in Piazza di Spagna, as long as it removed the large M. Arcigola (the Italian left wing elite that was the beginning of the movement Slow Food) expressed their reactions with a manifesto on the first page of *Gambero Rosso*, an eight page insert in the politically left-oriented newspaper *Il manifesto*, on November 3, 1987. They declared fast food, taking part of a “fast life” as a “barbaric invasion”, claimed that the human race was now “consumed by the cycle of production, consumption, and overconsumption”, a development in which the notion of “pleasure is totally incompatible with” (Petrini and Padovani 2006:70-71).

Since the establishment of a McDonald's restaurant in Rome has such a central role in the foundation of Slow Food, one might be lead astray thinking that “the large M” is the true enemy of the movement. In reality, the picture isn't as black and white as that; Slow Food can't simply be considered as the binary opposition to fast food. There may be certain

members who ban fast food completely from their diet, while others have a more relaxed relationship to it. For instance, I once ate at a fast food restaurant together with some of my informants. There was a great deal of joking around the situation, and we concluded that it created equilibrium between slow and fast. Likewise, Philippe had a humoristic glance at his experience with fast food. When he was 17 years old, he had a stay in Canada. During two months, he worked at a fast food restaurant, and every day he operated a machine that peeled potatoes. As a result of his diet while he worked there, he gained 7 kg in bodyweight. “Maybe this experience has formed the background for my present interest in Slow Food”, he chuckled while telling me this little story.

Joking apart, fast food is generally disliked among the members of Slow Food. One of the most expressed reasons is because this type of food is marked by the tendency of large restaurant chains opening identical restaurants all over the world, serving exactly the same food wherever you go. As already mentioned Philippe told me that quite a few members of “Les Canuts Ecervelés” share particularly one thing in common; they have experienced the feeling of missing something when visiting other parts of the world. As food-loving people, they seek local specialities and unknown flavours during vacations and business trips. All too often they end up disappointed. To a great extent, wherever in the world they go, they feel that they find the same kind of food, the same kind of flavours.

Slow Food in a local-global context

The spread of fast food chains is a process asserting itself on a worldwide scale. One can say that global processes have existed from time immemorial, for instance through long-distance trading or warfare and conquering. On the other side, one can say that relations crossing long distances are more widespread and less time-consuming today than it was before. “During the last few decades it has taken place an intensified flow of people, commodities, ideas and images on a global scale” (Eriksen 1995:282). The term globalization has been used, particularly since the 1980s, in order to describe this intensified flow. These are some of the aspects of globalization:

“When understood as *internationalization*, globalization refers to a growth of transactions and interconnectedness among countries. A more particular version of the internationalization concept defines [it] as *liberalization*. Globalization thus means the creation of an “open” and “free” international market. Taking a third tack, conceptions of globalization as *universalization* depict a process whereby increasing numbers of objects and experiences are dispersed to people in all habitable locations across the Earth. Finally, in this fourfold

typology of definitions, the idea of *planetarization* regards globalization as a trend whereby social relations increasingly unfold on the scale of the Earth as a whole” (Robertson and Scholte 2007:527, my italics).

There are too many aspects about the globalization processes to highlight all of them in this paper. I will pay special attention to one of them; the idea that the globalization process produces an increasing sameness around the world. According to the quotation above, globalization processes leads to a greater interconnectedness among countries and the dispersal of objects and experiences all over the world. In consequence, phenomena which come into being in one particular place might be spread all over the world, to be experienced by people everywhere. An obvious idea is that everything around the world grows increasingly similar. This is one of the basic ideas of Slow Food’s disenchantment tale.

Increasing sameness around the world?

The idea that “various parts of the world are growing increasingly similar in various ways” is known as homogenization in globalization theory (Robertson and Scholte 2007:575). Clearly, everything around the world doesn’t become identical. Scholars like Eriksen (Eriksen and Frøshaug 1998:403-419) argue that the flow of phenomena around the world will always be interpreted, conceived and used differently by different people from place to place. Hence, simultaneously with the homogenization processes, people and places around the world become different in new ways, and we communicate our differences in new manners. Even though social scientists find evidence for both processes, the process of homogenization has gained most attention in the public. Within Slow Food this is evident in the idea of protecting vanishing plant species and animal breeds through the foundation for bio-diversity (SlowFoodFoundation 2011). At a conference in June 1997, as a project of protecting the diversity of tastes, the “Ark of Taste to save the planet of tastes” (in French: “L’Arche du Goût”) was established (Petrini and Padovani 2006:97). The term refers to the biblical Noah, who saved his family and representatives of all the animals from the flood by constructing an ark. The project’s manifesto is as follows:

“To protect the small purveyors of fine food from the deluge of industrial standardization; to ensure the survival of endangered animal breeds, cheeses, cold cuts, edible herbs - both spontaneous and cultivated - cereals and fruit; to promulgate taste education; to make a stand against obsessive worrying about hygienic matters, which kills the specific character of many kinds of production; to protect the right to pleasure” (SlowFoodFoundation 2011).

In effect, this means that Slow Food works to detect food articles that are about to disappear. Why are they disappearing? For instance, farmers might stop raising a certain breed of domestic animal because it is not fit for an industrialized, profit oriented mode of breeding. For the farmer, then, it is more profitable to change to a breed that is better fit for these conditions. The result is that more and more farmers go for the same breeds, while the other breeds die out. The same might happen for particular sorts of seed, or special types of cheese or other food articles that cannot be produced in a “streamlined”, efficient mode of production, as preferred in the capitalist economy. Hence, there was established an international Ark commission responsible for selecting suitable products. By including a product into the Ark, Slow Food started a process of increasing awareness of it and the way it is threatened with disappearance. Petrini explains the use of the biblical metaphor of Noah: “the deluge represented the tendency toward homogenization that was about to hit Italy and Europe and overwhelm the culture of food” (Petrini and Padovani 2006:100). Here, the tendency of wiping out differences is pictured as a flood washing over Europe. It’s a rather frightening thought. How can we, as individuals, act against a scenario like this?

Slow Food’s ideology suggests that the first step towards the answer lies in the way we behave as consumers. Robertson and Scholte indicate the homogenizing power of consumerism when they write that “since the end of the Cold War, [it] has become the one ideology that unifies the globe” (Robertson and Scholte 2007:216). I will take a closer look at some features about consumption in our own times in chapter 5 and 7. In this passage I will content myself with a very short and extremely simplified presentation of the development of a consumer culture. Two consumer revolutions have formed the mode of consumption as we know it today. The first one took place in England during the 18th century. The supply of exotic commodities increased as a result of colonization and industrialization intensified the production of a variety of goods. The other revolution took place in the United States of America during the years after the Depression. During the 1930s, a mode of production called “Fordism” was developed (Robertson and Scholte 2007:217). Highly simplified, the term involves that the principles of efficiency and standardization led to mass-production, and higher salaries led to mass-consumption; a circle of growth was created. The growth in production stagnated however by the early 70s and led to some differences. According to research carried out in the 90s, the mode of consumption was more controlled by the chains in charge of selling the products than by the producers. Hence, the companies in charge of sales promotion, like Wal-Mart, have become increasingly visible and powerful in the chain of

consumption (Robertson and Scholte 2007:216-218). These companies operate with concepts like low-prize, efficiency, rationality and standards; words of great importance in capitalistic societies in the age in which we live.

Standardized uniformity

The American sociologist George Ritzer goes thoroughly into some of these concepts in his work about a phenomenon he terms *the McDonaldization of Society*. His theory “is an amplification and extension of Weber’s theory of rationalization, especially into the realm of consumption” (Ritzer 2008:25). In his theory of rationalization, Weber claimed that the modern Western world, featured by advanced bureaucracy, has become dominated by a distinctive form of rationality. It is characterized by the principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability and control. Ritzer doesn’t write about the fast food chain McDonald’s in itself, or exclusively about fast food chains for that matter. The title of his book could have been several things ending in –ization, because the phenomenon is evident in many cases throughout the world today. McDonald’s could have been replaced by the toy-store chain “Toys R us”, by the trend of online dating, or even by the potency medicine Viagra, according to Ritzer. He chose McDonald’s because the chain illustrates the four principles of the rationalization-theory in an excellent manner.

The streamlined organization of McDonald’s restaurants, like the concept of drive-through, is an example of the principle of *efficiency*. The principle of *calculability* is evident in the menu’s emphasis on quantity. A Big Mac-menu comes in one standard size. It makes it easy for the customer to know whether or not he gets what he’s paying for. He might therefore be deluded into accepting quantity as the same thing as quality. The third principle in the rationalization-theory is that of *predictability*. From the moment you walk into a McDonald’s restaurant you know what you can expect; if you have seen one, you’ve seen them all. You know that the coming meal might not be something to write home about, but it won’t be a shocking disaster either. Since every element of the menu, “even the pickles”, are standardized, it can’t lead to any unpleasant surprises (Ritzer 2008:108). The exercise of *control* is the fourth principle. McDonald’s controls their employees as well as their customers. Nonhuman technologies pre-slice and pre-cook most of the food before it arrives at the restaurant. The rest of the job is controlled by a highly developed routine, with a few simple procedures that almost anyone can follow. As an employee at McDonald’s, all you have to do is to follow instructions. This is to a large extent the case for the customers as well.

If you want to eat there, you will have to stand in line, order something from the limited menu, wait by the counter until your food is ready and personally bring it to an available table. The Spartan furniture creates an atmosphere that tells the customer to finish the meal as quickly as possible and leave the seat for the next customer. Before you leave, make sure to gather up your rubbish! (Ritzer 2008)

The high level of control might lead to the feeling that “rational systems are dehumanizing” (Ritzer 2008:141). They can also turn out to be unpredictable, incalculable and inefficient. The long line of people in front of you when you want to order a burger is an example of inefficiency for you as customer. The price you pay for your meal should also be further scrutinized. The burger alone doesn’t cost very much. However, when you take into consideration the value it has in terms of nutritional content, or the social and environmental impacts of fast food systems, the total cost turns out to be quite unpredictable and incalculable. For further reading on the “actual” costs, see Patel’s *Stuffed and Starved* (2008) and *The Value of Nothing* (2009). Ritzer uses the term “the irrationality of rationality” for all the negative aspects of McDonaldisation (Ritzer 2008:141). One of the irrationalities he alludes to is the tendency of disenchantment; that people replace magical explanations with rational, scientific calculations in order to understand the world. As Bennett (2001) argues, Weber considered the disenchantment of the world a pity, and I claim that the actions of Slow Food expresses the same opinion.

Parkerization

Several people at ”Communauté du Goût”, recommended I see a documentary film called “Mondovino” (Nossiter 2004). The film explains a lot about tendencies in the world’s winemaking. The fact that members of Slow Food took interest in this particular film can serve as an illustration of what I mean by the movement’s opposition to standardization. One of the main topics of the film deals with winemaker Michel Rolland’s job as a consultant specialist in wine production. He collaborates with many wine producers all over the world; in countries like France, Italy, United States, India and Chile. His job is to advise producers of wine about the mode of production, according to oenology (the science of winemaking) and according to market demand.

One of the central points in the film is that this advice is coloured by the writings of the American wine writer Robert Parker, who is known to have a great impact in the wine market all over the world. His rating system employs a 50-100 point quality scale. Wines rated above

85 points are considered as “very good to excellent wines” (Parker 2011). The tendency has been that when a wine is highly rated by Parker, it experiences great growth in market price. In effect, this means that Parker has a lot of power. His reviews, good or bad, might have dramatic consequences for wine producers all over the world. Hence, the producers are aware of Parker’s taste in wine. For instance, among the variety of red wines, Parker is known to appreciate wines with a deep colour, soft tannins and a high extract, new oak, vanilla taste. Quite a few producers have therefore started to make wines with these particular characteristics, even in the regions where the wines traditionally used to have other characteristics. In the French region of Bourgogne, for instance, the red wines in general have not been characterized by a deep colour. However, many producers in this region nowadays make their wines rich in colour. Since the producers want to attain good reviews, and subsequently good prices, they modify their mode of production according to Parker’s taste. High extraction of colour is one way of approaching his ideal, using exclusively new casks in order to maximize the flavour of oak is another one. As a consequence, regional varieties and peculiarities are lost, since different producers are making wines with the same characteristics (Nossiter 2004). In turn, Parker’s consumer-oriented reviews have created a global preference for big, rich and fruity wines; a phenomenon of uniformity in taste that has been named “Parkerization” (Stein 2006). In my interpretation, this term is synonymous with the term standardization.

