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Utopian Foodways: Critical Essays

ALIMENTOPIA

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Edited by
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U.PORTO PRESS

Título: *Utopian Foodways: Critical Essays*
Organização: Teresa Botelho, Miguel Ramalhete Gomes e José Eduardo Reis
Coordenação Série Alimentopia: Fátima Vieira
Coleção Transversal – Série Alimentopia, n.º 4
1.ª Edição, Porto, novembro 2019

Universidade do Porto
Praça Gomes Teixeira
4099-002 Porto

http://up.pt/press

Design: Miguel Praça
Impressão e acabamentos: Cultureprint CRL

ISBN: 978-989-746-242-9
e-ISBN: 978-989-746-243-6

Depósito legal: 465693 / 19

Coleção Transversal
Série Alimentopia

Societies evolve towards the questions they ask. The ALIMENTOPIA project was built upon a set of questions that call for both a critical approach to societies and the imagination of the way these may evolve, from the point of view of food. The *Série ALIMENTOPIA*, published by U.Porto Press as part of *Coleção Transversal*, aims to contribute to the creation of a history of literature and culture focused on how societies produce, distribute and prepare food, taking into account, for the critical reflection on the present and the future, indicators of inclusion, development, and sustainability, at different levels.

The Project *ALIMENTOPIA / Utopia, Food and Future: Utopian Thinking and the Construction of Inclusive Societies – A Contribution of the Humanities*, funded by National Funds through the FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology, and by FEDER Funds through the Operational Programme: Competitiveness Factors – COMPETE 2020 (PTDC/CPC-ELT/5676/2014 | POCI-01-0145-FEDER-016680), brought together 27 researchers from different fields of knowledge (Literature, Culture, Philosophy, Anthropology, Linguistics, Nutrition Sciences, and Psychiatry) who invested in a multidisciplinary study that proved the relevance of the intersection of the field of Utopian Studies with the field of Food Studies.

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Introduction

In an essay collection on food and its utopian modes of socialisation, it might be convenient to remember that the first systematic reflection from within the social sciences on the topic of the meal was produced by the German sociologist Georg Simmel, in a short essay published in 1910, "The Sociology of the Meal".[1] Writing decades before the socio-anthropological structuralist and poststructuralist conception of food and its discrete preparations as a form of language or as a message codifying a profound structure, be it mental (Lévi Strauss[2]) or social (Bourdieu[3]), Simmel argues that the human act of eating expresses a dialectical tension between its necessarily natural content, related to survival, and the culturally organised form in which this survival manifests itself. In its sociological explanation of the meal, founded on the form/content dialectic with which Simmel repeatedly works in developing his thought, this tension between what belongs to the natural domain and what belongs to the cultural realm implies a third term mediating between these two, which is precisely that of society. Simmel is not a utopianist, but his theoretical model built from a dialectic between the material dimension of food – the nutritional physical substance – and its ideal dimension – the practice of its sociocultural codification – can, without abusing or distorting his model, be broadened to the possible utopian representations of human food. It is a model that plays with the opposition between several categories:[4] axiological ("inferior" vs. "superior"); ethical ("selfishness" vs. "allocentrism"); biosociocultural ("individualist atavism" vs. "socialized autonomy"); as well as with their paradoxical correlation. Simmel's essay is complex and extends to questions of aesthetics (the ideal composition and display of the table and room for meals), religious symbolism (the meaning, for believers, in the sacrament of the Christian eucharist, of communion as an experience participating in an indivisible totality overcoming the act of individual physical human feeding) and other issues. But, for the purposes of our argument, it matters only to retain the functionality of those categories as a principle or frame meant to explain the food/utopia dyad. The "inferior", "selfish", and "individualist atavistic" act of eating is, paradoxically, according to Simmel, the most common of human activities and, for that very reason, it contains or constitutes itself as a condition of possibility of its conversion into an act which is "superior", "allocentric" and of "socialized autonomy". His explanation is intellectually productive: since it is the most vital and egocentric of human necessities, the

universal search for the satisfaction of hunger and thirst is converted into the most social and culturally shareable of experiences. In other words, because it is co-existential, the selfishness inherent to the physiological impossibility of food's material division is a condition for ideal sharing, that is, it is converted into a conceptually codified practice of distribution of food under the social form of the meal. By its temporal regularity, by its elective and congregational character and by the set of ethical and functional precepts which characterise and define it, the meal, as a socially ordered and ordering practice, as an ideal symbol of conviviality or as a social act transfiguring primary organic needs into a culturally codified practice, therefore constitutes itself, through its traces of ideality, into an outline – in Ernst Bloch's expression – of a better world, or in a prefiguration of the principle of utopia. In fact, and in the footsteps of Simmel's thought, this prefiguration becomes more evident if one emphasises his thesis according to which the meal works as a converter of selfish atavism into a distributive, communitarian practice. Or, amplifying his argument even more, it works to transform solipsistic ontological nature into the social condition of the companion, of the person who – according to the Latin etymology of the name, *cum panis* – shares the bread. It is evident that a meal is only the climax or the key event of a set of activities involved in the cycle of human feeding, including production, distribution, preparation and consumption, to which one should add the disposal of the remains, activities which can potentially be represented according to the above-mentioned principle of utopia.

The first essay in this collection, "From Production to Disposal: The Interaction of Food and Society in Utopias", by Lyman Tower Sargent, focuses precisely on the utopian figuration and documentation of these activities. Sargent thus analyses a representative set of eutopias, or positive utopias, in English, diachronically encompassing five centuries of history – from 1516, the year of the first edition of Thomas More's *Utopia*, to our days. The essay draws attention to the critical dimension of many of these eutopias, denouncing circumstantial situations regarding conditions of production, material scarcity and injustice in the distribution of food, as well as the prospective alternatives presented to overcome these situations, many of which would become a reality with the passing of time.

In contrast to, or extending, some of the issues examined in this inventory of positive utopias, in particular those related to the mode of food production, Teresa Botelho's essay "What Will We Eat? Food as Signifier in the Projection of Futurities in Climate Change Fiction" focuses on a corpus of twentieth/twenty first North American dystopian fiction depicting a future world drastically threatened in its food security as a result of population growth and dramatic climate change. Drawing on data from and conclusions of the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on the need to reform the prevailing food production protocols in order to avoid the irreversible disruptions of global environmental conservation, the essay demonstrates the extent to which the narratives it analyses – Harry Harrison*'s Make Room, Make Room* (1966), Paolo Bacigalupi's *"The Calorie Man"* (2008) and *The Water Knife* (2015), Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140* (2017) –, are, in their thematic variations, inventive experiments imagining future devastating food shortages largely caused by the ongoing climate change crisis.

In "'Please, oh Snowman, what is toast?': Memories and Nostalgia for Food in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake*", Manuel J. Sousa Oliveira takes Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and *Oryx and Crake* (2003) as examples of dystopian novels which make use of the utopian function of remembering food. By exploring the tension between the dystopian present and the traces of utopia which can be found in meals from the past, Oliveira argues that this results in a critical nostalgia that opens up utopian possibilities. Therefore, by looking back to an age of plenty, past meals and food become an essential part of, on the one hand, comfort, and, on the other hand, resistance for the characters surviving in dystopia.

Considering the role of spaces in the construction of a dystopian ambience, in "Fuelled by Bodies, Fed by Souls: Exploring "Hangry" Houses in Horror Fiction", Jaqueline Pierazzo focuses on food in horror fiction and begins by pointing out that, in such contexts, it tends to invoke the horrors of death. In her chapter, she thus considers this complex relationship in a sub-genre of horror literature that Dale Bailey called "the haunted house tale" and turns to Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* and Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" in an approach that combines Food and Horror Studies in order to shed new light on the works of these two authors.

The critical utopia is a twentieth-century literary innovation in terms of writing about ideal societies and political forms of relationship. The conceptualization of these goes back to H.G. Wells' *Modern Utopia*. Joana Caetano, Mariana Oliveira and Miguel Ramalhete Gomes's collaborative essay "Refectories and Dining Rooms as 'Social Structural Joints': on Space, Gender and Class in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*" is an interdisciplinary reading exercise of the architectural concept of "structural joint" applied to a classical critical utopia. The authors highlight how the cultural motif of food, represented by the practical architectural and literary categories of space, gender and class, plays a cardinal role in Ursula Le Guin's critical utopia *The Dispossessed* (1974). They analyse the ideological diversity of food-related spaces (dining halls and dining rooms) as well as their consequences for gender behaviour and for the representation and interpretation of social classes in the relational universes dialectically described in that novel.

If one of the critical features of Le Guin's utopia recalls the mischief caused by the competitive and exploitative voracity of the capitalist system, Joanna Russ's dystopian tales "Nor Custom Stale" (1959) and The "Throwaways" (1969) examined by Marinela Freitas foregrounds the most sordidly damaging aspects of this system in the context of social eating habits: the boredom-generating automation and the generalisation of the culture of discarding. Highlighting the contrast between the upbeat tone of John Elfreth Watkins, Jr's early 1900s predictions for the second millennium, and Joanna Russ's pessimistic view of a not-yet futuristic society ravaged by pseudo-material comfort, Marinela Freitas emphasises Russ's fictionalised social criticism of robotic and non-human food preparation and hyper-consumerism.

Another productive category in utopian studies is Foucault's heterotopia. In Alvany Rodrigues Noronha Guanaes' "Empathy through Foodways in Colum McCann's *Let The Great World Spin"* literary references to food are seen as a door to build the empathy of readers. The essay discusses Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin*, a novel where a radical Irish priest, prostitutes and a group of mourning mothers, among other characters, cross paths and share their losses, hopes and

differences placed in "heterotopias of crisis" (Foucault 1997), through food-character interaction.

Moving from utopian/dystopian/heterotopian paradigms to the world-estranging domain of Science Fiction, Ian Watson's essay "Better Than Being Fossilised" focuses on the absences and presences of foodways in Science Fiction, which goes back to techno-utopian texts of the nineteenth century, to identify the roots of the fascination with artificial foods that is still present not only in many literary texts, but in contemporary popular science discourses. It then identifies two preoccupations emerging in science-fiction texts, namely the types of food required by the imagined future human colonists of other worlds and the difficulties of obtaining food to feed those left on a Planet Earth plagued by climate instability. It does this by using texts like Kim Stanley Robinson's *Mars Trilogy*, which scrutinizes the (im)possibilities of extraterrestrial food production, and the anthology *Looking Landwards*, which offers diverse projections of the future of farming on Earth, and various imagined attempts to evade and survive the "Ecostrophy" in the horizon of humanity.

Still within the Anglo-American cultural boundaries, but resuming the positive trait of the utopian impulse, Maria Teresa Castilho and Sofia de Melo Araújo in "What we need is here": Food, Sustainability, and American Myths and Projects" discuss the New Agrarian Movement in the United States, focusing on the work of Wendell Berry, a Southern writer, poet, essayist and New Agrarian cultural critic, a strong defender of an agrarian revolution for a better world. Tracing Berry's perspectives back to John Crowe Ransom, who defended "that a happier human destiny should be secured through 'an honourable peace with nature'", and Robert Penn Warren, who warned against the destructive effects of industrialism and materialism, the essay inserts Berry into what Marius de Geus called the tradition of ecological utopias, envisioning a sustainable society, in contrast with the American myths of abundance and affluence: The Land of Cockaigne, El Dorado, Sierra de la Plata, The Big Rock Candy Mountain. The authors demonstrate how Wendell Berry's 'taking a stand' comes up in the course of this mythological tradition, and so does any reflection of Society and Food in the United States of America.

Aligned with the thematic range of the previous essay, Ana Paula Pedrosa, in "Alternative Agri-Food Networks and their Implications for Social Policy: A Literature Review" approaches the potential of alternative agri-food networks, especially the Communities Supported Agriculture, to transform the Food Systems and create innovative forms of sociability. The essay argues that the community capital and collective actions for the solution of environmental, economic and social problems are important to the development of sustainable communities, helping to achieve the goals of the 2030 Agenda. Initiatives related to consumption and production of food can create fairer communities and directly impact the food and nutritional security of the community. The essay concludes that these networks also act as a resistance movement to the conventional way of production and access to food, by addressing the particularities of each territory, food traditions and local biodiversity.

The following two essays discuss a key issue in food studies: dietary ethics related to species and gender theoretical and practical issues. Overviewing the social, scientific, economic, philosophical and literary implications of vegetarianism from an eco-feminist point of view,

Aline Ferreira examines three narratives ranging from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in "The Gendered Politics of Meat: Becoming Tree" in Kang's *The Vegetarian*, Atwood's *The Edible Woman*, and Ozeki's *My Year of Meats*." Based on contributions from various fields of knowledge, from philosophy, gender and animal studies to plant science, this essay analyses the destabilising rule of the patriarchal ("carnophallogocentric" in Derrida's terminology) order embodied in the revolutionary course of action of the female protagonists of those novels. Foregrounding Carol Adams' reflection on the sexual politics of meat (1990), the essay focuses on the intersections of animal and women's rights, meat eating and the sexual commodification of women as meat to be consumed.

In "Diet, Consciousness and Ethics. Convergent Praxis in the Animal Rights and Vegetarian Writings of Henry Salt and Agostinho da Silva", José Eduardo Reis and Chris Gerry turn to some of the main publications of Henry Stephens Salt (1851-1939) and Agostinho da Silva (1906-1994). Considering the courageous missions on which each embarked, and the pertinence and quality of their published work, Reis and Gerry discuss their work from a comparative perspective. They therefore present the political, philosophical and practical approaches employed by these two "food militants" in their attempts to raise awareness and promote attitude change among the public with regard to human diet and animal welfare, thus providing evidence of convergences and dissimilarities between the positions each took regarding ethical utopian vegetarianism.

As a way of denouncing and sublimating a historically wronged and forlorn world society, the fictional and religious journey to alternative celestial bodies or metaphysical realms is a common device in utopian literature. In their respective main argument, the last three essays show how the dietary aspects of these fictionalized or envisioned ideal worlds are important to their symbolic or spiritual configurations. In "*The True Story of Planet Mars*: A Portuguese Utopia about Food and Public Health", Maria Luísa Malato and Manuel Loff discuss *The True Story of Planet Mars*, a twentieth-century Portuguese utopia presented as an eighteenth-century Portuguese translation of a French novel by one Henri Montgolfier. Written by his "translator", José Nunes da Matta, a committed republican reformist, and published in 1921, during the first Portuguese republican regime (1910-1926), *The True Story of Planet Mars* includes a political constitution, with reforms made by a Martian philosopher. Matta's utopia depicts a healthy human life, based on a respect for nature and a delicate change of diet.

Two works by Cyrano de Bergerac – *Les États et Empires de la Lune* and *Les États et Empires du Soleil* – are discussed by Antoine Brandelet and Anne Staquet in the essay "Eating in the Other Worlds." After establishing the utopian characteristics of these works, the essay compares how the texts imagine the parallels and oppositions between people originally from the Earth, the Moon and the Sun by referring to their eating habits. It concentrates then on passages about acts of eating where the Bible and its mythology are reinterpreted by characters from the Other Worlds, and it concludes with the discussion of how these considerations about food and nourishment are consistent with the atheist and materialist philosophical perspective of Cyrano de Bergerac.

Finally, in "Juana de la Cruz's Heavenly Banquet: A Utopian Way of Thinking about Food," Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida discusses Juana de la Cruz's visions of the heavenly banquet. Born in 1481, Juana de la Cruz died in 1534 in Toledo. She was a Franciscan tertiary in the *beaterio* of Cubas de la Sagra, with the reputation of being a "living saint". She composed a book of visionary sermons, *Libro del conorte* (ca. 1509), committed to paper by her fellow Franciscan María Evangelista, and others. In her book of revelations, she creates a paradise filled with heavenly banquets, and Sanmartín considers how utopian *agape* meals are depicted in this formidable text.