The critical voices in the documentary film argue that the profit oriented approach of Rolland is more concerned about creating a “brand” (a best-selling name of a wine producer) than developing the best, distinctive product that one particular region and one particular “terroir” can yield. Rolland cares little about the concept of “terroir”, he’s more interested in expanding the production. This is a goal he expresses quite jocular in the film when he says that he will be the first oenologist to make wine on the moon (Nossiter 2004). Experts like Rolland have found the recipe to make a wine which conforms to Parker’s, and subsequently the market’s palate. Wine producers everywhere in the world follow this recipe in order to sell their name, no matter if it means to manipulate the natural product of the “terroir”. Even where the natural recourses set limits, Rolland can offer technology to attain the wanted result. An elderly, French wine producer, who has positioned himself against Rolland, goes so far as to proclaim that the wine is dead (ibid.). For him, wine represents a manifestation of an almost sacred relationship between man and soil, which goes centuries back in history, in the region around

the Mediterranean Sea. According to him, this relationship no longer exists because of agents like Rolland. Isn't it, indeed, a disenchantment tale he's telling us?

Re-enchantment of the dinner table; distinctiveness and diversity

My perspective on Slow Food as a way of re-enchanting the world is based upon an interpretation of their actions as a reaction to the frightful image of dehumanized irrationalities of standardization. In order to reverse the status quo of their notion of a highly standardized world, the movement works to rescue and communicate differences. Distinctiveness and diversity, then, is one of the dimensions of the notion of slowness. The key word, the goal they are striving for, is multiplicity.

The most obvious example of how Slow Food works to communicate this dimension is the project of presidia products. Still after the introduction of the Ark of Taste, several small scale products were moving towards extinction. Slow Food had so far stayed out of economics, but they decided it was time to do something more forceful in order to save these products. Presidium is a military term and it means garrison (Petrini and Padovani 2006:109). It indicates an increasing level of commitment, for creating a presidium is a long process in which Slow Food actively participates.

“First, it encourages the composition of a committee to promote a Presidium, then it helps to form an association, like a co-op or a consortium of small-scale producers. The final step is communication [...]” (ibid.:111)

In order to be included in the presidia project, the products first have to meet certain criteria⁵. These criteria demand, for example, that the products are bound to one particular place, and have been connected to this place over a long period of time. This is quite opposite to the trend of fast food chains “popping up” everywhere, not at all bound to one particular place. According to Rémi, the members of “Les Canuts Ecervelés” felt sorry every time they returned from vacations and business trips, if they had discovered nothing different than what they could have found at home (in terms of food). If always meeting the same foods and flavours, the act of eating becomes almost mechanical and dehumanized; it might become one of the irrationalities of rationality. There is no room for enchantment about the act of eating if the food becomes standardized and its taste predictable. By preserving geographical differences and diversity, then, the presidia project brings enchantment to the dinner table.

⁵ Attachment No. 3: Presidium Vademecum

In France there are 12 presidia products (SlowFoodFoundation 2011). They are called “les Sentinelles” in French. Slow Food and the producers of “les Sentinelles” share the common vision of creating a new agricultural model. It opposes to the model based upon industrial agriculture, which is a highly standardized mode of agriculture. The new model acknowledges products with specific qualities based upon an idea of differentiation between products (2010:8-9). I understand the search for specific qualities as a search for distinctiveness. A distinctive character might be a product’s connectedness to place throughout history, for example. As already mentioned in the passage about parkerization, the concept of “terroir” is important. I will return to this concept in the chapter about connecting place to place. For now, let us have a look at the distinctiveness of one of “les Sentinelles”; the “Golden lentil of Saint Flour”. It is cultivated in the region of Auvergne. I’ve interviewed Thierry, president of the co-operative of 35 lentil-producers, and director of the enterprise SARL, La Lentille Blonde. Additionally, he is a member of Slow Food “Volca’Niac”. He told me the following story:

Lentils with a history

He characterizes the lentil as an ancient and a new product at the same time. That’s because until the 1960’s the lentil was a common element in the agriculture and in the everyday diet of the people living in the area “La Planèze”. This is a plateau at 800-1100 meters of altitude, between the mountains of Margeride and Cantal. The soil in this area is volcanic and has a significance concerning the characteristics of the product. The dry and warm wind called foehn, created because of the position next to the Cantal-mountains, is also an important element of the cultivation. Thanks to this wind the lentils are completely mature and dry before they are harvested. The quite specific conditions of that specific place give this type of lentils its very own specific characteristics – this is distinctiveness. The “Golden lentils” also have a quite particular history, in my opinion. It is a rather turbulent history that contributes to the distinctiveness of the final product.

During the next 30 years the “Golden Lentil” disappeared from agriculture and from people’s consciousness. Then, in 1997 the chairman of Saint Flour of that time, Pierre Jarlier, took the initiative to resume the cultivation of the lentils. He made inquiries in order to find out if anyone was still in possession of some seeds. With the help of abbot Boussuge, who put an advertisement in the paper, he found what he was looking for. The family Cibiel de Cussac had found a box containing seeds. However, to their great disappointment these seeds were too old to be sown. The seeds could luckily work as a point of departure for Jean-Pierre

Bonnaud at L'INRA (French National Institute for Agricultural Research), father of "la lentille verte du Puy". In 1998 he undertook the first experiments and created 16 varieties of lentils. The variety was later reduced to 3 types in 1999. They were cultivated, each type on one hectare of terrain, before a panel of agricultural and gastronomic experts in 2001 chose the two most authentic varieties. They were given the names Santa and Flora, after the city Saint Flour. On the occasion of the festival "La Festa del País" in Saint Flour in 2002 it was decided to resume the cultivation of the "Golden lentil", with the seed-variety called Flora. Then, the Golden lentil was invited to become one of the presidia products of Slow Food during the event "Salone del Gusto" from 21st to 25th of October 2004. In the next chapter I give a further description of what kind of event this is.

This history gives the lentils a peculiarity; a soul, so to speak. It was looking dark for the "Golden lentils" for a moment, but they made it through - they survived. The presidia products are sources of many similar stories, because each of them has their own peculiarities; they are distinctive. Most important, the presidia products are connected to place. This is a point I will attend to in chapter 6. My point in this chapter is to show that distinctiveness creates an exciting variety. McDonalds serve the same menus all over the world, in more or less exact the same manner. In contrast, the aim of the presidia products is to preserve diversity in the world.

Enchanting diversity in the world

The project of communicating differences might take various forms, besides the presidia products. The presence of indigenous groups at the event called Terra Madre (Moder Earth) is another example of this agenda. I will return to a more lengthy description of this event in the next chapter, but it is an international, biennial event, organized in Turin. The event is turned upon the idea of bringing together different players in the food chain, so that they can exchange knowledge, meanings and solidarity (TerraMadre 2011). I participated in the Terra Madre event in 2010, lasting from 21st to 25th October. Sami peoples were some of the delegates representing indigenous groups during these days. This indigenous group comes from the Sàpmi area, situated in the border district of northern Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. Most of the Sami delegates present in Turin, however, came from Sweden. Slow Food Sàpmi presented the budget and planning of a meeting called Terra Madre Indigenous Peoples. It will be organized in Jokkmokk, Sweden, in 2011. One of the Sami delegates held a speech during the opening ceremony, Thursday 21st of October. It was held in his mother

tongue and then translated to other languages like English and French by translators. This was the wish of Petrini; he wanted the languages to remind us about the diversity in the world. When coming to meetings and conferences, these delegates were wearing their traditional, colourful clothing. This was also the case when they took the bus from the town centre to the building where the event took place. When I was taking the bus one morning, it was hard not to notice the colourful dresses of three young Sami girls among the other jeans- and shirt-dressed people. In my interpretation, exotic elements about the indigenous peoples, like their clothing, were underlined during Terra Madre 2010 in order to express a spell-binding diversity.

With the example from Terra Madre, I stress that the emphasis on diversity deals with more than just the food alone. It is directed towards the world in general. Slow Food encourages different languages to be spoken, even though it needs to be translated afterwards. Slow Food encourages people to wear clothes that underline differences between the various people populating the Earth. In my interpretation, this is a countermeasure against processes of standardization in the age in which we live. I claim that Slow Food ideology is based upon an understanding of these processes as leading to a disenchanting world, and that distinctiveness and diversity is their counter tale to the disenchantment tale. Food, then, works as a medium to communicate distinctiveness and diversity. Besides this aspect, the project of saving biodiversity can also be seen as an expression for environmental concern. This is the main theme of the next chapter.

5. Joyful attachment with ethical implications

“In the mood of enchantment, we sense that “we” are always mixed up with “it”, and “it” shares in some of the agency we officially ascribe only to ourselves” (Bennett 2001:99)

The feeling of enchantment is presupposed by a “joyful attachment” to the world, whereof joy is a powerful source of ethics (Bennett 2001:12). As mentioned in the introduction, enjoyment is a central part of Slow Food. For instance, pleasure is one of the ten headings in the agreement of “Les Canuts Ecervelés”, saying that “pleasure runs like a scarlet thread through our activities”⁶. Likewise, the first point of the 12 slow gestures says “take pleasure”⁷. How should we understand this idea of enjoyment? Considering pleasure as synonymous with sins and excess is a misunderstanding, according to the founder and president of Slow Food (Petrini 2003:20-26). “Slow” pleasures seem to be closely connected to moral questions. The idea seems to be that the enjoyment is more sincere when the pleasures are considered ethically correct. Ethical commitment, then, is another dimension of the notion of slowness. The ethical dimension is captured in Slow Food’s term, “eco-gastronomy” (SlowFood 2011). It points to the connection between taking pleasure at the table and taking environmental responsibility. In my interpretation, this is a way of creating joyful attachments to the world. Throughout this chapter, I will discuss the preference of locally grown and organic food as a type of “lifestyle politics” (Giddens 1991:209-231) expressing environmental responsibility. Further, I will take a look at the Slow Food event called “Terra Madre” (SlowFood 2011). I consider the notion of solidarity within this event as a way of creating attachments between producers and consumers, expressed through the re-naming of consumers as “co-producers” (SlowFood 2011). Taken that that farmers and fishermen are attached to the nature – the Earth – in another way than most people, I will claim that the idea of co-producers indirectly also makes consumers’ feel more attached to the Earth, or mixed up with it, as Bennett expresses it. I will argue that this feeling is elementary for the quest of re-enchantment.

Eco-gastronomy

The creation of Arcigola, later Slow Food, took place in a time when certain events forced people to question the relationship between humans, the environment and food. The death of nineteen people across northern Italy in March 1986, caused by methanol-tainted wine, is one

⁶ Attachment No. 1 : Charte du convivium

⁷ Attachment No. 2 : Les 12 gestes “slow”

of the events. One of the retailers in Narzole, where brokers used to buy and sell low-priced loose wine, had added methyl alcohol in order to increase the alcoholic content. Another event was the pollution of the aqueducts of the Po valley the summer of 1986. Toxic runoff had polluted the water because of widespread use of pesticides in the agriculture. The same disastrous year, a meltdown of the Russian nuclear plant in Chernobyl, and the following radioactive cloud all over Europe, led to doubts about the quality of vegetables, meat and milk (Petrini and Padovani 2006:48-50). Mad cow disease, or bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), discovered for the first time in Great Britain in the mid 1980's (Jacobsen, Almås et al. 2003:67), also spread fear and uncertainty. All these events contributed to people's growing anxiety about what we are doing to nature, and consequently what nature does to us.

In Slow Food ideology, this concern is illustrated in the description of the movement as “eco-gastronomy” (SlowFood 2011). The founder and president of the movement, Petrini, expresses it like this: “An environmentalist who is not a gastronomist is sad; a gastronomist who is not an environmentalist is silly” (Petrini and Padovani 2006:118). According to this statement, people who want to take pleasure of the table should also search for knowledge about how the food got to the table, and the environmental consequences of the food production. The idea is to eat in a way we could call “informed eating” (Parkins and Craig 2006:97). Slow Food is a countermeasure to industrial food production. This mode of farming and production became wide spread after the Second World War. It is characterized by extensive use of chemicals and the use of agricultural machinery. Further, it directs its efforts on a few plant and animal species, selected because they are fit for the profitable, intensive mode of farming and breeding. The use of a few selected plant species and breeds leads to mono crop farming and monotonous agriculture (Cadet 2010). Slow Food works to draw attention to the negative effects of this mode of farming and production. Rivers that are polluted by pesticides, impoverished soil and bacteria turning immune to antibiotics are some of the things that have been connected to industrial agriculture. The loss of plant species and animal breeds is a concern being dealt with through the Slow Food foundation for biodiversity (SlowFoodFoundation 2011). The foundation is in charge of the Ark of Taste and the presidia products discussed in the previous chapter.

Environmental concern is one example of “political consumption”, according to Jensen (Blindheim, Jensen et al. 2000:175-261). Although not a new phenomenon; this form of consumption has current interest in a time when we place a great deal of stress on the individual and its values. The political consumer is not only looking for the actual property of

the commodity; he is also taking its mode of production and distribution into consideration. He expects the commodity to meet certain political and ethical demands. His consumption contributes to a definition of himself as human being. The need of self-definition contrasts to the principle of mass production. The political consumer seeks something unique and genuine, he wants to know the history of the commodity and where it comes from – and he is willing to pay for it (Blindheim, Jensen et al. 2000:202).

“Eco-gastronomy” can be viewed as a type of “countercuisine” (Belasco 2007). Belasco writes about events at Berkley’s People’s Park, at the end of the 1960’s, signalling a growing environmentalism connected to food. Before 1969, the word “ecology” was rarely mentioned outside academic discourse, he claims (Belasco 2007:16). Provoked by many disturbing incidents of that time (the war in Vietnam, the King and Kennedy assassinations and student riots in Paris, for example) environmentalists sought to use “food as a medium to develop “collective social consciousness and social action”” (Belasco 2007:17). The same motive power is found in Slow Food as well. As mentioned in chapter 4, the movement works towards the vision of creating a new agricultural model, based on new conceptions of quality. Within the new model, food production should be friendly to the environment (Cadet 2010:31-32). In order to reach their goal, three strategies in particular are emphasized. I have already mentioned the foundation for bio-diversity. In chapter 4, I discussed the Ark of Taste and the presidia products as forms of resistance against standardization processes. They could have been further discussed in this chapter, as expressions for environmental concerns, but I will rather take a look at two of the other steps towards Slow Food’s informed eating; that is, locally produced food and organic farming.

The two consuming interests; locally produced and organic food

During one of the meetings with Volca’Niac, Charles told the following story: Together with his wife he went into a store in Clermont Ferrand, where they sell organic food. They wanted to buy some honey. To their disappointment, the organically branded honey they offered at the store was a product imported from Peru. Considering that honey is abundantly produced in France as well, it would not have been in accordance with “the snail philosophy” to buy it, Charles explained. Henri expressed his agreement by saying that there is a lack of logic in food import, when the imported products are grown in French agriculture as well. Lena gave an example to support his argument. In the food stores of Clermont Ferrand you can easily find garlic imported from China, but you will have problems finding garlic grown in Billom, a

town lying half an hour from Clermont Ferrand, despite the fact that Billom is famous for garlic cultivation. The others present at the meeting nodded their heads and said that this was only one of the many irrational examples of food import. According to Slow Food ideology, then, organic farming is the ideal mode of farming, but at the end of the day it is better to consume local products, no matter if they are organically produced or not, than to buy organically produced food that has been transported from another part of the world. What is the reasoning behind this utterance? We need to take a closer look at why these types of products are particularly preferred.

Let me start with organically produced food. In organic farming there are strict limits on chemical synthetic pesticide and synthetic fertilizer use, as well as livestock antibiotics, food additives and other inputs. Further, the use of genetically modified organisms is prohibited. Some of the other principles of organic farming are crop rotation and the use of on-site resources, such as livestock manure. Choosing plant and animal species that are resistant to disease and adapted to local conditions helps to prevent the need for pesticide and antibiotic treatments. Organic farming also means raising livestock in open-air systems and providing them with exclusively organic feed (European Commission 2010). The principles of organic farming are reflected in the presidia products. For instance, genetically modified organisms are prohibited⁸. Further, the cultivators of “Le Petit Epeautre de Haute-Provence” are either branded, or in the process of being branded as organic producers. The cultivators of “Le Navet Noir du Pardailhan” on the other hand, describe their production as close to the principles of organic farming, but they are not branded. It is a considerable cost for the producers to achieve the brand, because it involves a system of regular controls. Some of them, therefore, approach the same principles through a mode of farming that is more reasonable than the industrial mode (which means a reduced usage of chemical pesticides and livestock antibiotics), without being branded as organic farmers (Cadet 2010).

According to Slow Food’s environmentalism, you cannot have complete confidence that organically branded products are the best choice. Much of the environment-friendly effects of choosing organic food are lost if your organically produced honey (or other products) are transported all around the world. Pollution caused by transportation of the food is therefore one of the reasons for choosing locally produced food. The motivation for choosing organic

⁸ Attachment No. 3: Presidium Vademecum

and local food, or choosing locally produced instead of organic, then, rests upon a summing up of what will leave the smallest ecological footprint.

Life politics

Lena is 34 years old and comes from Münster in Germany. She has been living in France, more precisely in the city of Clermont Ferrand, in the region of Auvergne, for 8 years and she works as communication-manager in an automobile company. She was brought up under “*anti-McDonald’s influences*”, as she describes it. In Germany there were tendencies of resistance against the restaurant-chain McDonald’s during the 80’s. It was said that the fast food chain was an indirect reason for the deforestation of the rainforest in Brazil, since the cattle-breeding needed for the meat-supply occupied increasingly larger territories. She first got to know about Slow Food through an article in a German newspaper when she was in her early twenties.

In 2007, several years after her encounter with the article, she recognized the little snail-logo as she was walking through the market place in Clermont Ferrand. There, she met Béatrice, Charles and Jeanne who were trying to recruit members to their newly born convivium. Lena accepted an invitation to a gathering later that evening, where she discovered that she had several values in common with the others present. The sense of a common interest in food, and a common feeling of responsibility for the consequences of our food consumption, was an important reason why she became a member of Slow Food. Later, the social aspect of spending time together and sharing food became increasingly important as to why she is enjoying herself as a member of the organization. The priority of enjoying a good meal in social company is also one of the things Lena appreciates about the French culture, and one of the reasons why she has continued to live there.

“*In my everyday-life I’m not 100 % Slow Food*”, Lena says. I ask her what it means to be 100 % Slow Food, and she explains that it would be to buy exclusively organic or locally produced food. By locally produced she means products produced in Auvergne or France. In her pattern of consumption Lena pays attention to support these producers when she has the occasion. For instance, when she spent the week-end in “La Bourboule”, when “Volca’Niac” participated in “Festival Plein la Bobine”, several local producers displayed their products in the market place during this weekend. Lena made sure to buy something there, even though she didn’t need anything, because she wanted to support the producers. The next step of change, as a part of a more conscious way of consuming, would be to buy more Faire Trade-

products and organic clothes, she explains. A starting point could be to buy only organically produced textiles when she offers gifts to her friend's new-born babies, for example.

"To buy is to vote", according to Lena. The change she wants to see in the world is an increased percentage of organic farming, and decreased world-wide transportation of food. The way she is trying to make the change happen is by individual action. The third slow gesture says: "think globally-eat locally"⁹. The idea is that individual action will affect situations external to the person doing it, even up to a global scale. Lena expresses it like this: *"If everyone, on a world-wide level, if everyone, in Brazil, in India, in Germany, in Spain, act locally; that's what helps. In that way, everyone contribute with their brick."* The choices Lena makes concerning consumption in her day-to-day life, then, can be considered as her "brick" in creating her idea of a better world. These choices take part of her lifestyle. I understand the commitment to Slow Food as a sector of a person's lifestyle. "A lifestyle sector can include, for instance, what one does on certain evenings of the week" (Giddens 1991:83). According to Giddens, lifestyles are the arena where "life politics" take place (1991:209-231).

This form of politics is characteristic of the modern age; a time where the freedom of choice is abundant and clear answers to moral and existential questions are few, he argues. According to him:

"[m]odernity' can be understood as roughly equivalent to 'the industrialized world', so long as it be recognized that industrialism is not its only institutional dimension.[...] A second dimension is capitalism" (Giddens 1991:15).

Modern age is especially marked by emancipation from earlier restrictions and traditions, he claims. While people's lives in pre-modern society were highly determined by existing rules and expectations, the freedom of choice has been radically increased in modernity. The plurality of choice represents not only freedom, but also uncertainty and great efforts. We need to make these choices in order to create 'who we want to be' in the continuous process of "self-actualisation" (Giddens 1991:70-108). Even though this process revolves about the self, it does not imply that people in modern age become increasingly selfish, Giddens argue. It means rather that "the self becomes a reflexive project" (Giddens 1991:32) also dealing with moral dilemmas and ethical responsibilities. In order to do so, we take our surroundings

⁹ Attachment No. 2: Les 12 gestes "slow"

into consideration – not only the physical surroundings, but the whole frame of time and space surrounding us.

Beck has characterized modernity as a *'risk society'* (Beck 1992[1986]). Every day, people are faced with questions like 'will the rainforests disappear?', 'will the glaciers melt away?', 'will the world economy break down?' or 'will nuclear power destroy the earth?' Habits and routines are some of the most effective remedies against threatening anxieties, Giddens (1991) argues. Making choices concerning our daily life – our lifestyle -, therefore, becomes an important strategy for the reflexive self in risk society. "Modernity is a post-traditional order, in which the question, 'How shall I live?' has to be answered in day-to-day decisions about how to behave, what to wear and what to eat" (Giddens 1991:14). Living "slow" is one of the possible answers. Slow Food deals with affairs stretching well beyond individual activity, but it also takes root in people's sense of self and personal feelings.

Emotional attachments

The event called Terra Madre (Mother Earth) was organized for the first time in 2004, parallel to the event called Salone del Gusto (Hall of Taste). The latter event is a food festival open to the public, with an entrance fee of € 20 per day. During five days, there are several conferences and educational tastings. There is a wine bar and a large hall of food exhibitions, with food items from all over the world, organized as a marketplace. These two events are organized in the historical Fiat factory called Lingotto in Turin, Italy (SaloneDelGusto 2010; TerraMadre 2011). Five thousand delegates from 129 countries participated during the first event of Terra Madre. These were all sorts of producers, farmers, fishermen, nomads, and others people involved in food activities (cooks for example). Gathered under the same roof, these people declared their solidarity with one another, and the networks created during these days were called "food communities" (Petrini and Padovani 2006:164). The aim of bringing these people together was to let them, the people who possess firsthand knowledge about how to cultivate the land or how to fish in a sustainable manner, exchange their experiences directly, without the interference of trade systems or politicians. Since 2004, Terra Madre has been a biennial event, taking place at the same time and the same place as Salone del Gusto. As already noted, I participated at Terra Madre, and therefore also Salone del Gusto, between 21st and 25th October 2010.

Mathilde is 28 years old and comes from the city Le Puy en Velay in the department Haute-Loire. She has a master 1, according to the French education system, in information science.

By coincidence she discovered the concept of Terra Madre when she was surfing the internet in June 2008. She replied to participate at the event, and was invited to come to Turin in October 2008. The event in 2008 had a special focus on youth. As youth delegate, it is not obligatory to be a farmer or any other form of producer. Mathilde was hosted in the same building as many other youth delegates, where they had access to a cinema, a library with a great selection of books on the subject of nourishment, conference-rooms and a concert-hall. The presence of all the young people created liveliness during the event. “*Terra Madre is a great party*”, Mathilde assured.

She was there for 4 days. She characterizes the atmosphere as “*overwhelming*” and “*unforgettable*”. Several thousand people, coming from every corner of the world, were gathered in one place with the common aim of discussing nourishment and expressing solidarity. She met producers from many different countries and participated in several different conferences. She describes her experience as an “*emotional electroshock*”. Her membership in Slow Food is a direct result of her encounter with Terra Madre in Turin, October 2008; she became a member in November the same year. She feels that the event altered her in a way. She has become more aware about the seasonal supply of locally grown fruits and vegetables, because it permits her to consume a minimum of food that has been transported world-wide. She prefers also to buy organic food. Whenever she has the occasion, she meets farmers and producers in order to learn about their occupation and mode of production.

The feeling of being mixed up with the world

In the concept of Terra Madre, the notion of solidarity is visible in the emphasis on acknowledging small actors and the knowledge they possess. This deals with Slow Food’s goal of making consumers into “co-producers” (SlowFood 2011). Taken that consumers feel less attached to producers than co-producers, I consider solidarity as a feeling of attachment. When Petrini writes about the farmers, fishermen and producers who come to Terra Madre from every corner of the world, he names them the “intellectuals of the field” (Petrini and Padovani 2006:181). In my interpretation, the term indicates that people who work the land have deep knowledge about it, because they are connected to it in a particular way - they are connected to Mother Earth, so to speak. Considering that most people in the Western world are not farmers, fishermen or nomads, most people do not have this special kind of connection. I suggest that by becoming “co-producers”, people are not only feeling more

attached with the producers, but also more attached with Mother Earth. In turn, this is a way of getting mixed up with the world, and I am still referring to the quotation in the beginning of the chapter.

Lena directed her solidarity towards the farmers in France. She bought food she did not really need at the time, in order to support the local farmers in “La Bourboule”. For these farmers, it can be difficult to sell their products at the price they hope for if competition from large quantity import forces them to reduce their prices. Charles directs his solidarity towards the farmers in poor countries. He explains:

“You have countries where the...one can say... the farmers, or the workers, are poor and do not have enough to eat. Meanwhile, they produce for the well-to-does (used in the meaning of people in the rich countries) [...] it’s intolerable! For me, [consuming locally] is what permits the countries to stay autonomous regarding nourishment. That is, instead of a farmer from Africa cultivating for the well-to-does in a developed country, he cultivates for himself, first and foremost for eating it himself.”