Once singled out as a signifying element, foodways will often reveal an unexpected significance in otherwise discreet moments of utopian representations and speculations. In these essays, the imagination of food will be shown to play a decisive role in utopian world-building, as well as in firing the real-world critiques and reflections of utopianists and other thinkers. The present collection thus takes food as an object of urgent thought and explores the present challenges and potential solutions inhering in discussions of the ways of food, by insisting on giving much due attention to the traditions of utopian writing and utopianist reflection on food-ways, past, present and future.

Notes

1. The essay was originally published in the German newspaper Der Zeitgeist, a supplement to the Berliner Tageblatt, Berlin, nº 41, 10 October, 1910, 1-2 (commemorative number of the centenary of the University of Berlin). English translation in Michael Symons (1994), "Simmel's gastronomic sociology: An overlooked essay", Food and Foodways, nº 5.4, 333-351, DOI: 10.1080/07409710.1994.9962016.
2. Claude Lévi-Strauss, "The Culinary Triangle" (1966), in Food and Culture, a Reader (2013), ed. by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, New York, Oxon, Routledge, 40-47.
3. Pierre Bourdieu, "Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste", trans. Richard Nice (1979), in Food and Culture, a Reader (2013), ed. by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, New York, Oxon, Routledge, 31-39.
4. The terminology is ours and is inferred from a reading of Simmel's essay.

From Production to Disposal: The Interaction of Food and Society in Utopias

Lyman Tower Sargent

In the 1950s, the Dutch sociologist F. L. Polak argued that our images of the future help create the actual future, writing, "We will view human society and culture as being magnetically pulled towards a future fulfillment of their own preceding and prevailing, idealistic images of the future, as well as being pushed from behind by their own realistic past" (1960: I, 15). And in the second volume of his magnum opus, *The Image of the Future*, published in Dutch in 1955 and in English in 1961, he attempted to demonstrate that history proved him correct. His examples are at a high level of generalisation, such as culture, economic systems, religion, and the like, and, to me, the advantage of utopias is that they present the way social changes actually affect people in their daily lives, and even those that are pitched at Polak's level of generalisation often use examples from daily life to make their point.

Many utopias are primarily concerned, as was Polak, with the "big" questions of economic, political, or social systems rather than "little" questions like how food is produced, consumed, and so forth. But there are many utopias that are concerned with such questions and with antecedent questions about how changes for the better are brought about and maintained once achieved, with education and law being the most common ways of doing so. And at least some utopias seem to be far ahead of their time. For example, in a serial published in 1911-1912, there is an illustration depicting a solar array that is very similar to the ones we see all around us (Gernsback 2000: 127).

Therefore, I use food, which is central to any life, let alone the good life the authors of utopias purport to depict, to look at Polak's argument. In doing so, I discuss the role of food in utopias from its production to the disposal of waste and how these changes drive changes in society and/or changes in society drive changes in the utopias.

Utopianism says that things do not have to be like this or, possibly more optimistically, utopias reflect what Ernst Bloch characterised as the "Not Yet." While some authors believe that the eutopias they describe are possible, for many readers it is the critical function that is most important. Utopias derive from dissatisfaction, and they respond to it by depicting an alternative to what gave rise to that dissatisfaction. In doing so, utopias make connections that demonstrate the interdependence of social institutions. We now have just over five hundred years

of examples of the genre of utopian literature and many more centuries of the social dreaming I call utopianism. The literature has gone in many directions since More published his *Utopia* in 1516, with significant differences in time periods, countries, even regions within countries. And, in addition, there are differences based on class, ethnicity, gender, race, religion, and so forth, as well as the varied political beliefs of the authors.

For example, and something I will return to, throughout the history of the literature, food is deeply interconnected with gender relations and relationships of power more generally. So, what I have tried to do is to use food to look at how some authors of utopias thought that such things could be a feature of a better life. And one of the scholars who has looked at utopian literature and food, Warren Belasco, argued in his 2006 *Meals to Come: A History of the Future of Food* that "the fantasies of utopian and dystopian fiction have served to both reflect and shape the policy debate over the future of food. Speculative stories have also given greater voice to those who are not well represented by mainstream policy analysis – especially radical environmentalists, socialists, and feminists" (2006: xi).

Here I examine the way food is produced, distributed, prepared, and served, what foods we eat, how we clean up after the meal, and how we deal with the waste products. Of course, these practices reflect the belief system of the society and the economic, political and social institutions that belief system has brought about, and all the practices are interrelated, so the picture is quite complex. After all, we are talking about human beings, with their myriad ways of thinking and acting. To me, a major advantage of utopias is that they reflect this complexity and, as a result, I consider a range of answers to each question.

I only discuss positive utopias because, while it is important to point out what is wrong, as the dystopias do, the eutopias do that and suggest improvements. One of the points that I hope comes across is that eutopias are in dialogue with the society in which they are created, and as that society changes so do the eutopias. Not a particularly profound thought, but some students of utopias have tended to look at individual authors, and often only one book by an author, or a specific time period and, as a result, miss the changing interaction with society.

Farms and Farming

While many people have found, and others now find, farming a fulfilling way of life, it seems unlikely that the life of any farmer can ever be called utopian. Farming is hard, dangerous work with unforgiving hours, and it is dependent on the weather, which rarely does what is wanted. And while at least some of the authors had no idea about what farming is like, utopias reflect nostalgia for the "simple agricultural life," with examples from 1606 to 2013.[1] Arguing that "For centuries, farm work has been considered the natural avocation of the ignorant and the illiterate!", one author (Drayton 1900: 75) goes on to say that, on the contrary, the best thinkers "come from the people of the soil"(*idem*: 79). And another author wrote that in his eutopia "Man has been restored to his heritage, living close to the soil, on holdings from two to ten acres of land" (Clough 1923: 43), and yet another argued that "Divorced from the soil, they [nations and people] begin to die", and so proposes a utopia in which every family will have "a free home upon the soil" (J. L. Rogers 1898: 285-6).[2]

Although many also say that people need to be educated about agriculture and farming, it is not unusual to find that in utopia everyone is a farmer (Drayton 1900: 82). For example, in William Tuckwell's *The New Utopia* from 1885, there is a Government Agricultural College, in which "every one must be trained who proposed to gain his living by the land" (6), in D. L. Stump's 1896 *From World to World*, farmers are trained just like lawyers and doctors (30) and Alexander Craig's *Ionia* of 1898 stresses the importance of the school of agriculture (228). Tuckwell, published in England, predates the first government agriculture school, although a private one had been founded in 1845 (Cheesbrough 1966: 183); Stump and Craig, from the United States, predate the establishment of the first U. S. agricultural college.

But the central concern about farming in the utopia has been to organise agriculture in a way that improves the lives of farmers, improves the quality of the food produced, improves the efficiency of food production, and produces more food. Recently a concern with improving the quality of life of animals used for food and, in a growing number of instances, improving the land and the environment have been added.

Probably the most common way of improving the lives of farmers is by extending and formalising the cooperation that has historically existed among farmers (Murphy 1894: 177), ranging from making the traditional sharing of expensive machinery a standard practice, the formation of producer and consumer cooperatives and, in some cases, the establishment of cooperative housing, all of which have been done with many successes and some failures. One motivation behind cooperative housing found in quite a few utopias is to combat the feeling of isolation that farm life can produce and give farmers more access to cultural and other advantages of people living in greater proximity. Milan C. Edson's 1900 *Solaris Farm* makes this explicit in noting the poor lives led by farmers and seeing the solution in a cooperative farm, with the goal of making "farming the most charming and healthful and most and most desirable of all vocations." (81).

Of course, there are differences in how cooperatives operate. For example, in one utopia, also from 1900, the cooperative is designed to fit in with "the present commercial and industrial conditions." In part, this would be done to help the cooperative gain acceptance, but the author goes on to suggest a farm of "five thousand acres of land [later he says 6400 acres], to more readily enable it to dominate the township, as the lowest political unit of the republic and also to give room for the planting of suitable forests" (Drayton 1900: 84), which shows an intent to be politically active for the cooperative's benefit.

Production

How, more specifically, is food produced? More's *Utopia* (1516) is authoritarian, hierarchical, and patriarchal, and the only place in which he is not overtly patriarchal is when he says that everyone, men and women alike, are engaged in agriculture and taught it from childhood (More 1965:125). In Utopia, farm houses are inhabited by citizens who come in rotation to live there. "No rural household numbers less than forty men and women, besides two serfs attached to the soil. Over them are set a master and a mistress, serious in mind and ripe in years. Over every group of thirty households rules a phylarch" or lower official (*idem*: 115). The rotation ensures that all are well trained or have experienced overseers training them. And "When the time of harvest is at hand, the agricultural phylarchs inform the municipal officials what number of citizens they require to be sent. The crowd of harvesters, coming promptly at the appointed time, dispatch the whole task of harvesting almost in a single day of fine weather" (*idem*: 117).

In contrast to More's highly structured, community-based system, many utopias are centred on the family farm. For example, in Craig's *Ionia*, which has farms of 25 to 100 acres (the text says 25 to 75 in one place and 40 to 100 in another) that are operated with no hired labour (1898: 81, 185 for the larger number); in Stump's *World to World*, farms are from 10 to 40 acres with each farm the responsibility of an individual farmer (1896: 26). And in contrast to More's patriarchy, in her 1911 *Moving the Mountain*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman says that agriculture began with women in that they "gave the world its first start in agriculture and the care of animals; they clothed it and fed it and ornamented it and kept it warm; their ceaseless industry made rich the simple early cultures" (189-90).

There is one farming utopia from the last quarter of the twentieth century that is worth looking at more closely. "Outside the Solar Village: One Utopian Farm" (1980 with a slightly revised 1985 version) was written by Wes Jackson, a plant geneticist, one of the recipients of the so-called MacArthur "genius" fellowships, and the founder of The Land Institute.[3]

The utopia describes a sustainable family farm of 160 acres which he locates in Kansas in 2030, saying that with really good soil, ten acres could support a family, but that further west from his Kansas location it could take from 320 acres to two square miles to support a family (Jackson 1980: 138 / 1985:119).[4] Twentieth-century farming practices, particularly the heavy use of chemical fertiliser, had badly damaged the land in his future Kansas, and a radical reduction in the use of such fertiliser was part of the attempt to re-achieve sustainability (*idem* 1980: 145/ 1985:128). Jackson says that instituting these practices will reduce soil loss, encourage the return of water from springs, consume much less energy, and reduce the pathogens and insects that he says are at "ep*idem*ic proportions" (*idem* 1980: 146/ 1985:129).

On the farm, there are solar pig and chicken houses on wheels so they can be moved around the farm, and livestock is also moved to help the soil (*idem* 1980: 132, 147/ 1985:122-3, 130). And there is considerable use of draught animals to replace machinery, and while some tools and equipment is owned by individual farms, much is rented as needed (*idem* 1980: 144-45/ 1985:128).

The land is held by a Land Trust so, while not owned by individuals, it can be passed down to the next generation. The house on the farm is partly underground and has "both passive and active solar installations for hot water and space heating" (*idem* 1980: 141/ 1985:122). Wind power provides electricity; in the first edition, but dropped from the revised edition, fuel comes from alcohol produced from crops grown on the farm. There is a toned-down comment on fuel from alcohol in the revised edition (*idem* 1985: 126), and it worth noting that some food shortages in the U.S.A. are blamed on the heavy subsidies that farmers receive for growing corn for fuel rather than food. Many states in the U.S.A. mandate that fuel for cars have some percentage derived from corn, and in "The Soil Merchant" (2018), the protagonist says that the degradation of the soil in the U.S.A. is due to the overplanting of corn.[5]

Jackson's farm also raises the question of what size a farm should be to efficiently produce food. Here, there are significant differences. As seen, in *Ionia* and *World to World* the farms are small, but in Thomson's *A Prospectus of Socialism*, they should be from ten to fifty thousand acres (1894: 114-115), and in Bert Wellman's *The Legal Revolution of 1902* (1898), whole U.S. states have been turned into a single farm growing wheat (1898: 273). In *Hopetown* from 1905, they are 3500 acres and run by the municipality.[6] Today, agri-business has produced many farms that are immense, and obstacles (such as trees) to the efficient, i.e. least expensive, use of farm equipment have been removed.

The most common approaches to improving production are education and the application of science to agriculture.[7] In *Etymonia*, there is a detailed system of reporting on the agricultural situation and, based on these reports, a central determination of what each area should produce, and every district has an agricultural chemist (1875: 136-140).

I'm not quite sure what to make of it because to me it seems much too early, but More says that in Utopia, eggs are hatched under heat and the chickens follow humans (1965: 115). Leaving Utopian eggs aside, quite a number of utopias stress the need for irrigation, which, given the growing shortage of water and the conflict between rural and urban areas over water, is going to be more difficult in our future.[8]

Quite a few authors discuss the use of advanced machinery, with ploughing, harrowing, and reaping all done by automatic machinery in Craig's *Ionia* (1898: 185). In Edward Bellamy's *Equality* of 1897, Edith Leete, who, in *Looking Backward* appears to have nothing to do but look after the protagonist, is a farmer who does all her farming sitting miles away running the machines on the farm (1897: 298-99).[9] While farming is not yet being done quite so remotely, robots are in use and being developed for more and more uses.[10] Some mention using artificial fertiliser, although that comes and goes,[11] and, as Jackson noted, has caused as many or even more problems than it solved. To some degree, most of the advances in science have been used, and even the remote farming found in Bellamy is being developed. One such advance, namely the overuse of antibiotics in treating farm animals, has added significantly to reducing the effectiveness of antibiotics in treating humans. Furthermore, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, acting against the advice of the Federal Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has recently approved the use of antibiotics in oranges and grapefruit.

Distribution

The next problem is how to distribute the food. The issues in the literature concerned with the distribution of food focus on getting food to those in need, hygiene, and efficiency. A standard practice, found as early as More's *Utopia*, is a local market where, in this and many other cases, food and other goods are brought to the market and people simply take what they need (More 1966: 137). In Dr W. S. Mayo's 1849 utopia, which throughout stresses health and hygiene, markets are all marble or granite so that they can be easily kept clean (461).

Markets can also exist in residential buildings, which would radically improve access for those living in the building, and sometimes for those living nearby. In William Thomson's 1894 *A Prospectus of Socialism*, people live in a State Communal Palace and, as long as they work, they are entitled "to all Food which they or their families may require" (60-61). There are food stores in each of the Palaces, and food can be ordered in advance to one of the twelve dining rooms that every Palace has (*idem*: 29-33).

An alternative distribution system is based at least in part on private homes and, in one case, on a recently developed technology. In Stump's *From World to World*, food is prepared in central kitchens and sent to homes and hotels by pneumatic tube, based on individual orders (1896: 80-84). In Gilman's *Moving the Mountain*, food is distributed to homes, but without Stump's technology. In Gilman's utopia, you order your food in advance, but for no extra charge you can modify your order up to midnight of the day before you want the food. You can also order or change your order during the day the food is to be delivered, but you are charged extra for it (1911: 93).

This process is coming widely into practice. Many people who are confined to their homes have their food delivered from a supermarket chain; a recent neighbour regularly had food packages arrive from a national corporation, and I could have food delivered from a local supermarket. On a different level, more and more people, particularly in large cities, order complete meals to be delivered from restaurants, and not just the traditional pizza and Chinese or Indian takeaway. Many mid-range and high-end restaurants now provide this service.