Solidarity is an engagement, opposed to indifference; it is to place your emotions and great efforts into something you believe in. Whether it is Lena buying food to support the local farmers, Charles hoping that poor countries can feed themselves rather than feeding the rich, or Mathilde discussing food production with farmers and fishermen from every corner of the world, they are all being mixed up with the world, as opposed to feeling alienated from it. Alienation caused by a feeling of meaninglessness is one of the elements common for many versions of the disenchantment tale, according to Bennett (2001:63-64). The feeling of joyful attachment, on the other hand, allows the feeling of enchantment to occur (ibid.:12-13). When Mathilde describes her experience of Terra Madre it is obvious that it has affected her personal feelings. I claim that Mathilde’s reaction is an “affective fascination of a world thought to be worthy of it” (ibid.:12). She experienced an atmosphere and met some people that gave her a feeling of a good, positive world, and the fact that she was mixed up with these things added to her enjoyment of the world. An “*emotional electroshock*” is quite similar to Bennett’s description of the mood of enchantment, as described in chapter 1.

The ethical dimension affects the total experience of food

As already mentioned, Slow Food works for the opportunity to have “good, clean and fair food” (SlowFood 2011). According to the discussion in this chapter, the clean and the fair part of the Trinity affect the first part of it. It seems that the food taste better, because the pleasure is more sincere, when it has been grown in a manner that is friendly to the environment and fair to the people producing it. Taste, and the notion of pleasure, therefore, has an ethical dimension about it. The term “guilt free food”, as employed by Patel (CollegeoftheAtlantic 2011), gives us a hint as to how the experience of eating is affected. In this paper I shall not elaborate on the perception of guilt, but I assume that the enjoyment of food is greater when the eater think of himself as free of guilt concerning pollution and injustice connected to the food.

We can, of course, speculate about the relativity of ethics. I will let the following anecdote illustrate my point. During the closing ceremony of Terra Madre 2010, there was a demonstration which I think shocked everyone. While the president, Petrini, was addressing an audience of thousands of people, a girl with a megaphone and a person dressed up as a bleeding pig had succeeded to sneak in to the ceremony (even though there were guards at the entrance checking peoples’ admission). They handed out fliers saying: “No to the celebration of a massacre; no to the Salone del Gusto”¹⁰ (my translation). Further, it claimed that meat eating is not sustainable, even if the animals come from organic farming. I take it that there is no enjoyment about eating meat in their opinion. I will not discuss in further length the different understandings of sustainability and human responsibility for the environment. I simply underline the fact that there are alternative interpretations of ethical commitments. The notion of enjoyment within Slow Food includes enjoying meat (one of my informants was vegetarian), and their notion of environmentalism furthers the preservation of bio-diversity and mainly consumption of locally produced and organic food. Now, I will turn to another aspect about local food; its connection to place.

¹⁰ Attachment No. 5: Non c’è G(i)usto nel Salone Internazionale del Gusto

6. Connecting plate to place

“Our times are characterized by the industrialization and globalization of our food supply: in Europe and the United States eating has never been less connected to where people live and how people farm, whereas in Mexico, farming has never had less to do with what people who live there actually eat” (Trubek 2008:246)

As Trubek indicates, peoples’ diet throughout earlier times was determined by geography to a much larger degree than it is today. Some food items, like sugar (Mintz 1986), have been traded over large distances for centuries, but people principally ate what they could hunt, gather or grow in their nearby surroundings. In the Western world in our own time, the majority of people are no longer directly connected with food production. Most of us buy our food. The selection of foods in supermarkets is not limited to what the nearby surroundings can offer, not even limited to national borders. We now find vegetables, meat, fish and pre cooked specialities from every part of the world in the same store. In today’s situation, then, one can get the impressions that place no longer matters. To the contrary, I will argue that Slow Food ideology emphasises that place *does* matter. It is precisely the situation described in the quotation above that has incited their wish to re-connect the plate to place. I will claim that this connection affects our understanding of the external world. It seems that food’s connection to place, their rootedness, so to speak, helps create an image of a world divided into specific and unique places. Further, I claim that this comprehension of the world, as divided into unique places, often grasped as “terroirs”, is a central part of the re-enchantment of the world.

The world as one, singular space

There are many elements about the age in which we live that make distances seem insignificant. Television brings information and images from distant places right into our living room. Telephone and internet helps people connect each other, even though they live in completely different parts of the world. We can travel from one part of the world to another within a few hours. Increased mobility affects peoples’ notion of attachment to place. Where people consider themselves to be “rooted” is no longer a matter of course. This was underlined by one of the members of “Volca’Niac” themselves. Emma noted that several of the members of the convivium have their origins from other places than Auvergne. Changes in our relationship with place affects the way we understand the world we are living in.

“[I]t could be speculated that the process of deterritorialization culminates in an understanding of the planet as a ‘single place, a singular ‘global’ space” (Parkins and Craig 2006:70).

The situation on food supply, as described above, might contribute to this understanding. When searching the shelves of your nearby food store, you might get the impressions that place no longer matters. You can find Chinese spring rolls, Italian pizza and Indian tikka masala. You can find oranges from Israel, tomatoes from Spain, mushrooms from Holland, shrimps from Peru and the fish called pangasus from Vietnam. In the eyes of some, this is a great opportunity to discover and experiment. A quick stop at the supermarket allows you to taste exotic cuisines of an unknown world. On the other hand, it can be quite overwhelming, especially if the only thing you are really looking for – and do not find- is an apple grown in your own region. An alternative interpretation, therefore, might be that the world is devouring man instead of man tasting the world. This is a feeling of being alienated from our surroundings. This interpretation, and the understanding of the world as one singular space, corresponds with the disenchantment tale of homogenization, and it incites a need to differentiate the world into separate places. Parkins and Craig argues “that the concept of ‘place’ retains a significance in the global everyday and that deterritorialization paradoxically can contribute to a revitalization of the site of ‘the local’” (Parkins and Craig 2006:69). This is the framework within which I understand Slow Food’s preference for locally grown food. Faced with increased globalization in our food supply, locally produced food leads to an awareness of place and a “pluralistic valuation of the local” (Parkins and Craig 2006:71).

Locally produced food – dividing the world into separate places

The significance of farmers’ markets and food circles within Slow Food ideology illustrates the importance they give to locally produced food. While I stayed in Lyon, “Les Canuts Ecervelés” was working on an agreement with the “producteurs fermiers du Rhône” (the small scale producers in the department of Rhône) at the farmers’ market at Place Carnot. They wanted to participate with a stand for Slow Food at the market. This would promote Slow Food, but the idea was also to draw more people to the market in order to support the local small scale producers. The farmers at Place Carnot offered fruits, vegetables, meat and dairy products like yoghurt and cheese. If more people choose to buy their food at the farmers’ market, instead of going to the supermarket, the demand makes sure that the supply of locally produced food continues. Supermarkets favour large scale producers, no matter origin, who can supply a steady, large quantity at low cost. This means that small scale producers, even though situated right next door to the supermarket, have no access to this

market. Slow Food, therefore, considers it important to support these producers to maintain local agriculture. This idea is recognized in food circles as well. In France they are called AMAPs (Association pour le Maintien d'une Agriculture Paysanne). In English this means association for the maintenance of peasant agriculture. The idea is that peasants in the same area collaborate to deliver their products directly to the consumers. Philippe explained how this works in Lyon. Every week he arranges a point of time and place in the city where he can meet the peasant who is delivering. The delivery consists of meat, dairy products and vegetables – all coming from the area surrounding Lyon – varying according to the season.

Awareness of seasonal variations is an important element of Slow Food ideology. The selection in supermarkets offers almost any kind of vegetables and fruits at any time of the year, because they are importing food from all over the world. There is a chance that you forget about natural seasonal variations when you can go to the store and buy whatever you want, whenever you want. As already mentioned in the foretaste of the paper, Henri thinks it is a shame when people no longer possess knowledge about these variations. The second point of the 12 slow gestures says: “celebrate the seasons” and the fourth point says: “eat something that you have cultivated”¹¹. By cultivating something in your own garden or on your own balcony, you get knowledge about what kind of vegetables or fruits you are able to grow where you live. You learn about when you have to sow, how long it takes before you can harvest and what climatic conditions it takes in order to grow this vegetable and that fruit. As mentioned in chapter 3, there is a notion of slowness about experiencing the rhythm of nature. It seems to open for a dwelling about man’s place in nature – man’s place in the external world.

When you become aware of the conditions for growing food where you live, you also start to reflect upon the local conditions of other places. Different places have different climatic, geographic and geomorphologic conditions, and are therefore fit to cultivate different types of food. One place is known for having the sweetest plums, while another place is known for its large oat fields, for example. How does this awareness affect the experience of eating? Let us go back to the scene from the restaurant, as described at the ending of chapter 3. There, I wrote that people always reacted positively, and made comments about it, when I fetched vegetables directly from the garden and served it. It seems that the experience of eating strawberries (just to use one example) grown right outside the restaurant door is different than

¹¹ Attachment No. 2: Les 12 gestes “slow”

eating strawberries coming from somewhere else in the world. The strawberries from the garden do not only have a deep red colour, tempting fragrance and a delightful sweet and juicy taste. I suggest that they also make you think differently about the world.

Locally produced food is geographically situated, especially when cultivated in your very own garden. It means that it comes from 'a place' rather from 'somewhere out there'. Additionally, the emphasis on seasons situates the food according to the time of the year. As a consequence, the food helps the mind to classify the external world. This quality about food has been discussed by Douglas, in *Purity and Danger* (2002 [1966]). The main theme of her book is the idea of pollution and purity as principles of creating social order, whereof "dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter" (Douglas 2002[1966] :44). As a part of her arguments, she discussed the Jewish dietary rules in the book of Leviticus as "a systematic ordering of ideas" (ibid.:51). She found that creatures that are difficult to classify to one of the three environments, land, water or air, fell under a kind of taboo on anomalous creatures. They were prohibited because they did not fit into the systematic ordering. My intention is not at all to compare the preference of locally grown food to some sort of dietary rules separating pollution from purity. The part of Douglas' theory that I wish to refer to is her contention that food affects the way we understand the external world. I claim that eating food situated to one specific place helps classifying the world. Boundaries are created around this particular place, and between different places. Hence, the world is no longer one singular space. It consists rather of several, separated places.

The ideal of eating locally produced food is flexible and does not imply denial of food from other places. The idea is to eat mainly local food in the everyday life, but it does not imply to "retire into one's shell", as Béatrice expressed it. First of all, foods are not excluded from the diet just because they cannot be provided by French agriculture; I speak of items like coffee, chocolate, pineapples or bananas. Second, as people with a passion for food, members of Slow Food are constantly looking for new ingredients, flavours and specialities to be discovered. This project is not confined to local surroundings, but includes the whole world. As a tool of classification, then, the French concept of terroir works to avoid that this diversity becomes simply something from "somewhere out there". This concept connects the distinctiveness of a taste to the distinctiveness of the place.

Discerning distinctiveness through the concept of terroir

In chapter 4 I discussed Slow Food's preference for distinctiveness over uniformity. There, I also indicated that connection to a specific place is important for the notion of distinctiveness. For instance, producer of the Golden lentils, Thierry, mentioned the climatic conditions and the volcanic soil in the area of la Planèze as important elements leading to the final characteristics of the lentils. These are elements often conceptualised as terroir in French. The multitude meanings of the word can be difficult to translate; "Larousse's *Grand dictionnaire universel du XIXe siècle* defines terroir as "the earth considered from the point of view of agriculture'" (Trubek 2008:73). The term is perhaps most often understood as soil, but it also includes climatic, geographic and geo-morphologic peculiarities.

In *Taste of place; a cultural journey into terroir*, Trubek (2008) elaborates on the difficulties of defining terroir, caused by the different understandings of it. A scientific approach emphasises the mineral composition of the soil, climatic characteristics like temperature, rainfall and exposure to sunlight, and other land surface conditions like altitude and slope. In short, terroir can be understood as something quantifiable. But it has other meanings as well. Trubek tells the story of an American winemaker, Robert Mondavi, who in the late 1990's wanted to buy an area in the French region of Languedoc-Roussillon in order to make a premium wine on French soil. He wanted to develop a 108-hectare vineyard on communal lands in the nearby areas of the town of Aniane, and to make a wine produced from the grape called syrah. He felt that the traditional, cooperative system of making blended wines from many small growers had prevented the development of a really premium wine in the area. At first, he had a lot of local support for his project. However, when the inhabitants fully realised that Mondavi intended to turn the whole hillside, even the protected forest into vineyards, they organized an association in defence of the area. Trubek argues that in order to understand the situation it is important to understand the beauty of the area, and the peoples' connection to it as a site for picnics and recreation. They would not stand by and see all of it change. "The people of Aniane [...] wanted to protect a terroir that is instrumental in defining who they are and to protect a certain way of life" (Trubek 2008:73). In this situation, then, terroir is understood also as culture and landscape - not only as something easily quantifiable. This meaning implies connotations of picturesque villages and landscapes, and images of the culture and traditions of the folk living there. These are more vague ideas, often described in mystical terms. Both meanings of the term terroir are being used in order to situate taste to place.