This practice reflects an issue that utopias frequently struggle with, which is community on the one hand and individuality, privacy, and the traditional family on the other. One utopia written by a married couple directly addresses this issue by describing a building that they say was "planned for the relief of women" (Fitch and Fitch 1891: 195). Anyone living in one of the one hundred-fifty suites in the building can eat in one of the dining rooms or can use their own facilities, which include "a cooking closet with gas range, hot water, and steam pipes, porcelain-lined sinks, and pneumatic tubes for carrying away garbage" (*idem*: 193-195). This utopia is one of many reflecting the cooperative housekeeping movement that flourished in the 1880s and '90s; it produced many experiments and was still being referred to in utopias in the 1970s. [12]

On a different note, but reflecting what is now, a standard practice in many places, in the 1896 *A Christmas Mystery* by Charles O. Boring, churches provide free food and lodging for all who need it (23-24). Of course, there is a long history of convents and monasteries providing food and lodging, and during bad economic times, many churches have done the same, but today, with the explosion of homelessness and the general failure of governments to respond, many churches provide food directly or through supporting an organisation established for that purpose. Lodging is less often provided directly, but churches often support or advocate for housing for the homeless.

Preparation

And then there is the question of how food is prepared. Where the preparation of food is discussed, the authors of utopias are particularly concerned with health and hygiene and in one utopia from 1912 there is a Federal Bureau of Health that is responsible for teaching what and how to eat, as well as for the quality of the food eaten, and, of course, such bureaus now exist in most countries (Brinsmade 1912: 14-15, 17, 19).

Preparation can be divided into two parts, for the kitchen and in kitchens, and kitchen work can also be divided into the part that is creative, primarily cooking and presentation, and the part that is drudgery, primarily cleaning up after the meal. Until the early twentieth century the simple message was that abattoirs and the like should be kept at a distance. In W. S. Mayo's and Benjamin Ward Richardson's utopias, slaughterhouses are relegated to a separate area.[13] And in *The Inhabitants of Mars* from 1895, all food preparation takes place a mile outside the city (Mitchell 1895:23). Also, many of the comments suggest that butchering was degrading to the people doing it, and Thomas More makes this point explicitly by saying that butchering is done by slaves because of the Utopians' belief that it would harm the citizens to participate in such activities. (1966: 139).

In the home, both in practice and as reported in most utopias, preparation is done by women. In More's *Utopia*, cooking is done by the women taking turns, which assumes that any woman can cook to a decent standard (*idem*: 131). In Craig's *Ionia* every young woman receives training in cooking and then joins a household where she is considered a member of the family, not a servant, except that she cooks and serve the food and only then does she sit down to eat it with the family, and she does this until she marries (1898: 60-61, 87-89).

In contrast, in Stump's *From World to World* and many others, cooking is done by trained professionals. Stump also says that cooking is now considered a science and that both men and women cook. (1896: 34). [14] One author notes that "The cook demanded better wages than the senator. Anybody, after a fashion, might perform the functions of the latter; the skill of the former was exceptional and essential" (Russell 1893:247).

Serving

The young woman in Craig's utopia is his solution to getting food from the kitchen to the table, but others take different approaches. Where there is a central kitchen but individual homes, the food gets to the house by some form of delivery service from pneumatic tube to truck, or, today, by delivery services run by companies like Deliveroo or Uber Eats. In the home, it is still usually served by the women of the household, but if there is a system of restaurants, as in Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, serving the food is a respected occupation (temporary for those just joining the workforce in Bellamy's case) (1967:194). In *Etymonia*, the food is served by "youths" and "maidens" supervised by "matrons" (1875: 97). In *Rational Communism* (1885) by Alonzo Van Deusen, both cooking and serving is "performed by the wives and daughters of the household, assisted by the younger male portion, who served by turns at the tables" (339). In the 1943 *Erōne* by Chalmers Wells, "each group of apartment buildings had its own restaurant where residents [or anyone else] could have all or any of their meals" (69-70), and some of the restaurants are self-service while some have servers.

One of the advantages of the public or common dining arrangements is that the people working there are considered equal to those eating there. As Stump puts it, the people working there are considered peers and not servants and anyone who would be haughty or disrespectful is "very liable to be politely but firmly told to wait upon himself--and he generally has to do so" (1896: 87).

Eating/Meals

What we eat and how we eat are the centre of the food continuum. Some authors have said that in the future food will come as liquids or pellets, with one, at least, saying that the taste of the liquids will be exquisite,[15] but most food requires more from the consumer than swallowing.[16]

Meals may be eaten alone at home, in a restaurant, or, these days, in a car, with family or friends, or as a community. More's *Utopia* describes the common meal in Utopia at considerable length, and, except for including women and children, he could be describing meals in a monastery. It takes place in halls designed to hold about thirty families, and More describes the seating arrangement, which is based on age, gender, and status, in detail. Meals begin "with some reading which is conducive to morality, but which is brief so as not to be tiresome" and are accompanied by music (1965: 141-5).

In *The Pure Causeway* (1899), most people eat their breakfast at home and the other two meals in the community dining hall (Roberts 1899: 209). But reflecting the issue of privacy in a community-based utopia, the dining halls in some utopias make private rooms available to families.[17] Whether small children eat with or separately from the adults is sometimes an issue, as it is in More's *Utopia*. In *Etymonia*, children ate after the adults (1875:106); and in B. F. Skinner's *Walden Two*, "from three through six, the children ate in a small dining room of their own. The older children took their meals at specified times in the adult quarters. At thirteen all supervision was abandoned, and the young member was free to eat when and where he pleased" (1948: 96). Of course, such arrangements give priority to the community over the family.

The most frequently proposed change in our eating habits is vegetarianism, usually for reasons of health, although concern for the welfare of animals grows over time.[18] One utopia from 1900 says that no leather is used (Drayton 1900: 106), and another, from 1904, uses the phrase "the rights of animals" (Dixie 1906: 427). [19] Just what is included within vegetarianism seems to be an open question in that some allow, and others prohibit, milk and cheese, and in a few cases, even fish, while for others, only fruit and vegetables are permitted. [20] A subset of those advocating vegetarianism say that the food should not be cooked.[21] Beyond vegetarianism, the range of proposals is immense, although a concern with health and hygiene regularly recurs.

Samuel Butler, in his 1901 revision of *Erewhon*, added two chapters, "The Views of an Erewhonian Prophet Concerning the Rights of Animals" and "The Views of an Erewhonian Philosopher Concerning the Rights of Vegetables." In the first chapter, the prophet convinces the Erewhonians that they should not eat meat. In the second chapter, he describes a period in which there was a movement for giving rights to vegetables, but this was dropped because it would have interfered with a reasonable diet (1901: 255-98). At the other extreme, a special issue of *Utopian Studies* on "Utopia and Food" included an essay on the Paleo Diet, which, according to the article, "rejects agricultural products such as cereals and sugars for foods that could have been hunted or gathered – mostly high-fat, high-fiber meats and plants" and "An estimated three million Americans currently follow some version" of this diet (Johnson 2015: 101-124).

Still, there are some very common prohibitions, with alcohol the most usual one, but in quite a few cases the intelligent people in utopia have managed to produce a drink, or in some cases, a gas, that produces the pleasurable effects of alcohol without the hangover or the possibility of addiction.[22] Coffee and tea are also often prohibited. For example, in Marge Piercy's, *Woman on the Edge of Time* (1976), as a result of the desire to live locally, coffee, tea, and sugar have become scarce and are little used (187). While not a food, when coffee and tea are mentioned, tobacco is almost always included in the list.[23] There is one utopia, though, that includes cigars as one of the "essentials of existence" (Freeman 1941:13).

Also, the cost of food is a concern for many authors, with a number suggesting that food, and often other essentials, such as housing, should be free.[24] In his non-fiction utopia, *Folding the Red into the Black or Developing a Viable UNtopia for Human Survival in the 21st Century* (2016), Walter Mosley, well-known for his mystery novels, suggests that the "Federal government should subsidize nine of ten basic foods" (97), and others suggest a fixed price for some foods, something that has been successfully tried until the price is raised.[25]

I'm pleased to say, though, that, although there are exceptions, quite a few utopias are aware of eating as a pleasurable activity both in the simple enjoyment of the food being consumed and in sharing a meal with others. In Piercy's *Woman on the Edge of Time*, the "The 'fooder' is a home for all of us. A warm spot" (69).[26]

Cleaning-Up

Whatever and wherever food is eaten, cleaning-up after the meal can be tedious, and one fairly early utopia, "Crumble-Hall" from 1751 by Mary Leapor, who had herself been a servant, makes a point about providing better conditions for kitchen workers (1751: 118). At the end of the meal, something must be done with the leftovers, the dirty dishes, and so forth and somebody has to do it. In *Rational Communism*, the author provided a picture of an average day in his New Republic that pointed to one inequality between men and women in his supposedly equal future. Both men and women work the same hours, but after dinner the women clear the tables and do the dishes while the men wander off to relax (Van Deusen 1885:334). Indeed, this is the way the issue was dealt with for centuries and still is in many households.

Technology, as mentioned earlier, is a common solution and in one case mentioned earlier, pneumatic tubes are used to send everything back to where it came from. As one female author wrote in a description of plans for an intentional community that was created, but not as she depicted it, "The central kitchens will remove the hatefully monotonous drudgery of cooking three meals a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year, and washing the dishes" (Austin 1917: 14). Another, male, author said that if dishwashers were not yet invented, mothers would do the washing up working together (Thomson 1894: 33-34). In *Solaris Farm*, dishwashing has been mostly mechanised with pots and pans designed for electric cooking and easy cleaning, but it is clear that women do most of the kitchen work (Edson 1900: 259-61). Cheap paper or plastic dishes can be used and thrown away, as in the 1905 *As It May Be* and *You'll See* (29) from 1957;[27] the dishes, including pots and pans, can be recycled, as in Bellamy's *Equality* (1897: 51-52), or they can be compostable, as in Graham Purchase's 1994 *My Journey With Aristotle to the Anarchist Utopia* (59-60).

Waste/Sewage

Having dealt with the dishes, it is still necessary to do something with the food and human waste that is produced. In *A Strange Voyage* of 1891, leftover food is burned and used for power (Allen 1891: 152-53); and in Fay Weldon's *Darcy's Utopia* (1990), there will be "recycling stations on every street corner" (152). For those utopias published before the twentieth century, the establishment of good sewer systems was essential. As Miriam Eliav-Feldon says in her study of Renaissance utopias, "A New Jerusalem cannot be built without an effective sewage system" (1982: 31). As Stump put it, "Every town or city has a complete sewerage system; but its refuse is not allowed to be washed into the streams to contaminate the water, but it is conducted to a large reservoir where by chemical treatment it is converted into a fertilizer for the land, with the conversion of waste into fertiliser very common" (1896: 43).[28]

In the twentieth century, the way utopias deal with waste products becomes considerably more sophisticated. In Daniel P. Fischer's 1992 *Anthropolis*, there are compost toilets, an elaborate three-tier grey water system, and everything that can be reused, is (56). In Jacque Fresco's 2007 *Designing the Future*, all waste is recycled or used to produce power, as in *A Strange Voyage*, but Fresco's approach is very different. He writes that currents provide us with enormous potential sources of electric power.

> Energy "crops" can be farmed from biomass by converting waste organic materials into gaseous or liquid fuels. Additional energy can be obtained from fermentation. Imagine a pile of decaying food and other organic matter. This pile of biomass gives off heat and gasses. This potential source of energy can be harnessed and used with proper technology (Fresco 2007: 52).

Conclusion

A recent issue of the journal *Communities* included an article about an experiment, Soul Fire Farm, in New York State where a family farm is transitioning to such a community.[29] The farm was created on degraded land, like that described by Jackson, that was thought to be beyond restoration, and they have published a book that gives detailed instructions on how to restore such land.[30] Their approach resonates with Gilman's statement in *Moving the Mountain* (1911) that "The exquisite agriculture which made millions of acres from raw farms and ranches into rich gardens, the forestry which had changed our straggling woodlands into great tree-farms, yielding their steady crops of cut boughs, thinned underbrush, and full-grown trunks, all this one could see" (191).

Laura Penniman, one of the founders of Soul Fire Farm, argues that food that is both adequate and culturally appropriate should be considered a human right. And she says that in addition to food deserts, there is food apartheid. The land the farm is on was, as she puts it quite accurately, "stolen" from the Native Americans who lived on and used it without any sense of ownership, and the farm is now involving the descendants of those Native Americans, new Asian settlers, and African Americans from the area. It is providing training for adults, teenagers, and children from all those groups in how to grow the food they need and want. And they are reaching outside the area and the country to Haiti and various places in Africa to reinvigorate traditional practices and foods. I'm sure that Soul Fire Farm has its faults, but it illustrates what is possible with a vision of a better life.

Except for some of the science fictional technological extremes, just about everything suggested has been tried, and in many cases, worked, and some are still being used. Particularly regarding the production of food, some practices have been undermined by corporate or government policies, even where we know that the practice is better than the policy, and even when, as with pest control and chemical fertiliser, the mandated practice is demonstrably dangerous.

Unlike Upton Sinclair's, *The Jungle,* which directly changed laws in the U.S.A. covering slaughterhouses, it is unlikely that the utopias I have discussed have themselves made a difference, but they reflected an emerging concern with food that has developed dramatically during the period in which they were published, and frequently changed in ways that the utopias advocated. Therefore, I think it is fair to say that they contributed to positive change and, particularly in the world we now inhabit, we need more positive utopias to continue to do just that.

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Notes

1. See, for example, (Brenton 1606); (A.M., David Everett 1799); (A.M., H Peckwater 1881); (Baker 1936); (Wellock 1943); (Roy1972); and (Hydrick, Richard E. 2013).
2. Originally published serially as "Looking Forward, or Life Among the Lowly. A Tale of the Times" in *The Kansas Commoner* (1889). Also published as *The Graftons; or, Looking Forward. A Story of Pioneer Life* (1893).
3. The Land Institute is a research, education, and policy nonprofit organisation that has developed what they call an intermediate perennial wheat grass that currently lasts two to three years rather than the current one-year standard.
4. Wes Jackson, "Outside the Solar Village: One Utopian Farm." Illus. In his *New Roots for Agriculture* (San Francisco, CA: Friends of the Earth Published in Cooperative with The Land Institute, Salina, Kansas, 1980). Rev. in new ed. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1985.
5. See Eichenlaub, Anthony W. (2018), "The Soil Merchant", in *Little Blue Marble 2018: Stories of Our Changing Climate*, ed. Katrina Archer, Np, Ganache Media epub, originally published online in *Little Blue Marble*, eBook.
6. See Brockhouse, H. (1905), *Hopetown. An industrial town, as it is, and as it might be*, West Bromwich, Eng, J.B. Round.
7. See *Looking Landwards: Stories Commemorating the 75th Anniversary of the Institute of Agricultural Engineers* (2013), ed. Ian Whates. [Weston], Eng. NewCon Press in Association with The Institute of Agricultural Engineers.
8. See, for example, (Craig 1898:184); (Wellman 1898: 258, 274-79); (Murphy 1894: 115); (Gilman 1913: 171); (Macnie 1883: 88).
9. The same method is used in (Wellman 1898: 273).
10. See (Seabrook 2019: 48-57) on the development of a robot designed to pick strawberries.
11. See (Agricola 1908: 128-140); (Chambless 1910: 98); and (Gernsback 2000: 127).
12. For a study of cooperative housekeeping in the U.S., see (Hayden: 1982).
13. See (Mayo 1849: 461); (Richardson 1876: 42).
14. Repeated in (Stump 1913:179).
15. For the exquisitely tasting liquids, see (Crawford 1894: 179-81). In (Clough 1923: 19) refers to liquid food without mentioning its taste. (Bird 1899: 184) refers to pellet food but later says that a range of food will be available (217-24). In (Bowman 1887: 30) some food will come as liquids and others as pellets. (Lehrburger 1957: 32) refers to tablet food.
16. One popular health campaigner, Horace Fletcher (1849-1919), known as the "The Great Masticator," argued that all food should be chewed one hundred times before swallowing. See his *Fletcherism: What It Is and How I Became Young at Sixty* (1913), New York, Frederick A. Stokes.
17. See, for example, (Bellamy 1967: 183); and Fry (1905: 171-72).
18. In (Aldiss 1979: 10), he says that the people's "rapport with the animal kingdom was so close that they hesitated to slaughter anything for fear of the pain it brought them". Originally published in *Cosmos Science Fiction and Fantasy Magazine* 1.3 (September 1977): 48-50.
19. Originally published serially in *Agnostic Journal and Eclectic Review* (1904).
20. In (Rogers 1905: 22), it is said that "We eat no fish, meat, or anything that has animal life."
21. See, for example, (Beresford 1941: 126).
22. See (Worley 1890: 92).
23. (Olerich 1893: 85) and (Fowler and Fowler 1921: 49) ban all four. (Fitzporter 1891: 10, 19**)** bans coffee, and tea and intoxicants. (Griffith 1836: 81) and (Peck 1900: 146) ban alcohol and tobacco. (Tuckwell 1885: 10), (Boring 1896: 9) and (Rogers 1905: 50-51) ban alcohol.
24. See, for example, (Richardson 1925: 35); (Herrick 1933: 24); (Kearney 1945:73).
25. See, for example, (Mackmurdo 1944: 6).
26. Others stressing the social pleasures of dining are (*Etymonia* 1875:197); (Russell 1893:30-33); and (Howells 1894: 197).
27. See (Rogers 1905: 29); and (Lehrburger 1957: 27).
28. Others saying the same thing include (Craig 1898: 184); (Mayo 1849: 460-61); (Richardson 1925: 42); (Thomson 1894: 33); (Edgar Chambless 1910: 159); (Murphy 1894: 31); (Berwick 1890: 571); and (Gilman 1915:184).
29. See (Penniman 2019: 10-18).
30. Leah Penniman (2018), *Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land*, White River Junction, VT, Chelsea Green Publishing.

What Will We Eat? Food as Signifier in the Projection of Futurities in Climate Change Fiction

Teresa Botelho

Introduction

When the draft Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change special report on climate change and land use came to the attention of public opinion, in the summer of 2019[1] it presented the world community with a clear choice – introduce substantial changes to the current protocols of food production and land management, with a direct impact on consumption, or face the impossibility of keeping global warming within the boundaries of minimal sustainability.

Pointing out that more than 70% of the global ice-free land surface is already used to supply food and other vital resources to the current 7.7 billion humans, a number that is likely to rise to 10 billion in 2050 and more than 11 billion in 2100, according to recent United Nations estimates,[2] the report describes how intensive industrialised agriculture and livestock breeding,[3] deforestation, and the removal of peatlands have increased soil erosion, desertification and raised methane emissions to very dangerous levels, diminishing the capacity of the land to perform its carbon-sink function, and threatening food security for large sections of the world's population.

These predictions and the mitigative recommendations of the report[4] have imposed on the public debate questions which literary exercises of anticipatory imagination of risk have frequently scrutinised, when, extrapolating from present tendencies, they invoke the indispensable human needs for nourishment to call attention to the cultural implications of food production and consumption that function as evidentiary signs of alternative or possible future horizons.

In these imagined landscapes to come, foodways have been used as symbolic tools to represent loss of or threat to what is perceived to be the natural order and to pinpoint the challenges to human inventiveness and empathy created by the collapse of environmental sustainability, confirming Jean Retzinger's insight that food "not only signifies the needs of the individual biological body and the grammar of a particular society and culture", but also our fundamental connection with the environment "and simultaneously our indebtedness to science and technology" (2008: 371).

This chapter examines the literary history of these productive metaphors, identifying thematic choices and creative strategies in a corpus of twentieth/twenty-first century American

fiction that mobilise them as markers of anxiety about a future depleted world. This analysis is grounded on a discussion of the creative dilemmas of fiction which addresses the consequences of the present (and future) climate crisis directly, using projections that have been proven to be not merely possible, but probable. It will then examine parallel strands in the depiction of food scarcity and control, represented by narratives where climate changes constitute the background for other associated crises, from the nightmarish landscapes of Harry Harrison's demo-dystopia *Make Room, Make Room* (1966) to the post- petroleum "bio-punk" visions of corporate domination of food production in Paolo Bacigalupi's "The Calorie Man" (2008). Finally it will examine how texts that place climate crisis at the very centre of their dystopian scenarios grounded on the threats of extreme drought and extreme flooding caused by sea level rises – Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife* (2015) and Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140* (2017) – construct alternative human and social responses to the threat to vital water and food resources, ranging from survivalist, self-defeating resignation and despair to imaginative cooperation that allows not only survival but an unexpected utopian resilience and reinvention.

1. Fiction and the climate crisis

The Great Derangement, Amitav Ghosh's influential contribution to the global conversation on the many entanglements of climate change, has become an almost inevitable starting point for any discussion of the fictional imagination of global warming. Asserting that "the climate crisis is also a crisis of culture and thus of the imagination" (Ghosh 2016: 9), he dedicates most the first section of his three part essay to the scrutiny of what he perceives to be the creative failure of mainstream literature to address a concern that, in the face of its urgency "should be the principal preoccupation of writers the world over" but, in his view, is not (*idem*: 8). Asking why climate change "casts a much smaller shadow within the landscape of literary fiction than it does […] in the public arena" (*idem*: 7), he suggests that this absence has to do with the "uncanny effects of the Anthropocene" which are "too powerful, too grotesque, too dangerous, too accusatory," pointing to the intimacy of our relationship with the nonhuman (*idem*: 66, 32), and imposing on writers a vision of the improbable which "the modern novel has never been forced to confront," radically centred as it is on the human and the self (*idem*: 23). Arguing that "the calculus of probability that is deployed within the imaginary world of a novel is not the same as that which obtains outside it", he concludes that depicting "improbables" such as flash floods, persistent droughts spells of unprecedented heat or sea-level rise rendering cities such as Kolkata, New York and Bangkok uninhabitable in a novel, "courts eviction from the mansion in which serious fiction has long been in residence", and risks "banishment to the humble dwellings that surround the manor house – those generic hothouses [...] that have come to be called 'fantasy', horror' and of science fiction" (*idem*: 24).

The questionable implicit disdain for non-realist modes, which reflects public perception rather than any literary-grounded fixed hierarchy, is not the point of his argument, but rather the puzzling concept of "improbables" that Ghosh uses to signify visible consequences of climate change. A significant corpus of recent mainstream fiction that puts global warming in the foreground of the narrative – from Ghosh's own 2004 *Hungry Tide*, to the widely acclaimed and discussed *Flight Behaviour*, by Barbara Kingsolver – is hardly risking "eviction from the manor house" in their descriptions of its uncanny effects. On the other hand, as Ghosh has recently shown with the publication of *Gun Island*, his most recent novel, the weird seems to be losing its distinctiveness. In an interview with Amy Brady, he admits that some of the "improbable events" he has written about in his books have actually happened, from the storm surge in the Sundarbans[5] he describes in *Hungry Tide*, to the hailstorms and subsequent appearance of poisonous spiders he describes in *Gun Island* (Brady 2019).

This normalisation of the uncanny notwithstanding, the concept of "improbable" may be read as pointing to literary tales of the catastrophic climate collapse that devastates the planet or to the kind of post-apocalyptic imaginary where speculation and extrapolation intersect, present in some dystopian narratives such as Margaret Atwood's biological nightmare in the *MaddAddam* books (2003-2013)[6] or Jeff VanderMeer's new weird metaphors in the *Southern Reach Trilogy* (2014),[7] grounded on a speculative rather than on a cautionary rhetoric.

But while Ghosh highlights the difficulties of finding a space for scenarios of catastrophic futures (or presents) in literary discourses that require allegiance to the perceived real, a parallel dilemma haunts most fiction that addresses the anthropogenic climate crisis, dependent on projected reader responses.

Frederick Buell argues, in *From Apocalypse to Way of Life*, that the imagination of catastrophe in narratives that foregrounded extreme ecological and social meltdowns, to which the epithet of "improbable" might be tagged and the "depiction of the environmental crisis as something both all-encompassing and fearfully intimate", may fuel not a call to action on the part of the readers, but the "suspicion that nature and the natural human body are a lost cause" translated in the popularity of a "variety of bizarre fantasies of escape both from earthly ecosystems and from human flesh" (142).

The inevitable implication of this reading of literary texts as parables or metaphors of the anthropogenic global crisis is that they are also part of a public discourse; this is to evaluate them in terms of an implicit communication strategy which, Sarah De Weerdt summarises,[8] remains divided, weighing whether "doom-and-gloom messages scare people into action, or cause them to give up" and if emphasising hope puts "people in a can-do frame of mind, or reduce their sense of urgency?" (De Weerdt 2019). David Wallace-Wells, asking the same questions, namely whether "hope" can be more motivating than "fear", cites a number of scientific and academic studies, namely those surveyed by a paper published in 2017 in *Nature*[9] to conclude that there is no single way to "best tell the story of climate change, no single rhetorical approach likely to work on a given audience, and none too dangerous to try" (Wallace-Wells 2019: 157).

The obvious assertion that literature, unlike public or political discourses is not restricted by the demands of "responsible story telling" (*ibidem*), does not erase its effect as, to quote Laurence Buell, an act of environmental imagination, that potentially registers and energises the readers' engagement with the world, in particular by connecting them "vicariously with other's experiences", by directing "thought towards alternative futures" and by affecting their "caring for

the physical world: making it feel more or less precious or endangered or disposable" (Buell 2003: 1-2). Therefore, a more productive way to read a significant corpus of climate change inspired literature beyond the simpler classifications of "uncanny improbable catastrophe", "fatalist escapism" or "constructive optimism" might be to see it, as Ulrick Beck suggests, in terms of its capacity to project an awareness of risk.

In *The World at Risk*, Beck defines this concept as "a perceptual and cognitive schema according to which a society mobilises itself when confronted with the openness, uncertainty and obstruction of a self-created future" (Beck 2009: 4); in other words, not the paralysing certainty of catastrophe, but its anticipation (*idem*: 4).

Embracing this framework, as Meyer and von Mosser argue in their study *The Anticipation of Catastrophe: Environmental Risk in North American Literature and Culture*, allows fictionalised scenarios of climate crisis to be seen as privileged sites for exploring the individualised impacts of the perceived risks, since, unlike scientific texts, these works of the imagination can foreground a multiplicity of dimensions, from the cultural, social and political to the psychological, "engaging readers imaginatively, intellectually and emotionally through storytelling" (Meyer 2014:12).

It is this juxtaposition of the anticipatory and the cautionary that explains why narratives of disruption of the link between humans and food, their most basic need and as Atkinson argues, "a bridging substance between nature and culture, the human and the natural, the outside and the inside" (Atkinson 1983: 11), are so appealing and effective in mobilising reader's imagination of plausible webs of environmental risk. That is the case of *Make Room! Make Room*! and "The Calorie Man" whose dystopian landscapes establish an imaginative engagement with the anxieties and public debates of their times.

2. Food in Exhausted Earths

Written in 1966, *Make Room! Make Room!* reflects Malthusian concerns that had become prevalent in the post WWII public discourses, which saw in demographic trends of unprecedented population growth[10] a source of concern that demanded action, in contrast with previous anxieties over low birth rates in the 1930s and '40s. Like other *Demo-dystopias*, to use Andreu Domingo's appellation for literary works which adapted the classical dystopian tropes to the new demographic landscapes[11] (Domigo 2008: 729), the novel responds to anxieties of overpopulation, in line with the ruined futures forecast by biologists like Paul R. Ehrlich, whose hugely influential *Population Bomb* (1968) depicted the acceleration of population growth as a global catastrophe, heralding famines and societal collapses.

The urgency of the crisis outlined by Ehrlich was shadowed by environmentalist despair, since he considered that "appeals to nature's beauty", or pleas "for mercy for what may well be our only living companions on a vast universe" were likely to fail to move an apathetic majority of the world's population into action (Ehrlich 1995: 44). Alternatively, presenting a vision of coming doom directly affecting humans, translated in drastic famines, which he predicted would assail parts of the world as early as the 1970s would be more likely to have the desired effect. Aware of the power of storytelling to push the imagination into action, he called for "novels or plays emphasizing near future worlds in which famine or plagues are changing the very nature of mankind and his society" (*idem*: 175), and that is exactly what Harry Harrison's novel attempts to do.

The novel (for which Ehrlich wrote the prologue), is set in New York at the end of the twentieth century, and depicts a world already drastically affected by climate change, in the form of storms, floods, long-term droughts, crops poisoned by pesticides, and thoroughly exhausted by the demands to feed a population of 7 billion humans.

The plot, formally invoking the tropes of a crime novel (Andy, one of the main characters is a police detective and the inciting incident is a killing he investigates), presents a metropolis where 35 million humans struggle for survival, packed tight in tiny spaces provided by crowded buildings resembling the turn of the century downtown tenements, competing with the farming hinterland for vital resources in a country described as "one big farm and one big appetite" (142). Farmers, desperate for water after drastic shortages in California and the Dust Bowl states[12] destroy pipes that take it to the city to save the few grain crops that still grow, thus depleting the reserves destined for their urban fellow citizens, who, for their part, are dependent on the protein components farmers produce to make up the ersatz foods that keep them alive. Most of the narrative is constructed around food and the economic hierarchies and conflicts that it sustains. For most citizens the daily diet consists exclusively of oatmeal crackers, coloured with different varieties of seaweed but all with next to no flavour, bought on street markets in once elegant elite areas like Gramercy Park. Welfare Stations distribute these crackers to the very poor, as well as water which for most New Yorkers has to be bought and carried home. Occasionally, the better-off may feast on a rare meal of soylent, a composite of soybeans and lentils but which more often than not is only a concoction of recycled motor oil, plankton, white blubber and algae, so expensive that when one of the characters buys three small burgers made of the substance, her house companions complain that her extravagance will mean "that we don't eat for the rest of the month" (150). For the very rich, very corrupt or very criminal, clandestine "meateasies" may provide black market meat such as "a good leg of dog" (43) or very expensive flour, enough for a modest bowl of pasta (61).

This precarious social order, which provides the occasional luxury for those able to afford it – the text describes, for example, a bar announcing "BEER TODAY -2p.m." and we are told that a queue of eager customers had formed since the early morning (39) – turns into violent disorder when an attack on the water supply leads to a radical rationing of water and food, as New Yorkers, led by the Elders, an activist group made up of older people who remember the taste of real coffee and real food, suspect there is a conspiracy to hoard food and keep it away from the starving. It is through the voice of the elderly that the didactic message of the novel comes through, mostly through Sal, an old man who shares a room with Andy and is the carrier of memories of how things used to be, mixing the regret that conservationists "who kept telling us that we should change our ways or our resources would soon be gone" were not heard, with the rejection of laws that made birth control illegal and "that made it a crime for even doctors to talk about contraception" (196). His anger against the paralysis that brought the world to that

point of misery, is summarised by his bitter conclusion: "One time we had the whole world in our hands, but we ate it, and burned it, and it's gone now" (196).