The undertaking of situating taste to place is an expression for a food-centred worldview, Trubek argues.

“In France, food and drink from a certain place are thought to possess unique tastes. Thus, more than words, terroir and goût du terroir are categories that frame perceptions and practices – a worldview, or should we say a foodview?” (Trubek 2008:18).

For the record, the title of her book, *the taste of place*, is the English translation of gout du terroir. How is it possible to actually recognize the taste of a place? Trubek names the French AOC system as an example. AOC is a control system that links quality and diverse flavours to specific places. For example, as a protection against fraud, it makes sure that no other wine producers than those in the region of Champagne can name their wine Champagne, and likewise for other wine regions.

“The French government established the Appellation D’Origine Contrôlée (or AOC) system in 1935. Initially the AOC classification, administered by the French Ministry of Agriculture, was designed solely to protect specific wines. The system, however, proved economically successful, and by 1990 AOC status had been extended to include dairy and other agricultural products” (Trubek 2008:251).

In France, there have been many advocates for preserving regional gastronomy, and for protecting and promoting rural cultural heritage, she argues. A conscious state policy, along with “taste producers” (like winemakers, farmers, cheese makers and chefs) and “tastemakers” (like journalists and food writers), have influenced the idea of the connection between place and taste (Trubek 2008:21). The AOC system’s goal is to protect terroir, and the term is understood as a complex phenomenon. This is illustrated by the variety of consultants participating in Institut National des Appellation d’Origine’s decision-making; “geologists, soil scientists, plant scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, and historians all get involved” (Trubek 2008:30). Granted that the taste of place is a complex phenomenon, it can be described in scientific, rational terms, but it can also be described otherwise. It can be tied to the way people have been living in a place, and how they have been cultivating the soil throughout history. The latter understanding easily gets entangled with folklore and might be described in more marvellous, mystical terms instead of dry, scientific facts.

Marvellous places enchant the world

Slow Food ideology is inspired by the French foodview. “Carlo Petrini recalls visits in the early 1980’s to the French regions of Burgundy, Bordeaux, Alsace and Champagne where he was marvelled at the ‘sense of place’ that the territories evoked” (Parkins and Craig 2006:76). Later, Petrini and Arcigola introduced this complex understanding of the connection between taste and place in their own region in Italy, and made it a central theme of their ideology. My informants are influenced by this worldview from two angles in the sense that they are French *and* members of Slow Food. As members of Slow Food they are “tastemakers”, to use Trubek’s expression (2008:21). Like the journalists and food writers who acted as a driving force in connecting taste to place in France, members of Slow Food today acts to communicate the importance of this foodview.

The connection between taste and place is a way of acknowledging foods’ distinctiveness based on their place of origin, but it is also a way of acknowledging the distinctiveness of different places in the world. Seen in the light of Douglas’ theory, it is a mode of classifying the external world into unique, separate places, as opposed to the world seen as one singular space. “[T]he taste of place has become a transnational mode of discernment” (Trubek 2008:94). When discerning tastes according to terroir, it implies evoking images of the landscape, village life and cultural diversity connected to it. We are therefore also discerning places. I will illustrate my point by citing the complete description of one of the French presidia products, The Bearn mountain pasture cheese:

“Every year in June, around eighty shepherds from the three valleys of Béarn (Ossau, Aspe and Barétous) lead their flocks of sheep to the rich mountain pastures on the French side of the Western Pyrenees. For three months they live in small isolated stone huts, frequently hard to access, and produce traditional tommes: pressed raw milk cheeses which can weigh over five kilograms.

This is an age-old practice, though significant state aid has funded the renewal of some cheese producing facilities in the last 10 years, allowing them to meet European hygiene regulations.

Native sheep of the “Basque-Béarn” breed are particularly well adapted to the mountain environment and provide all the sheep milk used for cheesemaking.

The sun-drenched pastures at an altitude between 900 and 2000 meters grow mountain flowers in an array of colors and aromas. Alpine clovers together with mountain thyme give the cheese a delicate nutty flavor. Some shepherds, particularly in the Aspe valley, also bring a few cows to the pastures and continue to produce an older style “mixed” cheese by mixing two parts of cow’s milk with one part of sheep milk—it is more delicate, but still soft and intense.

After aging at least four months in humid premises, the tommes assume an attractive beige-orange color. Their outstanding quality is due to the animals’ natural diet, the skill of the shepherds, who make no more than two or

three cheeses a day, and the slow, carefully controlled aging.

These cheeses are soft and even after aging develop a delicate aroma of milk, nuts, mushrooms, vegetables, together with persistent flavor.

The cheese from each mountain dairy is unique because non-refrigerated milk keeps the pasture's microbial flora, giving it a distinctive flavor. In many cases it would otherwise be necessary to add artificial enzymes. Shepherds have to be truly dedicated to continue transhumance, live according to the rhythms of nature, spend hours milking and making cheese by hand, accompany a flock of a least 300 animals, conserve the mountain pasture landscape, and cope with the isolation—and sometimes the bears.” (SlowFoodFoundation 2011)

In this description we find measurable elements, like altitude, exposure to sun and different types of flora, which affects the taste of the cheese. Additionally, we find descriptions of the way of life of the shepherds, the beautiful colours and aromas of the mountain flowers, and even the presence of wild animals. These descriptions tell us more about the place than about the taste of the cheese. They create an image of a quite marvellous place on earth. Understanding the world as a myriad of unique terroirs and places makes the world appear more divers. “[Terroir] is the triumph of diversity over homogeneity” (Trubek 2008:250). Seen in light of the principle argument of this paper, this means that terroir is also a triumph over the disenchantment tale.

So far, I have dealt with enchantment as a rather unambiguously positive thing. I have argued that enchantment is brought about through eating food with distinctiveness, food grown in a manner that is friendly to the environment and food with taste connected to place. In chapter 5 I indicated that these characteristics are something political consumers are willing to pay for, but it doesn't mean that everybody can afford it. Is there a latent expression of social inequalities in the quest for re-enchantment? This is the theme of the next, and the final, “main course” of this paper.

7. Food as social marker

“ [...] only effete intellectuals have the luxury of feeling enchanted, whereas real people must deal with the real world” (Bennett 2001:10)

Since eating usually is something we do in company with other people, and something we do every day, it is perfectly suitable as a “social communication system” (Anderson 2005:124). On the one hand, we can communicate unity, as already discussed as the principle of commensality in chapter 3. On the other hand, we can communicate separation (Anderson 2005:125). In the latter case, food “serves to mark boundaries” (Lupton 1996:1) and create distinctions between people. Slow Food’s presidia products have a touch of exclusivity about them. For instance, the fact that they are produced under certain controlled conditions, and in limited quantity, is reflected in the price. Organically produced foods, as well, are generally more expensive than other alternatives. Hence, they can be used in order to say something about the social status of the people buying and eating them.

The appearance of elite

The first steps towards the movement Slow Food started in the early 1980’s, in the town of Bra in the Piedmont region of Italy. A politically left-oriented group started to express their concern about the loss of traditional, tasty food and decreasing time for the pleasures of the table caused by an increasingly hasty lifestyle they observed in their society. These were some of the members of the strong national association *Associazione ricreativa culturale italiana* (Archi), an association supported by the socialist and communist parties. This little group of members had some disagreements with the other members, and felt it was time to “pay attention to food and not just party enrolment” (Petrini and Padovani 2006:7). They separated themselves from Archi, and in the summer of 1986, they formally established “Archi Gola” (ibid.:22). “La Gola” means “The Throat”, but it is also a synonym for gourmet (ibid.:7&23), and it was the name of a monthly magazine about food culture and gastronomy that came out for the first time in October 1982 (ibid.:7).

The separation from the rest of the political association, created a sort of elite, based upon an interest in food and wine. They often gathered at the “osteria”, which means inn or tavern; they are generally small and family-owned, and they serve local cuisine and in convivial surroundings (Petrini and Padovani 2006:79). By taking pleasure of what the region offered, the group learnt about local agriculture and food specialities, and developed a pride for the

region of Piedmont. During the years from 1981 to 1986, Arci Gola visited vineyards in Italy and France, talking to several wine-growers and owners of wine-cellars. They attended a course at the “Ecole des vins de Bourgogne” in Beaune, the capital of France’s most famous wine region, in order to learn about the great wines of the region and France’s well established concept of “terroir”, a less established concept in Italy at the time. Developing from their many educational and pleasant experiences with food and wine, Arci Gola announced “a new philosophy of taste, in which pleasure and knowledge had equal importance” (Petrini and Padovani 2006:47).

The focus on gastronomy, fine wine, pleasure and knowledge tended to be interpreted as connoisseurship and snobbery by the surrounding world. Others formed an image of the food enthusiastic group as “upper class wine and olive oil fanciers”. The snob image is an ingrained and wide spread one. In France, the members of Slow Food are often referred to as “bobos” in the media and among non-members. The term is a fusion of the two first letters of the words “bourgeoisie” and “bohemian”. It ridicules certain people from the “hippie”-generation who still consider themselves as radical outsiders despite the fact that they have become members of the society’s upper middle-class with well paid jobs. Members of Volca’Niac clearly distanced themselves from the term “bobos”; they did not want to be associated with it. The term was not yet familiar to me while I stayed in Lyon, so I did not discuss it with the members of “Les Canuts Ecervelés”, but I can make an educated guess that they do not appreciate it either.

Theorizing social distinctions

Regarding the snob image, food is believed to communicate people’s social position. Social positions are often conceptualised as class, a central term in the science of sociology. “Class refers to a system of social inequality based on an unequal distribution of wealth, status and power” (Williams and Germov 2008:266). Like gender, or ethnic, national, religious or political belonging, class identity can be communicated through consumption practices and food habits. Veblen has elaborated on the displaying of class belonging, more accurately a tendency he referred to as “conspicuous consumption” (Veblen 2005[1899]). When he speaks of the higher social strata, Veblen names it “leisure class”, and he explains that the term “does not connote indolence or quiescence. What it connotes is non-productive consumption of time” (ibid.:21). His main point is that the leisure class consumes time and commodities with no industrial utility, so that the consumption appears striking in the eyes of others, and

therefore shows off their class belonging. In its nature, non-productive consumption of time does not lead to material goods. It leads rather to immaterial results, such as a high level of education, refined manners and connoisseurship. He takes the example of the old high society's ideal of knowing correct spelling of dead languages. Since it is a dead language, its industrial utility is limited. The people who nevertheless manage it, then, display that they have enough non-productive time to learn it. Underlying that time - not spent on industrial production - is money, they simultaneously show their wealth.

There is, however, a risk of being ridiculed when calling attention to one's own wealth. An example from the indoor market place in Lyon, called "Les Halles de Lyon", illustrates my point. When I asked what was worth seeing and visiting in Lyon (when doing fieldwork, I was also "doing tourism", seeking out attractions and panoramic things to see in this unknown city), Philippe told me that I should go visit "Les Halles de Lyon". It is a large indoor area with lots of food shops offering everything from vegetables, meat, seafood and cheeses to prepared local specialities. Additionally, there are several bars and restaurants in case you get thirsty or hungry while seeing all these delicacies. Familiar with my interest in food, Philippe thought this would be a nice place for me to visit. I should only avoid going there on Sunday mornings, he said, because the place is crowded. "*The restaurants are all filled with rich people, hoping to be seen while eating oysters*", he chuckled. From this remark, I take it that the act of eating, for the purpose of showing other people *what* you eat, is quite foolish in Philippe's opinion.

According to Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1984[1979]; Bourdieu, Østerberg et al. 1995), the people the most eager to "show off" like this are typically newly rich people. Everyone can gain a lot of money if they are clever in business, and everyone can in principal win the lottery. Then, they will possess a high level of "economic capital" (Bourdieu 1984[1979]). However, this is not the same as having refined manners and "cultural competence", understood as a specific code or adequate dispositions for the apprehension of cultural objects, like works of art (ibid.:2-3). People from noble families tend to be socialized into the possession of this code. In this case they possess "inherited cultural capital", but the competence can also be fostered within the educational system; then, better described as "scholastically acquired cultural capital", or "educational capital" (Bourdieu 1984[1979]). These are principles we use in order to create distinctions between ourselves and others when situating ourselves in the "social space", according to Bourdieu (1984[1979]:99-168). It is utterly important to underline that these processes are mainly unconscious, according to his theory. Extremely

simplified, he claims that the process of socialization and education injects people with certain ways of seeing, understanding and being in the world that is intelligible out of reach for the persons themselves. This particular disposition of being in the world, “habitus”, is situated in our body and expressed through our lifestyles. It affects the way we perform the most automatic bodily gestures – how we walk, talk and eat, for instance; the things we do not reflect upon in our daily life (Bourdieu 1984[1979]:169-225).