The science of artificial food production, which had looked so hopeful in the late nineteenth century utopias,[13] is presented here as ineffectual; its main achievement in the novel seems to be the production of "ener-G", a tasteless supplement derived from plankton, supposedly containing vitamins, minerals, proteins and carbohydrates (77). This impotence of science to make something out of almost nothing gains a gothic overtone in the novel's film adaptation in the early 1970s, as *Soylent Green* reveals a brutal reality the novel never pursued – the fact that the oceans no longer produced the plankton from which Soylent Green was partially made, and that it had been replaced by the only available supply of protein matching its composition, human remains, the gruesome conclusion summarized in the film's famous last line "Soylent Green is people!"

If *Make Room! Make Room!* responded to anxieties about an earth exhausted by both environmental neglect and population explosion, in Paolo Bacigalupi's "The Calorie Man," published in *Pump Six and Other Stories*, variously labelled as an agri-punk or bio-punk[14] text, sketches the world that he would further develop in the novel *The Windup Girl* (2009), mobilising the reader's critical imagination to contemplate a dystopian future extrapolated from two parallel concerns of the twenty first century – the collapse of fossil fuel resources before the full establishment of alternative energies, predicted by peak oil discourses, and the investment of corporate interests in genetically modified seed patenting.

Peak oil, understood as "the moment when the world will achieve its maximum rate of all extraction" (Heinberg 2007:1), after which it will necessarily dwindle, is used in the narrative as sign of human incapacity to resist what Rob Nixon describes as "those twinned calamities of squandered time: oil's receding tides and the advancing tides of climate change, sped on by our brief, rapacious age of hydrocarbon extraction and combustion" (Nixon 2011: 102). The short novella is set in the post-petroleum age of *Contraction* that emerged after the world-wide collapse of fossil fuel energy production that had sustained the era of *Expansion*. In this depleted world most markers of the contemporary have vanished, made impossible by the scarcity of energy that is now physically produced, mostly by genetically modified work animals such as *mulies* and *megadonts*, working incessantly on treadmills to produce kinetic energy stored in "kink springs", a new type of battery. In this projected future of diminished humanity, energy production had returned, as Lars Schmeink points out, to a pre-Anthropocene age, depending on muscles and on the calories needed to sustain them (2016: 79). This unending need is sustained by new hypercapitalist formations in the shape of Calorie Companies like *AgriGen*, *HiGro* and *PureCal* which assume the roles of the now extinct fossil fuel empires, dominating both the energy market and the systems of food production through the imposition of their own patented seeds.

Their absolute power comes from a successful business strategy that mirrors the one used by some contemporary agro-businesses – first they created plagues and pests like weevils and leafcurl that devastated unpatented traditional crops, then they sold their own disease resistant strains of the same plant. As all human life depends on these patent-protected mono-cultures, which have become both food and energy (without eating them the animals that generate kinetic energy cannot work), these companies control in fact all aspects of human life, unchecked by any semblance of functioning governments, protected by the ubiquitous *Intellectual Property* private police corps (IPs) with the power to inspect anyone and to destroy all vestiges of unpatented, and therefore illegal, crops.

Lalji, the Indian protagonist now living in the United States, sailing up and down the Mississippi, working as a seller of Expansion era artefacts that calorie company executives like to exhibit in their offices – items like paper cups or computer monitors – recalls the devastation created by the company-induced plagues, when "the genehack weevil came" and "the soil turned into alcohol", "before U-Tex and HiGro and the rest all showed up so conveniently" and "sat behind their fences and guards waiting for people with the money to buy" their resistant seeds (Bacigalupi 2008: 102-103), and also the brutal realisation that they were one-crop-only, sterile strains that would not propagate:

> He remembered planting. Squatting with his father in desert heat, yellow dust all around them, burying the seeds they had stored away, saved when they might have been eaten [...] his father smiling, saying, "These seeds will make hundreds of new seeds and then we will eat well [...] He sat every night [...] watching the seed rows, waiting, watering, praying [...] until his father shook his head and said it was no use [...] and dug up the seeds one by one and found them decomposed, tiny corpses in his hand, rotted. As dead in his palm as the day he and his father has planted them (112).

Unlike *Make Room! Make Room*! which can be read as a critical dystopia in the sense that it places a residue of hope extra-diegetically, in the relationship between the text and the reader, who it tries to move into a state of awareness, "The Calorie Man" enacts it in the very fabric of the text, in the shape of a planned act of bio-sabotage of the calorie companies' extortionary practices, designed by Charles Bowman, a genetic engineer hunted by the intellectual property police, who Lalji agrees to hide and transport in his boat.

Using his scientific skills to develop quasi heirloom plants, unpatented and fecund, Bowman intends to stop the "genetic dead-end", "the one-way street" caused by the Calorie Companies, that forces the world to pay "for a privilege that nature once provided willingly, for just a little labor" (114), by dropping the "bastardizing pollens" of these free strains in the midst of the oceans of SoyPro and HiGro crops, contaminating them with fertility, and then let the unsuspecting companies deliver to the world seeds that are no longer the "locked boxes" they once were but were instead "fat with breeding potential" (115). "Imagine", Bowman asks Lalji, all these seeds "unbelievably fecund, ripe, fat with breeding potential", resistant to the company-created plagues, with a high calorie content, "distributed across the world by the very cuckolds who have clutched them so tightly, all of these seeds lusting to produce their own fine offspring, full of the same pollen that polluted the crown jewels in the first place" (*idem*).

In the end, the IP men kill Bowman, but his "beautiful infection" that could free the world from the stronghold of the calorie companies is still available to Lalji, who had unknowingly been carrying Bowman's seed bank in his boat, and who intends to complete the plan, his mind fixated on the hopes of a father praying for hundreds of seeds that the soil never fertilised.

"The Calorie Man" (not unlike *Make Room! Make Room!)* is evidence of a deliberate creative choice to treat climate change as a backdrop for other intimately related but less scrutinised risks, in this case those related to resource level questions less present in scarcity fiction, be they energy or food, but its cautionary power derives mostly from its undisguised targeting of the predatory behaviour of the agrochemical giants which already control much of the seed market with their patented strains (the four[15] most powerful global multinationals, including Monsanto, already dominate 60% of the trade (Barber 2019: 13, 15). The court cases pending in the United States against Monsanto, brought by farmers whose unpatented crops have been destroyed by the weed killer chemicals matched with the company's patented seeds used by their neighbours, show how events in the present can be so easily extrapolated to such very possible and probable futures.

That is also the case of the two novels that are discussed next. They push climate change from the background to the centre of their plots, imagining the cultural grammar and social responses to two of its most egregious risks – extreme drought and extreme flooding.

3. Surviving, losing and finding hope

The scenarios of climate crisis discussed in Paolo Bacigalupi's *The Water Knife* (2015) and Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140* (2017) confront readers directly with two dystopian scenarios – a desiccated ravaged American Southwest and a drowned Metropolis can be read as bookending responses to the challenges of climate catastrophe, ranging from resignation and despair when lack of access to water implies the collapse of any sense of civic coexistence, to imaginative cooperation, when citizens envisage strategies for survival and food production and consumption that allow not only endurance but a kind of reinvention.

The *Water Knife* draws, in sharp images, a devastating possible future of an America without water security resulting from climate change, but also from the control of the dwindling resources by private companies, the new robber barons of the late twenty-first century which have jurisdiction over the Colorado River. This fictional premise is sustained by a real agreement, *The Colorado River Compact*, signed in 1922 by seven states,[16] which allocated the lower basin allotments and water rights each states would have access to in a way some states found unfair.

In the novel, the landscape of the Southwest is a new Dust Bowl, with temperatures reaching 50 degrees Celsius, where people do not venture out without goggles and masks, where cities like Phoenix barely cling to life, surrounded by ghost towns that were once prosperous suburbs but which have become worthless to anybody but squatters since the water supplies were shut off, and where "desiccated" refugees from Texas, and other desperate states, wander, stinking "of fear and stale sweat that had moistened and dried" and "of one another from lying crammed together in the plywood ghettos that they'd packed in, closer to wherever the Red Cross had spiked relief pumps into the ground" (39).

Here, water wars are also business wars, in which companies such as the Las Vegas based *South Nevada Water Authority*, decide who survives and who does not, based on their business calculations and on their fierce competition with other similar companies from other states, especially California, the richest of the Compact members.

"Water-knifing", as we understand from the first pages of the novel, refers to the practice of "cutting off the water" from communities in conflicts about jurisdiction and control of the river and local aquifers. The novel begins with one such operation, when we follow Angel Velazquez, a water-knife working for the South Nevada Water Company headed by Catherine Case, "the queen of the Colorado," as he blows up a rival water processing plant in the city of Carver. This is a night operation before the courts reopen and re-establish the local rights to their share of the Colorado water, condemning all who live there to an impossible future where the choices are death by thirst and starvation or an escape that will render them refugees in their own country.

The federal government offers no relief against this savage form of capitalism, having been rendered ineffectual by the crisis and by corporate influence, and the very notion of a Federal state with freedom of circulation has collapsed. The Western states have formed their own militias to protect their borders – Nevada, which controls much of the water sources has its volunteers with names like the South Border Marauders, or Desert Dogs (79) – and with their help shut their borders against the desperate internal refugees, deprecatorily referred to as Zoners, if they are from Arizona, Merry Perries, if they are from Texas.[17] Under pressure from Eastern States to repress the actions of these militias, the inept Western state governments occasionally parade "theatrical arrests in front of the cameras", but as soon as the cameras go dark, "the cuffs come off" and the patrols resume (80). This practice is also commonly used by the rich State of California the place most refugees risk their lives to reach, unable to even dream of the northern states or Canada, the promised lands where it still rains.

In this dystopian, possible future, water and access to it structure every aspect of life, magnifying economic and social imbalances, placing geography at the heart of the calculation of who survives and who loses everything. Those with substantial means have moved indoors into arcologies, many of them built and maintained by the very companies that hold water rights. Their exceptionality is summarised by this recognition – "outside, there was only desert and death. But inside, surrounded by jungle greenery and koi ponds, there was life" (50).

In these vast self-contained sealed biodomes that use natural symbiotic processes to recirculate water with great efficiency, an elite known as the Fivers (those with five digit arcology addresses) live and work, thanks to the filtered, recycled and plentiful water taken from the Colorado River to which they have unique access. These arcologies have fountains and vertical farms that provide abundant fresh food to serve their several thousand residential units whose dwellers never need go outside, and who live in comfort, insulated not just from the effects of climate change, but from the violence that sustains their security.

Those who are left outside, live like the young Texan refugee Maria Villarosa, displaced and torn from the middle class of her birth, surviving by her wits in the dangerous criminal fringes of the decaying society, in a vortex of poverty, prostitution and violence, trying to find a way to pay people smugglers to take her to the north where the rain still falls. For her, as for millions of others, fresh food – but especially water – is something you are ready to sacrifice almost everything to buy from local Red Cross pumping stations. For Maria it will eventually become a possible source of income when she figures out how to get it for less than its usual price so she can sell it by cups and mugs to industrial workers, for a small profit. This is how water is measured, for most drought refugees, in cups and mugs.

The nightmarish narrative of the *Water Knife* offers several perspectives on the social and personal effects of the drought, as it is told from the point of view of three characters, Angel, the former corporate enforcer, Maria the refugee, and Lucy Monroe, an East Coast journalist. She is known for her work in "collapse porn" – that is, the voyeuristic documentation of the decay of the Southwest – who initially positioned as a detached observer gets emotionally involved with the fate of the people of Phoenix. The plot eventually assumes the tropes of a thriller, when all three characters find themselves involved in the search for a new water source, but two features of the narrative that engage both the discourses of the environmental crisis and the dystopian imagination are of particular relevance.

First, unlike in most climate fiction, notably in Bacigalupi's "The Calorie Man" and *The Windup Girl*, the causes of the disaster are projected, at least by its characters as intensely localised, grounded on a historicised desire to counter nature, followed by an irresponsible inability to understand the limits of that gesture. Looking at the desperate dry lands Angel, who likes the desert "for its lack of illusions" says of places like Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas that they

> had thrown on the garments of fertility for a century, pretending to greenery and growth as they mined glacial water from ten-thousand-year-old aquifers, playing dress-up in green and pretending it could last forever […]. They'd pumped up the Ice Age and spread it across the land and for a while they turned their dry lands lush. Cotton, wheat, corn, soybeans – vast green acreages, all because someone could get a pump going. Those places had dreamt of being different from what they were. They'd had aspirations. And then the water ran out (78).

And, voicing an insight that resonates with contemporary debates about the urgency of change if we are to protect our climate in the future, another character concludes: "We knew it was all going to go to hell and we just stood by and watched it happen anyway. There ought to be a prize for that kind of stupidity" (29).

A second and perhaps more vital point is, as Sheryl Vint observes in a review of the novel, the fact that the narrative functions not only in a cautionary mode by asking "if this world of water wars is a destination we desire", but also as an investigation of the psychology of disaster, asking readers to ponder "what kinds of people we might become if we continue down that road" (Vint 2015) and it is here that the novel is truly dystopian (or perhaps realistic). If there are no caricatured villains, and no larger-than-life generous heroes, as Vint points out, there is also no sense of resistance, of solidarity, of community, no capacity to think of a way to live slightly better. As Lucy, the journalist muses, "when people lose hope, they sometimes lose their humanity too" and then "desperate people become avatars of unexpected tragedy" (155). For her, but especially for Angel, the depleted world they experience matches the findings of the Stanford prison experiment they discuss: "you give people something to do and that's what they are […] Put them on the border, tell them to keep the refugees out, they turn into a border militia. Put them on the other side – they beg for mercy and get themselves scalped" (191). Readers will look in vain for a grand gesture of selflessness, of true collective cooperation and rebellious resistance. In this scenario of radical environmental, social and psychological disharmonies, marked by completion for the bare necessities of food and water, there are no whispers of hope within the narrative, signalling that the risk that this kind of drastic climate upset may destroy not only the economic and social networks upon which we depend, but our very own sense of ethical compass.

In contrast, this kind of emotional paralysis before environmental loss is singularly absent in Kim Stanley Robinson's *New York 2140.* Where *Water Knife* takes us to a very near future, Robinson's novel sends us to distant underwater downtown New York, after a "second pulse" of catastrophic climate-change-driven rises in sea level. After the first decade-long pulse in the 2050s when the water had risen by about three meters and humanity had finally begun assessing the seriousness of the risks hovering over them. Though some argued that "it was too late" and that "having torched the world" humanity might as well go with the flow, ride the wave, enjoy the last efflorescence of civilization and stop trying to fix things", all were shaken by "the food panic of 2079" when, as the narrator explains

> hunger, famine and death gave everyone, and this time everyone, the rude awareness that even food, that necessity that so many had assumed had been a problem solved or even whipped by the wonders of modern agriculture, was something that was made uncertain by the circumstances thrust on them by climate change, among other anthropogenic hammerings on the planet (377).

Governments refocused attention on agriculture and on cutting dependence on fossil fuel, and "people stopped burning carbon much faster than they thought they could" (139), but "despite 'changing everything' and decarbonizing as fast as they should have fifty years earlier" (*idem*) attempting to cope with the great economic depression that ensued, they were too late to prevent a second disaster, at the beginning of the twenty-second century, when the waters rose a further 15 meters. We are told by the nameless narrator known as "the citizen," who functions as the conveyor of background facts, that this Second Pulse "thrashed all the coastlines of the world, causing a refugee crisis rated at ten thousand Katrinas" (144). As one eighth of the world's population living near coastlines were engaged in food related activities, from fishing to aquaculture and agriculture, one third of humanity's food was directly impacted. The newly drowned world's coastlines, were

"at first abandoned, then quickly reoccupied by desperate scavengers and squatters [...] the water rats as they were called" (145), although basic services like electricity, water, sewage and police were paralysed. But, as "the citizen" tells us "history is humankind trying to get a grip" though, as she/he sardonically adds, it would have gone better, if we had "paid a little more attention to certain details, like for instance our planet" (*idem*). Still, a lot of infrastructure survived in devastated places, where the "water rats" could try new experiments in "living wet" (*ibidem*).

That experiment had met with reasonable success in New York. Downtown, the "intertidal" zone had not been abandoned, and resilient citizens built a new kind of Venice both below and above the water. Each street had become a canal, every skyscraper an island, linked by sky bridges and boat taxis that allow people to move and commute. As "the citizen" explains, as the unimaginative escaped to Denver, the new financial centre of the country, the imaginative turned downtown into an experiment. As "hegemony had drowned", alternative words occupied the social vacuum with "a proliferation of cooperatives, neighbourhood associations, communes, squats, barter, alternative currencies, gift economies, solar usufruct, fishing village cultures, mondragons, unions". In parallel, a new wave of cultural innovation emerged, represented by concepts like "submarine technoculture," "art-not-work," "amphibiguity" that flourished, alongside "free open universities, free trade schools, and free art schools." "Lower Manhattan" the citizen explains, "became a veritable hotbed of theory and practice, like it always used to say it was, but this time for real" (209). "Possibly", he or she adds, "New York had never yet been this interesting" (210).

None of this resilience and inventiveness would exist without access to food, the most basic of necessities, and the main concern of all citizens, since, as a character comments "that's the real value, food in your belly. Because you can't eat money" (3). Because the story is told from the perspective of eight different characters all living in the same skyscraper, the MetLife Tower, their daily comings and goings illuminate the ways inventiveness and cooperation have been mobilised to turn that building, and most others in the area, into a kind of utopian community that provides its members with the precious food that has become more valuable than money, isolated as they are from most of the still operating farming areas of the country. Since the first 10 floors of the Tower were flooded and rendered inhabitable, the building dwellers had created a farm on the top floors of the open walled loggia from the 31st to the 35th floor, with planter boxes filled in the summer, when the narrative begins, with ready-to-pick crops – tomatoes and squash, beans, cucumbers and other vegetables. For those who still like their meat, the building ś animal floors also provide the occasional treat. The building which is more like an autonomous village has employees who are also residents; but taking care of the farm is a collective job, as is most of the eating, which is provided in the large common dining room in shifts compatible with the schedules and working hours of the members. This utopia of survival predicts nonetheless, private joys and autonomous moments. People who love to cook, who want to do it on their own, or with their own friends just have to put in some extra time taking care of the farm to claim the vegetables they have earned.

In contrast with the dystopian renderings of a New York plagued by food scarcity in *Make Room! Make Room*, and the cruel landscapes of the dry Southwest drawn by *Water Knife*, Kim Stanley Robinson's text harbours a kind of paradoxical ambiguity, somewhere between a chilling assessment of risk, in the perception that, as Gerry Canavan points out "climate change is in an intensifying feedback loop that we cannot really interrupt and cannot reverse, but can only contain, delay or prepare for" (2017), and the proposition that humanity will "get a grip" and will not let itself be reduced to the abject condition of total inhumanity. Whether the survival of utopian impulses in imagining attractive post-climate devastation futures diminishes the power of the narrative of environmental disruption, is the open question addressed by Frederick Buell and David Wallace-Wells in the first part of this discussion. Equally debatable is the quality of the risk the narrative projects, since, as Buell comments, referring to the old catastrophic narratives he decries, "old disasters age quickly" (Buell 2003: xvii). Others, however, have a way to return to public discourses under different frameworks. Such is the case of the demographic-related crisis predicted in the *Population Bomb*, as the IPPC report on land management demonstrates, since factoring in a population growth from the current 7 to 10 billion in 2050 and more than 11 billion in 2100 amplifies the risks and challenges humanity faces.

What might be unquestionable is the imaginative impact of anchoring narratives of future climate-related risks on the lived experiences of food shared by all humans, since scarcity, estrangement, access, texture and quality carry emotional implications that are easily relatable, working as signifiers of what we need, want to secure or want to prevent.

If we see climate fiction, in all its variations, as writing stories of possible futures, either just around the corner or more distant but not only possible but also "probable", then we need, as we contemplate uncertainty and risks, to be reminded that the unique link between our bodies and what daily sustains them is also a connection with a precarious natural world upon which they wholly depend.

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Notes

1. This special report produced for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, about greenhouse gas fluxes in land-based ecosystems, examines the issues of desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management and food security. It was requested by the Panel in 2016, together with two other reports, one which examines the impacts of global warming when temperature rises 1.5 °C above preindustrial levels (*Global Warming of 1.5 Special Report,* published in 2018) and the other dedicated to the impact of climate change on ocean, coastal, polar and mountain ecosystems (*Special Report on the Ocean and Cryosphere in a Changing Climate*, issued in 2018).
2. Estimates by the United Nations Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat published in *2019 Revision* of *World Population* Prospects https://population.un.org/wpp/.
3. Livestock now use 30 percent of the earth's entire land surface, including 33 percent of the global arable land, for producing feed such as soybeans.
4. These include a more sustainable model of land management, the restoration of peat lands a reduction of food waste and, perhaps more significantly, cutting down on meat consumption, necessary to reduce methane emissions.
5. The Sundarbans, covering around 10,000km^2, is a mangrove area in the delta formed by the confluence of Ganges, Brahmaputra and Meghna Rivers in the Bay of Bengal, regularly affected by micro- and macro-tidal cycles and by yearly submergence during the monsoon. Parts of the area are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites, as they provide habitat for 453 faunal wildlife species, including bird, fish, mammal, reptile and amphibian species. In 2007, the landfall of Cyclone Sidr damaged around 40% of the Sundarbans and in 2009 Cyclone Aila devastated the area again with massive casualties.
6. *Oryx and Crake* (2003), *The Year of the Flood* (2009) and *MaddAddam* (2013).
7. *Annihilation*, *Authority*, and *Acceptance* (2014)
8. The findings discussed are presented in Marlon J.R. et al (2019),"How Hope and Doubt Affect Climate Change Mobilization", Frontiers in Communication https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fcomm.2019.00020/full (last accessed 21 August 2019)
9. Daniel A. Chapman et al. (2017), "Reassessing Emotion in Climate Change Communication," *Nature Climate Change*, November, 850-852.
10. Both these trends emerged in fictionalised forms, as Lionel Shriver documents in her 2003 study "Population in Literature," which identifies three parallel fears – of population decline, of population excess, and also of population professionals who direct the course of demographic change.
11. Other notable examples would be Anthony Burgess's *The Wanting Seed*, 1962, John Brunner's *Stand on Zanzibar*, 1968, and Kurt Vonnegut's short story "Tomorrow, and Tomorrow and Tomorrow", published in *Welcome to the Monkey House*, 1968.
12. The area of Great Plains states affected in the 1930s, during the Great Depression, by severe droughts and sandstorms, covering around 400,000 km^2 from Texas and Oklahoma to sections of New Mexico, Colorado, and Kansas, which led to tens of thousands of small farmers losing their properties and livelihood.

13. See for example Arthur Bird's *Looking Forward: A Dream of the United States of the Americas,* (1899) or Mary E. Bradley Lane's *Mizora* (1889).
14. Bacigalupi states that he prefers the term *agripunk* to describe both "The Calorie Man" and the *Windup Girl*, to *biopunk*, which tends to refer to texts that explore negative aspects of biotechnology, explaining that while bioengineering is central to their plots, the thing he cares about are "seed corporations" (Bacigalupi, Interview with James Long, 2011).
15. Besides Monsanto, now acquired by Bayer, the three other giants are Corveta, BASF and ChemChina (Barber 2019: 13)
16. The seven states are Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming (which correspond to the Upper Division of the river basin) and Nevada, Arizona and California (the Lower Division). The Compact regulates the access to the river's resources and ensures, in principle, that the Upper Division states do not overuse them and deplete supply to the Lower Division states.
17. The term is a reference to Rick Perry, the former governor of Texas, who during the drought of 2011 asked Texans to pray for rain.

"Please, oh Snowman, what is toast?":

Memories and Nostalgia for Food in Margaret Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx* and *Crake*

Manuel J. Sousa Oliveira

"'Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past'", repeated Winston obediently.
George Orwell, *1984*

No sooner had the warm liquid, and the crumbs with it, touched my palate than a shudder ran through my whole body, and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary changes taking place […] And suddenly the memory returned. The taste was that of the little crumb of madeleine which on Sunday mornings at Combray, […] my aunt Leonie used to give me, dipping it first in her own cup of lime-flower tea.
Marcel Proust, qtd. in Belasco 2008

In Paul Auster's *In the Country of Last Things* (1987), famished characters engage in a sort of dreamlike conversation which, implicitly, corresponds to a nostalgia for plenty. The people in Auster's dystopian city "break off from what they are doing, sit down, and talk about the desires that have been welling up inside them"; they go on describing a meal in meticulous detail and by concentrating on the food travelling down their throats and arriving in their bellies (Auster 1987: 9) the power lent to reminiscence is enough to almost nourish them. A feature of food which appears to be present in several dystopian fictions is exactly this: food memories.

It seems almost inevitable that characters in dystopia, or rather the dystopian protagonists in a process of awareness, must be confronted with "the irrecoverable nature of the past" (Hutcheon & Valdés 1998: 19), which lends nostalgia its "emotional impact and appeal" (*idem*: 20). This dissatisfaction with the present makes them look back into a time when things were better – or, at least, not as bad. As Linda Hutcheon[1] has said, "the ideal that is *not* being lived now is projected into the past" (*ibidem*; emphasis in the original). However, the real question, I believe, lies in whether the dystopian protagonist can project the past into the future. Or, particularly relevant to my argument, if they can find the utopian function of their food memories.

This essay will consider the work of Margaret Atwood, whose preoccupation with food

and eating has been focused on by critics such as Emma Parker, Sarah Sceats, and Annette Lapointe. Given that Atwood has come to write multiple dystopian novels, one might expect that her imaginative preoccupations would also find themselves dealing with memory and nostalgia. In this essay, I will attempt to emphasise those uses of memory and nostalgia in *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) and *Oryx and Crake* (2003).

Even though it could be argued that memories of this sort could occur in any type of fiction, it is my contention that they serve a specific purpose in dystopian fiction. In many dystopias, in contrast with the utopias of plenty, it can often be seen that there is a food shortage and/or dietary restrictions. Thus, by having the characters engage in recollections not only of times gone by, but of the food of those times, dystopias open up the possibility of hope and engage in a mode of critical dystopianism. Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan have already noted that

> the process of taking control over the means of language, representation, *memory*, and interpellation is a crucial weapon and strategy in moving dystopian resistance from an initial consciousness to an action that leads to a climatic event that attempts to change the society. (2003: 6; my emphasis)

Moreover, Baccolini has further problematised the issue of memory in dystopian fiction, which will greatly benefit the present study. I propose to explore the memories of food from before the dystopian setting came about. As I will argue, memories of food will work within the concept of the critical dystopia, as articulated by Baccolini and Moylan,[2] as forms of resistance, survival, and horizons of hope. For this, I will borrow Baccolini's distinction between two different uses of memory: conservative (or anti-utopian) and progressive (or utopian)[3] (2005; 2007). Most important, I believe, is to understand how memory and food engage in a specific dialogue, and how their relation will be made clear if we consider the concept of critical nostalgia. As Baccolini explains, a critical nostalgia through being self-aware and reflective will acquire a social and ethical dimension in addition to the personal. Essentially, I argue that memories of food in their utopian function contribute to the definition of these two novels as critical dystopias – while I also suggest that this issue will be present across the critical mode of dystopianism. Or, as Baccolini would have put it, my ultimate aim will be to find utopia in dystopia (2007).

One might dare to claim that Atwood's first dystopian novel *The Handmaid's Tale* is also her most popular and most studied work. The story revolves around the handmaid Offred who has been forced into serving as a surrogate mother for the leaders of the Gileadean regime. One of the main justifications for the totalitarian practices and abuses of the Republic of Gilead is an ecological crisis which has both caused an upsurge of infertility rates, and a food shortage. Consequently, variety in nourishment is limited for all, but particularly for handmaids who are additionally under a very restricted diet of bland but healthy food (Atwood 1985: 78), and are not allowed to have liquor, coffee, tea, or cigarettes (*idem*: 22).[4]

As Baccolini affirms, "in a novel like Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, nostalgia is recovered as the desire for what could have been" (2007: 176 n13). Sarah Sceats argues that Offred's food

memories[5] have a potency which "may also be seen as that of appetite, of fundamental connection, something that propels resistance" (Sceats 2003: 112). Here a connection between desire and appetite seems ripe to be drawn. Baccolini explains that "it is desire for a change, for a better place, and a better life, that moves Utopia, and it is desire for a lost place and a lost time that informs nostalgia" (2007: 159). Seen through an added lens of food, this desire can be equated with the lost meals of the past, with a plentiful table, with a satisfied appetite, in contrast to the hunger inflicted by Gilead both literally and symbolically (Rubenstein 2001: 19).

It is Offred's desire and appetite for the past that often leads her to drift off into her memories; at one moment in particular she recalls "The good weather holds. It is almost like June, when we would get out our sundresses and our sandals and go for an ice-cream cone" (Atwood 1985: 53). Even though Offred is thrown back to a nostalgic idea of a summer day, this cannot be sustained when confronted by her harsh present. Hence, her next remark is that "There are three new bodies on the Wall" (*ibidem*). In this passage one can identify Linda Hutcheon's argument that "[t]he postmodern does indeed recall the past, but always with the kind of ironic double vision that acknowledges the final impossibility of indulging in nostalgia, even as it consciously evokes nostalgia's affective power" (Hutcheon & Valdés 1998: 23).

The power of food as nostalgia is also present through smell, which as Jon D. Holtzman has pointed out is a common element of sensory memories of food: "the sensuality of eating", he writes, "transmits powerful mnemonic cues, principally through smells and tastes" (Holtzman 2006: 373), and he adds that in individuals such as immigrants in a foreign country it evokes a longing for their "lost homeland" which "provides a temporary return to a time when their lives were not fragmented" (*idem*: 367). For the protagonists of critical dystopias, however, "the knowledge and the memory of their lives complete with the feelings, desires, and emotions attached to those lives (nostalgia) can represent a form of resistance and hope" (Baccolini 2007: 180). As Offred smells yeast she returns to her past life, to her lost home(land), if you wish:

> I walk around to the back door, open it, go in, set my basket down on the kitchen table. The table has been scrubbed off, cleared of flour; today's bread, freshly baked, is cooling on its rack. The kitchen smells of yeast, a nostalgic smell. It reminds me of other kitchens, kitchens that were mine. It smells of mothers; although my own mother did not make bread. It smells of me, in former times, when I was a mother. (Atwood 1985: 57-58)

However, she knows she must not fall into the trap of a conservative nostalgia and displays self-awareness by affirming that: "This is a treacherous smell, and I know I must shut it out" (*idem*: 58). As Rubenstein explains,

> The yeasty aroma of baking bread, one of the few pleasant smells in Gilead, also recalls comfortable kitchens and "mothers": both Offred's own mother and herself as a mother. Accordingly, it is a "treacherous smell" that she must resist in order not to be overwhelmed by loss. (Rubenstein 2001: 18)

The mother is here also seen in her relationship to food. In both *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* the mothers are dissident figures, and in neither case is the mother of the protagonist present in their lives after the dystopia. In the former, Offred's mother is a radical feminist, while in the latter, she is a former microbiologist turned environmental activist. Warren Belasco claims that childhood memories are very much associated with the mother, and particularly the mother as a figure who provides comfort and nurture. The earliest conscious experience of eating is traditionally that of a baby at the maternal breast. And later on, the traditional figure of the mother as the homemaker will be an object of nostalgia – as, for example, "the special foods for sick children […] may become the 'comfort food' of adulthood" (Belasco 2008: 28). In her painful yearning, Offred even wishes to turn Serena "into an older sister, a motherly figure, someone who would understand and protect [her]" (Atwood 1985: 23). Besides mothers, the invention of family meals also becomes an idealised moment of sharing and happiness. Ironically, Gilead also draws heavily on the nostalgia for mothers and families. Their perspective, however, is that of the regressive invented tradition as opposed to the critical nostalgia Offred displays. In this aspect, we can also see similarities with *Oryx and Crake*.