The findings he presents in his book, *Distinction; a social critique of the judgement of taste* (Bourdieu 1984[1979]), is based upon an examination of preferences in things like music, art and food, performed in 1963 and 1967-68, in France. Bourdieu claims that the different social classes distance themselves from each other through the notions of good and bad taste, whereof the higher classes are the lawful definers of the terms. People from the lower social strata strive to possess home decorations, listen to music, buy (or talk about) art or eat food that can display a good taste, similar to that of the higher social strata. Because of their modest economic capital, however, they often have to content themselves with cheap copies. This, in turn, is rejected as vulgar taste by the higher classes. Concerning food, Bourdieu found that the higher classes rejected exaggerations; they preferred light food, but nonetheless with a sense of exquisiteness. This was expressed by the preference of vintage wine, for example. Further, he noted a preference for sweet food for breakfast, like jam and honey, tastes which bears connotations to women and femininity. The patterns of sex roles were more rigid in the lower social strata, where men did not want to be associated with the feminine sex. They, therefore, tended to eat salty, substantial food in the morning. In general, food capable of satisfying one’s hunger, like large amounts of meat, was preferred among the lower classes (Bourdieu, Østerberg et al. 1995[1979]:199). The important point is not *what* the classes ate, but the fact that they ate different things. They created distinctions between “themselves” and “the others” through the food they preferred. Obviously, individual differences can create mismatches in any pattern, and any pattern will change over time. If the higher social classes in France ate sweet, while the lower classes ate salty food for breakfast in the 1960’s, it might be the exact opposite today. The concepts of good and bad taste are negotiated in a continuous process. If the lower classes start to adopt the same preferences as the higher ones, the latter will bring new things into fashion in order to maintain a distinction between them. “Ours” and “theirs”, “good” and “bad” taste is always defined in contrast to each other.

Consumption is a way of creating ourselves

There is an important challenge about Bourdieu's theory. Social inequalities are perceptible in reality; they can even be so prominent that some people find it necessary to rebel against its unfairness. However, 'social class' is a rigid term. When used, it can be difficult to determine the term's accuracy and representativeness in relation to real life. There is always the risk that theoretical categories are taken for fixed, empirical objects, whereas real life actually is quite inconsistent and changing. In the article *The Political Economy of Elegance*, Friedman (1994) notes that his empirical data from Congo shows more ambiguous sides about consumption than Bourdieu's analysis recognizes.

“ Even if we grant that distinction plays a role in defining selfhood and thus consumption, there are more spectacular aspects of capitalist consumption in general that cannot be grasped in such an approach which assumes that the only identity is class identity, which is relatively static” (Friedman 1994:149).

Williams and Germov call attention to the possibility that, when analyzing food habits in contemporary society, the concept of social classes as analytical tool has declined in importance. They pose the following question: “Are class-based food habits diminishing?” (Williams and Germov 2008:269). They refer to observations that the mass production of food has made food relatively cheap and accessible to anyone, that the choice of food products is larger, and that we have access to cuisines from almost every corner of the world in contemporary society. They continue by referring to the work of Giddens and Beck, who elaborate on the “hybridisation of cultures, tastes and cuisines”, and “fusion food” (Williams and Germov 2008:270) which is an expression of the increased plurality in food habits. The plurality involves that every individual continually have to make a number of choices – these choices constitute the individual's lifestyle. According to Giddens and Beck, then, individual lifestyles structure our food habits more than class belonging does. For further reading on the increased importance of the individual over class, see *Individualization* (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002)

Consumption is more than just an expression for class identity. First of all, consumption expresses several identities of a human being. More than this, it actually participates to *create* these identities. Discussing post-modern consumption, Nyeng claims that “we create our social existence through the commodities” (Blindheim, Jensen et al. 2000:106, my translation). Hence, consumption is a process of “self-construction” (Friedman 1994:151). We understand ourselves, and our being in the world, through consumption, and the commodities

help us to define how we want to live our lives. Friedman notes that consumption is “a material realization, or attempted realization, of the image of the good life” (Friedman 1994:150). In comparison, Lupton claims that food is central in the creation of the plurality of identities making up a person’s sense of subjectivity. Every person has a repertoire of identities, always in a process of negotiation and change, and even sometimes in conflict with each other. Depending on the context, therefore, the way we eat reflects all the different identities of the subject - not only its class identity (Lupton 1996). In accordance with this, my intention is not to argue that members of Slow Food belong to any certain class. If I wanted to take the easy way out, I could simply end my discussion by quoting Parkins and Craig: “Slow Food is primarily middle class in its membership” (Parkins and Craig 2006:107). However, this utterance alone is not very interesting. As Bourdieu noted, several contemporary societies are regarded almost as “one large middle class” (Bourdieu, Østerberg et al. 1995[1979]:41, my translation). This gives a fallacious picture, according to him, because the differences and inequalities are still out there. People are not one homogeneous mass; they still strive to differentiate themselves from others in the social space.

This is a point I will elaborate on, but I will discuss it as a matter of individual self-construction and realization of an image of the good life - not as an expression for social class. I will argue that as members of Slow Food, people can situate themselves in the social space with the help of their taste education. As I will show, this concept has a ring of scholastically acquired cultural capital to it. To keep the record straight, the concept of taste has two meanings. First, it refers to the five different tastes we define with our tongue. In addition to sweet, salty, sour and bitter, we have now included the taste called umami in our system of taste categories (Anderson 2005:70). Then, we have the concept of good and bad taste, explained in Bourdieu’s theory. This ambiguity concerning taste is worth taking serious. In *Slow living*, Parkins and Craig considered the connection between taste education and cultural capital, but they more or less rejected it by concluding that it is more to Slow Food than just “a trace of Bourdieu’s class-ification of meals” (2006:107). As already noted, I certainly agree, but the connection is, nevertheless, interesting enough to take a closer look at.

Taste education

First of all, what is taste education? It includes a wide range of activities, which can be recognized as educational projects. Above all it includes a general mentality; to search

knowledge about what you eat. I will now describe three Slow Food activities that have this purpose in mind.

The educational object is perhaps most obviously expressed in the arrangement called *the summer university*. It is organized as a huge seminar, including several lectures and workshops. In 2010 it was arranged in the city of Millau, the 3rd- 4th July. All the members of Slow Food France could enter for participation and the program was planned in co-operation with the festival “Les Pieds sur Terre” which took place in Millau the same week-end. Saturday morning there was a fair in the streets of Millau where one could buy presidia-products and organic products. After a joint outdoor lunch, we gathered for a lecture given by Jean-Claude Poëncet, a consultant in agro-ecology. He presented a holistic viewpoint on the health of domestic animals today, where he criticized the industrial mode of breeding. Afterwards there was a debate based upon three contributions about how to act as consumers. The first contribution was about how one can support the small fishermen in France, whose business is threatened by the big fish farmers and large exportation from Norway, among other countries. The second contribution was given by Pierre Guigui, writer of the guide to organic wines “Guide des Vins bio”. As the third contribution Olivier Cabrera, responsible of external affairs in Fair Trade Max Havelaar, presented some statistics about the pattern of consumption in France. One of the examinations he presented said that an average consumer uses 5 seconds to decide which product to buy. In the following debate several “slowfoodians” underlined the similar philosophy shared by Slow Food and Fair Trade, but they criticized the Fair Trade-brand for directing themselves toward the supermarkets. The ideal according to Slow Food-philosophy is that consumers stay in direct contact with the producers, in order to avoid trading links exercising economic power on the producers. Cabrera’s answer to the criticism was that Fair Trade includes mostly commodities in a north-south relation, where the chance of a physical encounter between the producer and the consumer is extremely small. He also emphasized the fact that the number of people choosing the supermarkets as the place to do their shopping is enormous, and that the best place to sell Fair Trade alternatives is the place where the people are.

Creating direct contact between consumers and producers is one of the points emphasized in the 12 slow gestures¹². The dialogue resulting from a personal meeting between them is considered an important way of getting knowledge about the local agriculture and production.

¹² Attachment No. 2 : Les 12 gestes “slow”

The consumer can ask questions concerning the production, while the producer can promote his product and explain the challenges he might be facing as a local producer competing against other market-actors. The summer university in Millau was ended, Sunday afternoon, by visiting two producers from the nearby area; a producer of the cheese “Roquefort” and a farmer who was cultivating cherries.

In the arrangements called *taste evenings*, the important place given to personal contact with the producers can be recognised. These evenings belong to the educational aspect of Slow Food, even though the social quality about them might be the most obvious reason for participating. Talking to friends or getting to know new people, while listening to music, eating and drinking is the context wherein one acquires the following education. “Une soirée degustative”, then, is a gathering with the aim of tasting some selected products. Thursday 29th April, “Volca’Niac”, in co-operation with a wine store, the cheese store “La Délicatesse” and a butcher, organized one of these evenings. The gathering was held at 7 pm, partly inside and partly outside the wine store in Clermont Ferrand. Lena, Catherine and Béatrice took care of welcoming everyone and selling entrance tickets for € 15, which included the food and wine. About 50 persons came to this event, and there were both members and non-members. Béatrice explained the philosophy of Slow Food to the people who didn’t already know the movement, in a short speech at the beginning. The main focus of the evening was to learn more about two of the presidia products. Thierry introduced the “Golden lentils” and described their peculiarity and mode of production. Another producer made a similar presentation of “Le Porc Noir de Bigorre”, the black pork of Bigorre, raised in a region of southern France, in the foothills of the Pyrenees. The presidia project “Le Porc Noir de Bigorre” was started in the beginning of the 80’s, in order to save the breed Gasconne, in its region of origin, between Astarac, Bigorre and Comminges. As the breed is unfit for the conditions of intensive, industrial farming, it almost disappeared (Cadet 2010:23). As a presidia product, the black pork is raised in the fields and woods. It eats grasses, cereals, acorns and chestnuts, a diet which gives a rich flavour to the meat. After a minimum of 12 months, but on an average 14 months, it is slaughtered. Then, it normally weights 160 kg. This differs from the principle of intensive farming; to let pigs attain maximum weight in minimum time (ConsortiumduNoirdeBigorre 2011).

After his presentation, the producer explained how we should proceed when tasting the samples he had brought. He advised us to start by tasting a piece of fat. Even though the texture might be a little bit awkward, the concentration of taste is ideal to get the best general

impression. The piece of fat left a distinct flavour in the mouth. Then, he told us to continue with a piece of meat. The fine texture and rich flavour are obtained through the principles of breeding, he concluded.

Our awareness of taste can be trained. Almost everyone develop their sense of taste, in passing from childhood to adulthood. Children often prefer mild, simple flavours, and quite particularly, they love the sweet taste. Gradually, we start to appreciate more complex and distinct flavours; like olives and wine. Our ability to recognize different tastes and other sensuous impulses can also be trained. This is the objective of *taste-, or sensuous workshops*. Volca'Niac arranged an activity like this during the film festival for children, "Plein la Bobine", in the city of La Bourboule, 13th June. The activity was organized like a steeplechase with different stops. At the first one, the children listened to a tape playing different sounds of the act of cooking. There was the sound of something boiling, something frying, vegetables being peeled and others being chopped. The participants had to figure out the different sounds. Then, they got to taste water with different additives, in order to decide which glass of water tasted salty, sweet, sour or bitter. Third, they had to stick their hand inside of a box. Without the help of seeing, they should figure out what they felt. There were different sorts of fruit inside the boxes. Finally, they got to smell several cups, containing different types of spice. The cups were covered with a square so it was impossible to see the content, and the children had to guess the different odours. Cinnamon and garlic were some of them. Since the context was a film festival for children, this workshop was directed towards children. However, it can also be aimed at adults as well. During the event of Terra Madre 2010, for instance, there was a similar activity for adults. The difficulty of recognizing a certain taste, for example, can be striking even as adults.

Through training of the senses, one becomes more aware of the complexity of matters like taste and odour. In addition to other knowledge attained through taste education, then, the members of Slow Food increase their ability to talk about the difficult subject of taste. They develop knowledge about trade agreements, agricultural politics and modes of production. Consequently, they can engage themselves in discussions about food with a certain sense of self-confidence. In addition, they get familiar with a distinct vocabulary of discernment, a language to talk about taste. I claim that people mastering this vocabulary are better equipped when discussing food matters than people unfamiliar with it. Here, I would like to return to my comparison with Bourdieu's concept of scholastically acquired cultural capital. My point is that the specific knowledge attained through taste education, and the use of a distinct

vocabulary, can be used in the process of situating oneself in the social space. I will illustrate my point by giving an account for what I mean by the vocabulary to talk about taste.

How to talk about taste

When we eat or drink something, we can experience great difficulties when we want to describe the taste of it in words. Mmmm, this is good! Oh, I know I've tasted this before. Is ginger one of the ingredients? No, there I lost it. There's another taste in there as well, isn't it? Is it cloves? I suddenly got a kind of Christmas feeling. The subtlety of taste reminds very much of a wet piece of soap slipping through our fingers as we try to grab it. In order to make this task easier, through the different activities of taste education, the members of Slow Food have the opportunity to develop a rich vocabulary in order to talk about taste. Philippe often underlined the importance of this vocabulary, exemplified with the following scenario: give children two different types of apples and tell them to decide which one of the two apples they prefer. Then, ask them to describe why they chose the one instead of the other. Most likely, children will manage to characterize one of the apples as sweeter than the other, or more tempting because of the brightest colour. Beyond this, they will most likely miss the words to describe the difference between them. Through training of the senses, and training of putting words to the sensuous experiences, one can more easily talk about taste. Then, one can say that "I prefer this apple because it is juicier and less granular than the other. It is also more sourish, but still sweet, a balance which suits my palate very well".

In the world of wines, this vocabulary is well developed. Wine connoisseurs who recognise the taste of toasted bread, minerals or leather in their glasses can be quite impressive. It takes neat and thorough training of the nose and palate, in consultation with the aroma wheel (a remedy used in wine tastings), in order to develop a vocabulary for recognizing the subtle nuances of odours and tastes. I will not argue that every member of Slow Food is a wine connoisseur. I will rather argue that they gradually increase their vocabulary regarding everything eatable and drinkable, with the help of each other and through events like taste evenings. My point is that this is a time consuming process. The very act of acquiring the knowledge and the vocabulary says something about the person doing it; it bears witness to an investment in time which is more powerful in creating distinctions than any object in itself, according to Bourdieu (Bourdieu, Østerberg et al. 1995[1979]:101). In this connection, the notion of slowness works as an educational remedy in order to attain scholastically acquired cultural capital. In the process of learning about taste, it is - if not essential - then at least of

great help to have some kind of mentor. For instance, one might be tasting the same wine again and again; chanceless of describing its nuances in words, until someone tells you it's the taste of black currant. Then you go "Yeah, that's what it is!" The members act as mentors for each other simply through the fact that they have a common interest in talking about taste. Another, more concrete example is to be found within the presidia projects. Slow Food works out organoleptic profiles¹³ of the products, which are detailed descriptions of how the products strike our sensuous organs. Colour, size, nuances in taste and texture is neatly described in a vocabulary which makes it possible to express these things in words.

In my interpretation, by mastering this vocabulary of discernment, then, the eater is capable of talking about food in the same way as intellectuals relate to works of art, as described by Bourdieu (Bourdieu, Østerberg et al. 1995[1979]:86-103). For them, the art is interesting in itself, not as a potential symbol for economic wealth. Likewise, Philippe finds it ridiculous to have a meal at a restaurant just for the purpose of being seen while eating something expensive. For him, food is interesting in itself. Nevertheless, the cultural competence possessed by the intellectuals gives them a particular authority to define good taste, even in the cases where their level of economic capital is insignificant in order to situate them in the social space (ibid.).

I suggest that members of Slow Food have the same authority, to a certain degree, to define good taste regarding food. By this I mean that when they mark certain elements about food as "slow" elements, they canonize them as the good taste, in Bourdieu's use of the term. As mentioned throughout the paper, there are some principles held as important elements of "the slowfoodian good taste". The food should be good, clean and fair. It should be locally produced and preferably organically produced. Further, it should possess some distinctive characteristics thanks to, for instance, their connection to place. From this, how do I take it that members of Slow Food have a certain authority to define good taste? Well, in the Western world of today, isn't it almost taboo to state that you really don't care whether your vegetables are cultivated in your local surroundings or if they come from Kenya, where the local people might be starving? Likewise, wouldn't most people agree that they feel better when eating pork that has been raised in the open fields and woods, living on things they find in the nature, than when they eat pork that has been living in captivity, fed with concentrated cattle food? Who would seriously claim that they prefer food from industrial food production

¹³ Attachment No. 4 : Description et caracteres organoleptiques.

instead of artisanal products? Further, when consumers today choose branded organic or Fair Trade products, is it uniquely because of personal motives, or have their choices been influenced by an anxiety of displaying a “bad taste” if they go for other products? These brands have symbolic power; they might tell something about the ones who buy them, or the ones who don’t buy them. “Post-modern consumption is a consumption of symbols” (Blindheim, Jensen et al. 2000:109, my translation).

Nevertheless, this doesn’t mean that there is a falsity about the self that we construct through consumption. In order to illustrate what I mean, I will quote the writer, activist and academic Raj Patel, talking about “guilt free food”. He was one of the keynote speakers of a conference on sustainable food, farming and fisheries, at the College of the Atlantic, 2nd October 2009. He made the following jocular statement:

“I buy Fair Trade, right, because what’s the alternative? [...] -Yes, I would like my coffee with the bones of small children” (CollegeoftheAtlantic 2011)

I take it that most people find this idea rather nauseating, even though it was said with humour in this connection. Raj Patel points to the profound personal feelings involved with consumption. Food, in particular, touches our innermost emotions and creates strong reactions within us. The total experience of food is affected by these emotions and reactions, as already mentioned in chapter 5. In my empirical data from Slow Food, this aspect is more pronounced than the food’s potential as a marker of class belonging. It seems that the importance within the concept of taste education lies with how the knowledge influences the eating experience. I will bring my discussion, and my paper, to a close with an illustration.

The total experience of food

The act of eating includes our body and senses in an all-embracing manner. We take the food into our mouth; we mix it with our saliva, which helps our sensorial organ to analyze it, while we chew it. Then, our digestive apparatus breaks down the nourishment so we can use it to perform all the bodily processes. We incorporate the food and literally transform it into parts of our selves (Lupton 1996). Our brains are not shut down while all of this is taking place, at least not for most people. Actually, the quite opposite is true. What we think about the food is a presupposition for what the senses can tell us about it. The brain even has the power to lead our senses astray. If your brain is convinced that you are eating chicken, your senses won’t be able to discover that the waiter served you pork by a mistake. “Anything we don’t know...” By the same token, anything we *do* know matters equally. Any information about what we eat

starts an intellectual process which has great impact on the total taste experience. A glass of wine can taste “like a glass of wine” until someone calls your attention to all the nuances in it. Suddenly you start to recognize the odour of butter, or the taste of exotic fruits in it. The more you are capable of analyzing it, the more interesting it is to drink it (of course, if you are not only trying to get tipsy). The complexity of the total taste experience grows larger the more detailed information you have about what you eat or drink. In my interpretation, then, taste education rests upon the idea that the more you know about the food, the more you start to reflect about its taste – consequently, the food also becomes tastier. At the next step, there is more enjoyment about the food, and this affects your enjoyment of life in general. It influences your interpretation and understanding of the world you are living in.

As a member of Slow Food you no longer simply chew and swallow the food. For instance, when taking a mouthful of meat of the black pork of Bigorre, you register the rich flavour and tender texture. You reflect upon it. Maybe you sense the taste of the chestnuts it has eaten. Your senses become highly alert. It is almost as if you can taste the fresh air and the sunshine the pig has enjoyed in the open fields and woods. Your thoughts start to wander off; they take you to the foothills of the Pyrenees. You think about the distinctiveness of this particular pork. It is a rather rare creature; it doesn't live everywhere in the world. It was about to disappear, because it is fragile to intensive breeding conditions. Thanks to a few passionate farmers, it still runs around in the same area it has been living in for centuries. Its survival assures at least a certain bio-diversity on this planet. Several dimensions about its “slowness” start to sink in. Its mode of breeding is friendly to the environment; it doesn't imply heavy use of pesticides or herbicides. The pork is not a genetically modified organism. The farmers who are feeding it are not exploited and underpaid workers. They are not some people you will never meet because they live on the other side of the Earth. These people, and this particular pork, come from a place, rather than from somewhere out there. The plants, flowers, cereals and nuts growing on this particular place can be recognized in the taste of the meat. You can actually taste the marvellous diversity of the world! This is how food can be a way of re-enchanting the world.

8. Food for thought; concluding remarks

My perspective on Slow Food, as a way of re-enchanting the world, has contributed to anthropological writings on the subjects of food, consumption, modernity and the self. I have pointed towards some features about the Western world in the age in which we live, and claimed that the principles of efficiency, calculability, predictability and control might give the feeling that the world is becoming a highly standardized place. I have argued that Slow Food is built upon the interpretation that these standardization processes lead to a disenchanted world.

The movement Slow Food is based upon a connection between food and temporality. Throughout this paper I have illustrated that by bringing slowness into the life, members of Slow Food works to re-enchant the world. Food is the medium through which they do it. The notion of slowness has several dimensions about it, occurring at every stage, from the production and distribution of the food to the act of eating it. The social dimension is to share the food and eat it together. The principle of slow temporality culminates in the act of sharing the table. I have argued that this is considered the most powerful manifestation of slowness.

Taken that the principle of the shared table is the social dimension of the “slow” principles, the other dimensions of it have been discussed in the subsequent chapters. For instance, I have dealt with Slow Food’s preservation of bio-diversity (the Ark of Taste and the presidia products) as a longing for diversity in the world. Supporting the production of food with distinctive characteristics is their strategy for preserving enchanting diversity in the world.

Slow Food invites gastronomes to take environmental responsibility as they enjoy the pleasures of the table. As an example of this kind of ethical commitment, I could have continued my discussion on the foundation for bio-diversity from chapter 4. Instead, I have elaborated on the preference for locally produced and organic food, and the idea of solidarity expressed through the aim of turning consumers into “co-producers”. The vision they are working towards is a new agricultural model, opposed to the industrial mode of farming and food production.

Besides the environmental concern, the preference for local food expresses another idea as well; a connection between plate and place. This connection creates an awareness and valuation of place and locality. In my interpretation, this is a matter of how we understand - or

want to understand - the world. I have claimed that the connection between food and place creates an image of the world as a myriad of unique places instead of one, singular space. The notion of “terroir” works as a tool for making connections between taste and place, and for expressing the great varieties of both tastes and places throughout the world. Taken that diversities are more enchanting than homogeneity, then, the world becomes a more enchanted place.

The social character of eating turns food into a perfectly suitable medium for communication. I have connected Bourdieu’s concepts of cultural and educational capital to the notion of taste education in Slow Food’s activities. The members acquire knowledge about food production and a specific vocabulary in order to talk about taste, properties they can use in order to situate themselves in the social space. However, I do not equal Slow Food membership with expression for class identity. Consumption deals with much more than this kind of status; consumption is a complex matter of creating ourselves and the image we have of the good life. The postmodern consumer expresses his values through consumption. Simultaneously, he evaluates his choices and understands himself as human being through them.

Towards the end of the paper I have connected the notion of taste education to the total experience of food. I claimed that anything we know about the food we eat starts an intellectual process which has great impact on the total experience of eating it. Training of the senses influences the taste we are able to recognize in the food, and makes the eating experience more enchanted. As I have argued, food expressing ethical commitments leads to a special attachment to the world, and food’s connection to place leads to a greater admiration of the world. Together this means that the act of eating has the power to re-enchant the world.

Alternative approaches

Throughout this paper, I could have applied other theories and illustrated the act of eating from other perspectives. In short, my approach could have been different. For instance, I could have paid more attention to the political aspect of Slow Food. As discussed in this paper, the movement furthers consumption of locally produced and organic food, it works to preserve bio-diversity and it opposes the use of genetically modified organisms. Their vision of a new agricultural model implies political decisions. An alternative approach, therefore, could have been to take a closer look at Slow Food’s political significance. From such a perspective, I could have treated the movement as grass root movement influencing consumer behaviour, and examined the actual political influence involved with it. At the next step, it

would have been interesting to investigate, for instance, Slow Food's influence on legal provisions about genetically modified organisms, and their struggle against particularly one company in this regard, Monsanto. This company is a US-based, multinational company producing herbicides and genetically engineered seeds (MonsantoCompany 2011). This is an extremely interesting subject, especially regarding future situations on food supply, and it could have been a fruitful starting point for further anthropological writings on food.

Another discussion I could have elaborated on is the one I pointed towards at the end of chapter 5; the relativity of ethics. What is considered to be friendly to the environment and ethically correct for one person might be understood differently for another person. The way we live our lives includes making decisions of ethical character and the validity of our ethical judgements are up for discussion. A study of Slow Food could have been a contribution to this discussion.

At the end of the day, my approach was decided by the type of empirical data I was able to gather during my fieldwork. When I spent time with my informants, there was especially one thing that pointed itself out to me; their emphasis on searching knowledge about food. By knowledge I mean everything from how the food was grown, where it comes from, how it is traditionally prepared and eaten, and how we can explain its sensuous qualities. It led me to focusing on how knowledge influences the experience of eating. Additionally, through my role as a cook, I was even more exposed to the sensuous aspect of food and the social meaning of eating. Time, and time again, I was so lucky as to have the opportunity to see people experiencing enchanted moments around the table!

Attachments

Attachment No. 1



Slow Food® Lyon les Canuts Ecervelés

Charte du Convivium

Quelques mots qui résument notre engagement !