Despite Snowman's claims that "he needed to forget the past" (Atwood 2003: 406), this proves not to be possible as he is haunted by memories and even voices from his past life as Jimmy. His ambivalent relationship with the past can be exemplified by a dream:

> Jimmy's in the kitchen of the house they lived in when he was five, sitting at the table. It's lunchtime. In front of him on a plate is a round of bread – a flat peanut butter head with a gleaming jelly smile, raisins for teeth. This thing fills him with dread. Any minute now his mother will come into the room. But no, she won't: her chair is empty. She must have made his lunch and left it for him. But where has she gone, where is she? (*idem*: 311)

Not only can we see here a type of nostalgia which is deeply unsettling, closer to trauma than comfort, but the mother in her association with the meal seems to be the focal point of Jimmy's distress.

This second dystopian novel written by Margaret Atwood, *Oryx and Crake*, pays more explicit attention to the science and ecology issues already hinted at in *The Handmaid's Tale*.[6] Told by a third-person narrator, the story follows Jimmy/Snowman[7] around a post-apocalyptic landscape and makes use of Snowman's memories[8] to explain how it got to that point. Still, "utopian glimpses" (Mohr 2007: 18) abound in elements such as the open ending, the power of storytelling and the potential hope for humanity that the Crakers come to represent.

Oryx and Crake, it could be argued, is centrally about the decline of belief in progress and how humanity has been downgraded in favour of science. In this one can pinpoint the ultimate dystopia the novel wants to portray, which results in a worldwide plague to destroy humanity. Postmodern theorists have claimed that the Enlightenment belief in infinite progress through modern science (Habermas 1987: 4) has come under attack, and Lyotard, for instance, has claimed that technoscientific development can no longer be called progress, since it has started evolving independently of human

needs and no longer seems to answer them (Lyotard 1993: 48-49). Thus, the novel's "doubts about progress" (Hutcheon & Valdés 1998: 23), a feature of postmodernism as Linda Hutcheon argues, clarifies why nostalgia is important. In this context of food, the novel makes it clear that, if progress means artificial food, the good old days and their real food are simply better.

One of the main problems of transgenic science as raised by the novel are the pigoons and the ChickieNobs. The pigoons were created by the company OrganInc Farms where Jimmy's father works. Originally supposed to grow human-tissue organs for transplants, "[t]he pigoons blur uncomfortably with food" (Lapointe 2014: 139). Similarly, the ChickieNobs are chickens reduced to parts. Initially described as "a large bulblike object that seemed to be covered with stippled whitish-yellow skin" (Atwood 2003: 237), Crake explains to Jimmy that "'Those are chickens […] Chicken parts. Just the breasts, on this one. They've got ones that specialize in drumsticks too, twelve to a growth unit'" (*idem*: 238). Considering the utopian tradition, Lyman Tower Sargent notices how "food production, mostly as farming, is […] a significant concern, but a concern that obviously changes dramatically over time […] [and] recently the concerns have shifted to ecology and organic farming" (Sargent 2015: 20).

In *Oryx and Crake* the most curious imaginative treatment of nostalgia for food can be seen in this dichotomy between real food and transgenic food. Aline Ferreira comments on the "deep sense of nostalgia for what used to be unenhanced humanity and the putatively natural world, namely real flowers, *real food*, real, unpolluted air" (Ferreira 2006: 152; my emphasis). Throughout the novel the importance given to real food will be emphasised repeatedly, and it will contribute to a critique of scientific progress.

Understood through postmodern theory, this sort of food can be equated with Jean Baudrillard's simulations. Food such as the ChickieNobs is past the point of being real, it has become a laboratory simulation of what food should be. Artificial food sacrifices sustainable agro-farming production for convenience and mass-production; it sacrifices the sensory elements of food for the mere appearance of food and satisfaction of hunger. As a consequence, "[w]hen the real is no longer what is used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning" (Baudrillard 1993: 197). In other words, one cannot escape the desire for those authentic meals of an idealised past.

Concerning the specifics of meat, Jovian Parry is right in affirming that there is a nostalgia for real meat in *Oryx and Crake*, but the novel is far from taking a stand against vegetarianism or simply "a profound nostalgia for a simpler, better time that has since passed" (Parry 2009: 254). Instead, the novel becomes critical of its present situation by recalling, not just meat, but real food in general. This does not make *Oryx and Crake* regressive, it instead acknowledges that better ways of food production have existed, and by going back to that "past as imagined, as idealized through memory and desire", (Hutcheon & Valdés 1998: 20) Jimmy/Snowman can find through taste some sort of solace. Additionally, from a young age Jimmy has shown concern over animals being burned. In contrast to his father, who dismisses those animals as "steaks and sausages", Jimmy is troubled by their heads,

> Steaks didn't have heads. The heads made a difference: he thought he could see the animals looking at him reproachfully out of their burning eyes. In some way all of this – the bonfire, the charred smell, but most of all the lit-up, suffering animals – was his fault, because he'd done nothing to rescue them. (Atwood 2003: 20)

This passage could be seen as an appeal for a more humane treatment of animals. Through an ecofeminist approach, Lapointe rightly comments on the statement *Oryx and Crake* makes on a masculine techno-culture – as embodied by Crake – which has contributed to the demise of humanity.

A nostalgia for a pastoral ideal can be found here, since real food is never defined but is always contrasted with the genetically engineered sort. Thus, as Jimmy can see that the quality and sensory power of food are being replaced by cheaper simulations, this means, I believe, that some elements of a past natural world should be recovered, but not the past itself.

Another critical standpoint assumed by the novel is on who has access to this real food. The class divisions informed by the contrast between the Compounds and the pleeblands clarify how, despite the Compounds developing and producing transgenic food, they naturally prefer to eat real food while the former is restricted to feeding the poorer pleeblands.

The Crakers, on the other hand, designed to have a more harmonious relationship with their environment, such as being vegetarians, have no recollection of the past and at a certain point Snowman struggles to explain to them what toast is. In a passage that ends with an image parallel of Offred lying "on [her] single bed, flat, like a piece of toast" (Atwood 1985: 114), Snowman is presented as the last keeper of the past world's memories, with the double meaning of symbolic cannibalism and his certainty of being destroyed:

> "I was telling him", says Snowman, "that you ask too many questions". He holds his watch to his ear. "And he's telling me that if you don't stop doing that, you'll be toast".
> "Please, oh Snowman, what is toast?"
> Another error, Snowman thinks. He should avoid arcane metaphors. "Toast", he says, "is something very, very bad. It's so bad I can't even describe it. Now it's your bedtime. Go away".
> "What is toast?" says Snowman to himself, once they've run off. Toast is when you take a piece of bread – What is bread? Bread is when you take some flour – What is flour? (Atwood 2003: 112-13)

Snowman continues to imagine how the interaction would go until he finally realises the pointlessness of such an endeavour[9] and declares: "Toast is me. / I am toast" (*idem*: 113). Nevertheless, the Crakers also embody a nostalgic Edenic hope for humanity – or posthumanity – since, regardless of the genetic engineering designed to rid them of humanity's "flaws", they gradually start to show signs of being more human than initially presupposed.

Given Atwood's preoccupation with food and eating, further research should be conducted on utopia and food in her novels, including the remaining two novels of the *MaddAddam* trilogy, her

recent *The Heart Goes Last* (2015) and *The Testaments* – the recent sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*. Moreover, I believe that further research on the utopian function of memories and nostalgia for food could potentially benefit the definition of critical dystopia.

To conclude, I would like to draw on Baccolini one last time. She recognises "slight suffering [as] the necessary condition of Utopia" (2007: 162). In other words, eutopia is not simply a place of happiness, nor is it an idealised past utopia, present or future. When Snowman or Offred recall an idealised past, they are confronted with this condition of slight suffering through memory and nostalgia. This contributes to a feeling of discomfort transposed from their utopian nostalgia to their dystopian present that "can point [them] toward action and change" (*idem*: 161) in the future. Both *The Handmaid's Tale* and *Oryx and Crake* make use of food memories to, on the one hand, nostalgically help the protagonists survive by recalling "the good old days" and/or their childhood, while, on the other hand, the deferral to a later time recognises "the necessary condition of Utopia" as "acceptance and… awareness of [this] slight suffering" (*idem*: 180). These two standpoints converge in the symbolic power of food to traverse the private and individual towards a sense of sharing and community (Holtzman 2006: 373; Sutton 2008: 160). If one, then, takes a critical look at these memories of food and its self-conscious use of nostalgia, it becomes possible to find resistance and hope in dark times, and thus to find utopian feasts in the famished halls of dystopia.

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Notes

* An earlier version of this essay was presented on April 2019 at More Meals to Come: An International Conference in Porto. I am grateful to the organising committee and the ALIMENTOPIA Research Team, in particular Professor Fátima Vieira and Joana Caetano. I would also like to thank the attendees for their stimulating questions and comments, particularly Miguel Ohnesorge and Nora Castle.

1. The essay in question is described as "a dialogue between colleagues" and is divided into two parts. I am here quoting from the first part written exclusively by Linda Hutcheon.
2. The concept of critical dystopia has been articulated by Tom Moylan in his *Scraps of Untainted Sky* (2000), and by Raffaella Baccolini and Tom Moylan in their introduction to *Dark Horizons* (2003).
3. I have decided to keep Baccolini's term *progressive* memory. Nevertheless, I must clarify that this does not imply the Enlightenment idea of progress but instead that "Memory is… necessary as it is an important step for a political praxis of change, action and empowerment" (2005). Equally productive would be Svetlana Boym's distinction between restorative and reflective nostalgia, from which Baccolini borrows.
4. Lyman Tower Sargent has already noted that "the prohibition of alcohol, coffee, tea, and tobacco" (2015: 22) can often be observed in utopian fiction, particularly when concerns over vegetarianism and health are raised. This idea, among others, supports the tension between eutopia and dystopia that the Republic of Gilead represents, "because, in [Atwood's] view, each contains a latent version of the other" (Atwood 2011: 66). In a very elucidative passage of *The Handmaid's Tale*, the Commander explains that "Better never means better for everyone" (Atwood 2006: 241).
5. Even though the generic classification of *The Handmaid's Tale* as an epistolary novel would define Offred's entire narrative – excluding the Epilogue – as her memories, here I focus on the memories from before the dystopian Gilead.
6. Critics such as Coral Ann Howells have gone so far as to claim that "in many ways Oryx and Crake might be seen as a sequel to The Handmaid's Tale" (2006: 161). Even though these claims remain valid on many fronts, they may still be undermined by the subsequent publication of The Year of the Flood (2009) and MaddAddam (2013) as completing the trilogy started by Oryx and Crake, and The Testaments – the recent sequel to The Handmaid's Tale.
7. For consistency, I use the name Jimmy to refer to the character during the pre-apocalypse, and Snowman for the post-apocalypse.
8. Following Gerry Canavan, it is my contention that the novel describes two main dystopian moments: the pre-apocalypse and the post-apocalypse. The apocalyptic event per se is, however, primarily a moment of transition, being part of a tendency in post-apocalyptic contemporary novels to "avoid exact descriptions of what caused the apocalypse" (Spinozzi 2018: 102). Then, I will focus on those memories which go as far as Jimmy's childhood, and, even though I believe that the world in which Jimmy grew up is already dystopian, I will consider the post-apocalypse as the ultimate dystopia of the novel.
9. Contrary to the example taken above from Auster, where the words used for food themselves acquire the characteristics of actual food, in the post-apocalyptic world of *Oryx and Crake* these very same words are meaningless.

Fuelled by Bodies, Fed by Souls: Exploring "Hangry" Houses in Horror Fiction

Jaqueline Pierazzo

Introduction

When we think about food and horror fiction, we can easily recall the most obvious relationship: the relationship between food and death. Indeed, within the horror framework, food assumes an almost intrinsic connection to death that can be summarised as follows: either it is used as a weapon to cause death, or death is used as a medium to obtain food. From poisonings and deathly potions to flesh eating cannibals and zombies, when food takes a more central position in a horror book or film, it is usually to invoke the horrors of death. The connection between food and horror, however, can be explored in a variety of different ways, starting with the horrors of the food industry and advancing to the use of (disgusting) food in horror stories. In this essay, I intend to consider this complex relationship, especially regarding a sub-genre of horror literature that Dale Bailey called "the haunted house tale" (Bailey 1999: ix).

After more than two hundred and fifty years since the publication of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*,[1] the motif of the haunted house is still very powerful and popular, transcending the realm of literature to invade other media such as cinema and television. From the seventh art to the most recent technology of streaming TV, it is almost impossible not to come across a horror movie or series that depicts a scary mansion or castle.[2] The last adapted version of Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*, for instance, proves that the haunted house formula is still very popular, refurbishing itself to speak to a new public that craves the horrific sensation brought on by these stories, a public whose grandparents could have been scared by the first publication of the book in 1959 and that is now entertained by the same gothic motifs.[3] For its part, Jackson's book draws an interesting parallel with Edgar Allan Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher", published in 1839, making an analysis that combines these two works of literature an interesting and almost irresistible pursuit.

Bearing these ideas in mind, with this essay I intend to explore the relationship between food and horror, with particular reference to these two texts, comparing Shirley Jackson's Hill House and Poe's House of Usher in an approach that will, hopefully, combine Food and Horror

Studies and shed new light on the works of these two American writers. I start with an overview of the different ways in which food and horror can merge in fictional works for the sake of achieving the effect of terror. Afterwards, I discuss the specific topic of the haunted house in its relationship to food by focusing on Jackson's story to, finally, compare the two works and show the ways in which both used food or food-related metaphors to achieve horror.

Food in Horror, Food Horror, Food and Horror

As we enter the domain of food and horror there are two initial paths that can lead us to two different destinations: we can think about food *in* horror or about what Lorna Piatti-Farnell described as "food horror" (Piatti-Farnell 2017: 2). In the first instance, we are closer to Horror Studies, considering food's important yet accessory role in the development of horror fiction. The second path, however, leads us closer to Food Studies and we begin to think about food not as a mere accessory to the narrative, but as an essential part of its development. Further down that path, we start thinking about what the depictions of food add to the narrative, providing a glimpse of social, economic, cultural and gender relations that transcend the text *per se*. In other words, when we think about food *in* horror, we focus on horror and push food to a secondary role, whereas when we think about food horror, the focus remains on food, pushing horror to a more subsidiary role in the study of a specific work of literature.