**Biodiversité :**

« En réaction à l'appauvrissement d'une alimentation standardisée, il est fondamental de préserver et promouvoir la biodiversité. »

**Convivialité :**

« Nous sommes heureux de nous réunir parce que nous pensons que la convivialité à table est une base au bien être. »

**Vigilance :**

« Écouter avec vigilance et sans a priori les discours sur l'alimentation »

**Questionnement :**

« En adhérant à Slow Food, nous développons une habitude systématique de questionnement sur la pertinence de nos choix (origine, goût, saison, ...) »

**Cheminement :**

« Chaque adhérent a un parcours de vie, géographique, qui le mène à Lyon ; ce parcours enrichit le convivium »

**Terroir :**

« La richesse exceptionnelle du terroir lyonnais nous amène à le faire découvrir et à veiller à l'authenticité et à la valorisation de l'ensemble de ses produits »

**Spécialités :**

« Les Canuts Ecervelés ont vocation à promouvoir les spécialités locales et traditions locales (mâchon, bouchon,...) »

**Coproducteur :**

« Nous souhaitons nous associer à toutes les dimensions de la production et dépasser le simple rôle de consommateur. »

**Curiosité :**

« La curiosité est notre moteur, elle nous conduit à découvrir d'autres goûts et nous stimule à interroger nos propres traditions »

**Plaisir :**

« Le fil rouge de nos activités »



Pour une alimentation bonne, propre et juste au quotidien

- ❁ Faites vous plaisir
- ❁ Fêtez les saisons
- ❁ Pensez global, mangez local
- ❁ Mangez quelque chose que vous cultivez
- ❁ Rencontrez ceux dont le métier est de produire
 - ❁ Soyez curieux
 - ❁ Choisissez en conscience
 - ❁ Mangez varié
- ❁ Manger complet, brut, non transformé
 - ❁ Cuisinez
 - ❁ Soyez radins
- ❁ Transmettez vos passions, vos goûts, vos découvertes

Les militants du goût.

www.slowfood.fr

Presidium Vademecum

INTRODUCTION

How Slow Food Works to Protect Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the total variety of all ecosystems and living beings—plants and animals—that populate our planet.

Agricultural biodiversity is the total variety of cultivated plants and domesticated animal breeds, the result of thousands of years of selection by communities of farmers and herders.

Slow Food began focusing on biodiversity in 1997, particularly as it relates to:

- **edible wild species** linked to cultures and traditional techniques and customs
- **domesticated and cultivated species**, such as plant varieties, ecotypes, native breeds and populations
- **traditional food products**

Many other associations and organizations are working to protect biodiversity, but generally they concentrate on wild species and pay only marginal attention to domestic diversity, selected by humans over the course of the centuries. It is very rare to find anyone concerned with food biodiversity as represented by processed food products.

Food products are an important heritage and asset to local communities. Developed to preserve fresh foods like milk, fruits, vegetables and flowers, they are the result of wisdom passed down from generation to generation.

Artisanal food processing results in distinctive products, able to express a local culture and to free producers from seasonal cycles and market fluctuations. Often it is possible to protect local ecotypes and breeds only by selling processed products.

Biodiversity in all its forms is seriously threatened by intensive and super-specialized agricultural systems, pollution, overbuilding and the mechanisms of the global market.

Over the millennia, around 10,000 species have been used for human food and agriculture, but today 90% of what people around the world eat comes from 120 species, while just 12 plant species and 5 animal species provide over 70% of all human food.

It is estimated that over the last century three-quarters of genetic diversity has been lost from agricultural crops. A third of native cow, sheep and pig breeds are extinct or dying out.

Similar losses of diversity have been seen in food products like bread, cured meats, cheese, wine, sweets and many others.

Slow Food has developed a number of tools to protect and promote biodiversity over the years

Food Communities

Food communities are **groups of people** who produce, process and distribute quality food in a sustainable way and are historically, socially and culturally linked to a geographic area. They can be involved in various activities: fishing, livestock farming, beekeeping, organizing farmers' markets and so on.

The most important element in defining a food community is environmental and social **sustainability**. A food community is interesting because of its organization and production philosophy, not just a particular food it makes.

All food communities belong to the international **Terra Madre** network.

Ark of Taste

The Ark of Taste is an online **catalog of traditional** and artisanal quality food **products** at risk of extinction, selected from around the world. In this project, attention is focused on the **products**.

In some cases, the inclusion of a product in the Ark precedes the launch of a project with the producers (a Presidium, an Earth Market, etc.).

Slow Food Presidia

The Presidia are projects that involve food communities in safeguarding native breeds, plant varieties and food products (bread, cheese, cured meats, wines, etc.).

Their objective is to save traditional, artisanal, quality foods, strengthening the organization of producers, raising the profile of geographic areas, preserving traditional techniques and knowledge and promoting environmentally and socially sustainable production models.

Earth Markets

Earth Markets are **farmers' markets** created according to Slow Food guidelines.

Collectively run, they serve as meeting places where local producers sell sustainably produced quality local foods directly to consumers.

Food communities and Presidia producers often participate in the Earth Markets.

Awareness-Raising Campaigns

Slow Food's strength, amplified by Terra Madre, comes from the network and lies in its ability to spread messages to different generations and social groups.

When **issues** are **relevant to different products and places**, the most effective way to protect biodiversity is through an extensive awareness-raising campaign.

Examples of international campaigns include saving raw-milk cheeses, protecting sustainable fishing and preserving indigenous cultures and languages.

Slow Food Presidia Identifying a Product

In the Slow Food meaning, the **quality** of a food product is a **narrative**.

It starts from the origin of the food and then takes into account the characteristics of the environment, local knowledge, the fame enjoyed locally by that product, processing techniques, recipes, conservation and marketing techniques, environmental sustainability and sensory and nutritional characteristics.

None of these aspects can be considered on its own. And there are no measurable and defined parameters (chemical and physical analyses, tasting panels, etc.) that can identify quality.

Different **tools** are used to construct a complete narrative.

- The collection of information and **oral accounts** from **directly involved actors** (farmers, herders, fishers, cooks), with a particular focus on women and the elderly.
- **Comparative tasting** of product samples from different producers.
- The involvement of **experts**, researchers and scientific institutes and the consultation of specialized **literature**.

Selection Criteria

1 – TASTE

The food must be of distinctive quality from a sensory point of view. Quality is defined by local practices and traditions.

The food must be good. This is the only way to guarantee that the person eating the food experiences the **pleasure of taste**, fundamental to the "slow" philosophy.

What do we mean by sensory or gastronomic quality? How can it be defined and identified?

There are at least three factors for establishing sensory quality: equilibrium, sense of place and complexity.

Equilibrium means a good harmony between the food's specific aromatic and flavor components.

Sense of place means the ability of the food to express sensory characteristics linked to its place of origin, and is sometimes known as terroir.

Complexity refers to the positive sensory evolution over time during tasting. A simple food will end, on the nose and in the mouth, the same way it began, with the same sensory characteristics. A complex product will change during the tasting process, the sensations evolving and persisting.

2 – HISTORY, CULTURE AND PLACE

The food must be linked to the memory and identity of a group. It can be a vegetable species, variety, ecotype or animal population or that is well acclimatized into a specific territory over the medium or long term.

In the case of processed food products, the main ingredient must be of local provenance.

The relationship with place must be documented by written and oral evidence. The food must be linked to a specific area from an environmental, socio-economic and historical perspective.

3 – SMALL SCALE

The food must be produced in limited quantities by small farms or producers.

The producers must be artisans who apply traditional knowledge to all the production phases. This knowledge must have been passed down through their family or learned from another producer over years of apprenticeship. Their products have a specific identity and distinctiveness and are not standardized.

NB: It is preferable to avoid creating a Presidium when the production quantity is extremely small (a few plants in an enthusiast's garden, 50 sheep farmed as a hobby). In these cases it is better to promote awareness-raising among producers so that they start to grow the specific variety or raise the specific breed.

The aim of a Presidium is not to be a museum, nor to sensationalize a critical situation, but to launch a sustainable economic system. Promoting a food that is teetering on the brink of extinction can even be futile, in the case that demand is increased without mechanisms to increase production in place.

4 – RISK OF EXTINCTION

The food must be at a real or potential risk of extinction.

Up to this point, the criteria for inclusion in the Ark and Presidium selection are the same.

In the case of Presidia however, the risk of extinction can regard the food itself (a plant variety, a breed, a product), or a **landscape**, **social group** or technique (fishing, farming, processing, cultivating).

Examples of Presidia focused on a unique cultural, agricultural or environmental context include Gargano citrus groves in Italy, Wiesenwienerwald chequer tree forests in Austria and Tafeljura plum orchards in Switzerland.

But to launch a Presidium, another two aspects must also be taken into consideration.

5 – ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Cultivation techniques must preserve the **fertility of the land** and hydrographic ecosystems and avoid the use of synthetic chemicals as much as possible.

Agricultural systems and production facilities must preserve the **agricultural landscape** and traditional architecture.

Intensive monocultures, intensive livestock farming, unsustainable fishing techniques, industrial production and the use of genetically modified organisms (including in animal feed) are not allowed.

NB: Sustainability should not be confused with organic certification.

6 – SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

A Presidium always involves a food community. It is not a project for the benefit of a single producer or individual producers who do not want to work together.

The producers must take an **active role** and be able to impact on business decisions. For this reason, employed farmers and shepherds are not taken into consideration.

Producers must be willing to collaborate, deciding together on production rules (the protocol) and how to promote their product (creating a food community).

One of the objectives of the Presidia is to obtain a fair and profitable price for producers so as to improve life quality and socio-economic well-being for them and their families. The price must also be transparent and fair for the consumer.

(SlowFoodFoundation 2011)

DESCRIPTION ET CARACTERES ORGANOLEPTIQUES

Une variété est cultivée en Planète de Saint-Flour : FLORA.

	FLORA
Forme	Ronde-plate
Dimensions	Calibre compris entre 3,5 et 5,5 mm
Couleur	Le cotylédon est de couleur jaune. Le tégument est fin et de couleur unicolore blond, occasionnellement porteur de ponctuations noires. La couleur blonde peut être précisée par les termes de blond rosé cendré
Texture	Finesse de la peau et caractère fondant
Saveur	Douce et onctueuse. Léger goût de noisette
Composition	Riche en protéines (environ 25%) et en sels de fer Peu de cellulose brute (environ 4%) et peu de tanins
Type d'emballage	Sachet de polypropylène avec étiquette auto-adhésive
Mode de présentation au public	Sachets de 500 g

(Cadet 2010:77)

Non c'è **G(i)usto**
Nel
Salone Internazionale del Gusto

SALONE DEL GUSTO

REGIONE PIEMONTE
Cruelty Food

CITTA' DI TORINO

Torino
21-25 ottobre

**NO alla celebrazione di una strage...
NO al Salone del Gusto!**

Una fiera che ammicca alla sostenibilità ambientale, alla decrescita e persino al "benessere animale". A questa kermesse sono invitati tutti, a quanto pare: amanti della natura e della "sostenibilità", ambientalisti, teorici della decrescita, difensori dei diritti dei lavoratori del sud del mondo, buongustai e paladini dei "beni comuni".

Tutti parleranno e saranno rappresentati, ma ci sono degli invitati che presenzieranno a migliaia senza poter parlare. Eppure, il loro ruolo è tutt'altro che marginale. Fra decine di conferenze, dibattiti, stand della "cultura" gastronomica, locale e non, sarà massiccia la presenza di qualcuno che per le istituzioni e le industrie è soltanto un oggetto da vendere: gli animali non umani.

Sono i convitati muti, esposti e consumati a pezzi sugli stand, nelle tavole, nei laboratori del Salone del Gusto. Sono coloro che verranno mangiati sotto forma di prosciutti, bistecche, formaggi e uova.

Un massacro "sostenibile"... finanziato dal Ministero dell'Agricoltura, Regione, Provincia, Comune.

Ma questa strage è semplicemente insostenibile.

Ci dite...

- "L'allevamento biologico non danneggia l'ambiente". Probabile che sia vero...
- "Mangiare carne biologica non fa male alla salute". Non è difficile crederlo...
- "Il mercato equo e solidale è strutturato in modo tale da non arrecare danno ai paesi del terzo mondo pur producendo carne". E' ragionevole pensarlo...
- "I produttori di carne biologica non sfruttano i lavoratori". Forse i lavoratori umani...
- "Il biologico è un modello applicabile all'industria della carne". Può essere...
- "Le catene che legano vostri animali sono più lunghe". Non possiamo negarlo...

**Non ci interessa saperlo.
Non ha alcuna importanza.**

Il *commercio di corpi fatti a pezzi* non è sostenibile, siano essi pezzi biologici o no.

- _ Le ferite "*bio*" non sono meno dolorose...
- _ La morte "*bio*" non e' meno definitiva...
- _ La paura "*bio*" non e' meno spaventosa...
- _ La bistecca "*bio*" non era meno viva...

**Gli animali non vogliono gabbie più grandi...
Vogliono gabbie vuote**



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Images:

Snail logo in the title: retrieved 11.05., 2011, from <http://slowfood.com/>.

Pictures: personal photos taken during my fieldwork