In this sense, when considering food in horror, we are not necessarily interested in the analysis of food itself but in its participation in the creation of the horror experience. Here, for instance, cannibalism plays an important role, especially when further away from a metaphorical sense or as a source of nourishment and closer to a more psychological aspect of the self, such as psychopathy. Nonetheless, (human) meat eaters such as cannibals, zombies, and even vampires, reveal the relationship between food and horror in a more explicit way, prompting analysis from both areas of study. In its turn, in her book *Consuming Gothic: Food and Horror in Film*, Lorna Piatti-Farnell defines food horror as "the narrative that links the idea of food and consumption to notions of horror, disgust, and even fear" (*ibidem*). Food horror involves the food that goes wrong or that brings us closer to notions of disgust, danger and even death. In this respect, Piatti-Farnell is not concerned about what she calls "traditional horror movies", but about a horror effect that can be achieved by a specific manipulation of the topic of food even in movies not canonically taken as part of the horror genre, such as *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory* (*ibidem*).

The connection between food and horror can appear even when we are seemingly far removed from Horror Studies. Thus, an idea intrinsic to food, the notion of food as *Other*, can also be terrifying, even when we are not specifically considering a horror story. According to Lorna Piatti-Farnnel, "[a] promise of dark discovery lurks behind every meal, a suggestion that could easily take the subject through a tunnel of horror, disgust, and (de)generation" (Piatti-Farnell 2017: 12). This possibility of "horror, disgust and (de)generation" arises because the act of eating involves adding something strange, extra-corporeal – alien if you will – to our bodies, making it part of ourselves. And therefore, once again considering Farnell's ideas, consumption is "steeped in horror, for we do not truly know the foods we are allowing into our bodies until it is too late: once the oral threshold has been breached, we have been colonised by the food" (*idem*: 15). In the realm of horror, this unknown aspect of food is usually explored by narratives that revolve around the possibility of fatal food poisoning, from crime fiction to fairy tales.

Another perspective of horror and food that is closer to the realm of the latter is the consideration of the horrors of the food industry, especially the meat industry, and the ways in which it influences works of horror fiction, such as the so-called slaughterhouse narratives that usually contain a profound critique of culturally approved eating habits. [4]

In the context of this essay, I set out to merge these two different paths to show how one approach does not overshadow the other; indeed, on the contrary, how an analysis of such works can benefit from a perspective that combines both Food and Horror Studies. With this idea in mind and to better organise and elucidate the most common ways in which food appears as a part of horror narratives, we will start by considering three separate but interrelated categories.

The first one is closer to the first path mentioned above and, as such, approaches the domain of Horror Studies: food as accessory. The second category is closer to a Food Studies perspective and deals with a conception of food closer to our everyday reality. The third and final category lies between these two perspectives and involves what I am calling hangry[5] monsters and monster-like creatures or entities.

The first category, food as accessory, is self-explanatory and coincides with an approach focused on the horror aspects of the work of literature, where food is seen as an accessory to better describe characters, situations and places or functions simply as a plot device without, at least apparently, any other role in the narrative, so it is seemingly incidental to the text. Here, we can find classic horror movie clichés such as the whistling of a boiling tea kettle or the popping of a bag of popcorn on the stove as means to create suspense in the stories. This use of food is especially explored by horror movies, since the use of sound effects only enriches the achievement of the desired effect; take, for instance, the *Final Destination Franchise* or the iconic Drew Barrymore participation in the opening scene of the movie *Scream*.[6]

But this category is not exclusively related to horror fiction; it shares a common ground with other genres and it can also be said to permeate the great majority of literary works. If a work of literature involves food, it is quite possible that it is part of at least this category. We must just pause a moment to think about how food is in the background of a variety of romantic encounters, meetings, family conversations and other commonly found moments in literature.

Besides this, this group encompasses a metaphorical use of food and food-related activities, where eating certain types of foods in certain ways can be a metaphor or symbol for something else. Here, food references can symbolically represent present-day issues such as the destructiveness of contemporary consumption habits or the assimilation and adaptation of the *Other*.[7]

This category is also one of the most fluid ones, since what at first can be seen as merely accessory can actually be more complicated and involve complex social, cultural and economic

relationships that are essential not only to the development of the narrative's plot, but also to the formal structure of the literary text itself. This is the case, for instance, of the ghost story formula, where the narration of the scary and mysterious story usually starts after or during a pleasant meal, preferably where a generous amount of wine is involved. Likewise, despite it being seemingly a simpler perspective, it can work as a starting point for the consideration of food in literature in general and, more specifically, of food in horror fiction.

The second category involves a treatment of food and horror that works in the vicinity of Lorna Piatti-Farnell's idea of food horror. This time, however, I am interested in those works that do take part in horror as a genre and, more specifically, in horror fiction. Taking Piatti-Farnell's food horror as a starting point, this category involves works where horror is connected to a more "conventional", "ordinary", or, at least, culturally accepted sense of food, closer to our everyday reality. This category is defined by the opposition between edible and inedible[8] and as such is extremely dependent on a broader cultural framework, since this opposition is responsible for deciding what is appropriate or not in terms of food (*idem*: 14).

The duality edible-inedible inevitably opens up the possibility of disgust, an aspect relentlessly explored within horror fiction. As pointed out by Piatti-Farnell, disgust has a dual quality: it refers both to "nature and nurture" (*idem*: 16), to the possibility of physical harm and to culturally structured ideas that deem certain types of food as disgusting and others as pleasant, which leads Stephen Mennel to assert that "disgust has very little to do with rationality" (apud *idem*: 17).

Bearing these ideas in mind, when dealing with disgust, horror works must consider the audience's cultural framework in order to effectively achieve the desired effect. When this framework is not effectively considered, or when the author of horror fiction deliberately wants to provoke horror through the exaggeration of disgusting images, we enter the realm of what Stephen King called "the gross-out" (King 2012: 17). In his book *Danse Macabre*, King thus defines different levels of what is generally called horror fiction: the gross-out, horror and, finally, terror.[9] Most of the examples presented by the author in relation to the gross-out are related to food or, to be more specific, to the feeling of disgust. For instance, King describes and exemplifies the gross-out as a "wanna-look-at-my-chewed-up-food?" level, calling it the "YUCH factor" [sic] (*idem*: 218). Curiously, the cinematographic references given by the author to exemplify this type of horror are also examples of haunted house narratives, such as "The Exorcist" and "The Amityville Horror".

Through this "gross-out" we are more evidently looking at what Dale Bailey called "Gothic's central truth and attraction", which is the fact that "nothing, no bonds of steel or prayer, can restrain the Dionysian forces that lurk just beneath the placid surface of everyday life" (1999: 3). In horror, even when we are facing foods that resemble the normality of our everyday eating habits, the possibility of it being something else, dangerous, evil, is almost always present. This leads us to the last category that encompasses figures well known by any Gothic enthusiast or specialist: what I am calling "hangry" monsters. This category embraces not only what Fabio Parasecoli called "voracious monsters", [10] such as vampires, but also monster-like entities, as we will see.

Despite their being the most popular figures in relation to the connection between food and horror or, at least, the most recalled ones, these "voracious monsters" are not considered in the scope of this essay, since, as Piatti-Farnell does well to remind us, these creatures are "culturally subversive from the on-set: as such, they do not lend themselves to an interrogation of how food – a common and commonplace presence in our human lives – can shift conceptual boundaries and cross the threshold between 'common' and 'uncommon', 'familiar' and 'unfamiliar', which is where, I argue, the true horror lies" (Piatti-Farnell 2017: 26).

As previously mentioned, this category also involves monster-like entities: inanimate objects and even spaces that can assume a monster-like aspect in order to take part in the human activity of eating or, rather, consuming. It is in this particular category that the haunted house fits better, with its tendency to prey upon its inhabitants to fulfil its hunger for revenge, justice, or simply Evil.

Before considering the houses themselves, it is worth mentioning that these three categories are not independent or exclusive, they coexist and complement each other. The first one approaches the second, since food as accessory and food as what is edible or inedible both share the same common ground: our culturally ordinary references to food. The second and third categories, food horror and hangry monsters, can encompass what Jennifer Park called "strange eating", defined as "presumed aberrant or atypical eating habits – eating strange things or eating the strange or strangers" (Park 2018: 271). We are here still facing a more ordinary reference to food as a background, even though the ways in which food is being used or consumed are distorted. Finally, the first and last categories can merge since specific types of food can be used as accessories merely to describe a particular monster-like creature.

The volatile nature of these categories also means that it is possible to find, within the same narrative, a variety of motifs whose boundaries intersect. This is the case of at least two very popular gothic motifs: the figure of the cannibal and the haunted house.

At the same time as a cannibal can be seen as a hangry monster when associated with a psychopathy or a perverse instinct, it can also navigate through the first category, when descriptions of food are being used to better characterise the cannibal's habits or habitats, and even through the second one, when we are considering cannibalism from an anthropological, historical or sociological perspective. Cannibalism can also be considered from a metaphorical or symbolic viewpoint as, for instance, the idea of assimilation of other cultures brought by Oswald de Andrade's Anthropophagic or Cannibalist Manifesto.[11]

A haunted house, meanwhile, can be described by the type of food served and prepared within its walls. It can also, as we will see, serve as the perfect place to display instances of food horror, and, of course, it can be personified into a monster-like entity, as it is in fact in both works that are considered here: "The Fall of the House of Usher" and *The Haunting of Hill House*.

The Haunting of the Hangry Hill House

Following in Poe's footsteps with respect to the haunted house formula, Shirley Jackson published *The Haunting of Hill House* in 1959. Indeed, the book seems to echo Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" in a number of passages throughout its development, especially when Jackson is describing Hill House. Nevertheless, for a range of motives, from the cultural framework to which the work belongs to the peculiarities of the formal aspects of the novel as opposed to the short story, *The Haunting of Hill House* offers a broader spectrum for the analysis of food and horror than does "The Fall of the House of Usher". For this reason, in this first part of the analysis I will focus on Jackson's book.

Hill House is the perfect example of the haunted house that navigates through the three discussed categories that summarise the relationship between food and horror. One of the episodes than can be regarded as part of the first category, food as accessory or metaphor, is found at the very beginning of the story, even before Eleanor arrives at Hill House, at the symbolically charged scene of the "cup of stars". When the protagonist stops at a restaurant for lunch in the middle of her journey to Doctor Montague's experiment, she observes a family sitting nearby (Jackson 2006: 14). The mother and the father have a little disagreement regarding their daughter's demand for her cup of stars in order to drink her milk. Observing the scene, while the parents insist that the girl drink the milk without her special cup, Eleanor thinks to herself: "Don't do it […]; insist on your cup of stars; once they have trapped you into being like everyone else you will never see your cup of stars again; don't do it; and the little girl glanced at her. And smiled a little subtle, dimpling, wholly comprehending smile, and shook her head stubbornly at the glass. Brave girl, Eleanor thought; wise, brave girl" (*idem*: 15). Different interpretations have been derived from this episode. In short, Eleanor's pledge for the little girl not to accept her milk without the "cup of stars" can be seen as a symbol of her absence of control over her own life: the cup of milk was never just a medium for the achievement of the little girl's nourishment, it was a symbol of the longing for independence and control.

Moving on to the second category, two spaces take on great importance when considering a more ordinary use of food in fictional works: the kitchen and the dining room. The latter is already part of Eleanor's digressions during her journey to Hill House and sets the tone for the description of her thought process, which is then developed throughout the narrative. Her characteristic longing for home, peace and love is here presented to the reader through the description of an imaginary dinner as seen in the following passage: "I took my dinner alone in the long, quiet dining room at the gleaming table, and between the tall windows the white panelling of the walls shone in the candlelight; I dined upon a bird, and radishes from the garden, and homemade plum jam" (*idem*: 12). After spending eleven years taking care of her invalid mother, Eleanor longs for a simple and solitary dinner. Before that, however, she also imagines that "[a] little dainty old lady took care of me, moving starchily with a silver tea service on a tray and bringing me a glass of elderberry wine each evening for my health's sake" (*ibidem*). Here, food mediates her perception of love and care, in an inversion of her duties regarding her mother: now she is not taking care of "a cross old lady", "setting out endless little trays of soup and oatmeal" (*idem*: 4), but, instead, a "little dainty old lady" takes care of her, bringing her tea and wine, thinking about her health for a change (*idem*: 12).

Within the walls of the house, the dining room seems to meet Eleanor's imaginative expectations, since it is described as "the pleasantest room they had seen so far, more pleasant, certainly, because of the lights and the sight and smell of food" (*idem*: 46). The aspect of the dining room contrasts so drastically with the rest of the house that it is even seen as a sort of recovery from a "non-civilized" state when Doctor Montague gladly acclaims: "'I congratulate myself,' he said, rubbing his hands happily. 'I have led you to civilization through the uncharted wastes of Hill House'" (*ibidem*).[12]

The dining room is also perceived as the space responsible for bringing peace and protection to the group. Later in the novel, the importance of this chamber is emphasised when the characters try to interpret the peculiar decorations of a marble statuary object in the drawing room. After being seen as "Venus rising from the waves" by Doctor Montague, as "Saint Francis curing the lepers" by Luke and after Eleanor detects a dragon in the strange piece, Theodora, jokingly or not, identifies it as the portrait of the family and the house (*idem*: 79). What attracts our attention, at least in the scope of this paper, is the identification of some grass-like "stuff" in the statuary piece as the dining room rug. Theodora asks if they had ever noticed the dining-room carpet, asserting that "It looks like a field of hay, and you can feel it tickling your ankles" (*ibidem*). On top of that "field of hay" is what Theodora describes as an "overspreading apple-tree kind of thing" and what Doctor Montague promptly identifies as "[a] symbol of the protection of the house" (*ibidem*).

The symbolic sacred protection of the *apple* tree and the remembrance of the dining room brought by the carpet is immediately interposed with the possibility of the instability and potentially dangerous characteristic of the house, when Eleanor interrupts the Doctor to wonder: "I'd hate to think it might fall on us [...] Since the house is so unbalanced…" (*idem*: 80).

Whereas on the one hand, Lorna Piatti-Farnell considers food horror as the narratives that emphasise the relationship between food and horror, disgust and even fear (Piatti-Farnell 2017: 2), in *Hill House*, on the other hand, food, as experienced in the dining room, is identified as an escape from the horrors brought by the rest of the house and, when the place where food is prepared, the kitchen, is considered, the idea of escape assumes a quite literal significance.

When we come to look at the space of the kitchen, our attention must turn to the cook, Mrs Dudley, the mysterious housekeeper who is a key figure in the consideration of the relationship between food and horror in the narrative. When the reader meets Mrs Dudley, her role as the household's cook is emphasised, because the first thing the reader knows about this character is that she wears an apron (Jackson 2006: 25). Her role is even clearer since some of the first words she shares with Eleanor concern her duties within the house, as the following passage confirms:

> Mrs. Dudley turned aside to let Eleanor come in, and spoke, *apparently to the wall*. "I set dinner on the dining-room sideboard at six sharp", she said. "You can serve yourselves. I clear up in the morning. I have breakfast ready for you at nine. That's the way I agreed to do. I can't keep the rooms up the way you'd like, but there's no one else you could get that would help me. I don't wait on people. What I agreed to, it doesn't mean I wait on people." (*idem*: 27)

Mrs Dudley is always described in a sinister and scary way, contrasting with the comforting nature of her food, always praised by the group. For this reason, in *The Haunting of Hill House* the meals do not seem to be an extension of the cook, and even her presence in the dining room seems to deprive it of that status of the pleasantest room in the house, as we can see in the following passage: "and a little chill went around the table, darkening the light of the silver and the bright colors of the china, a little cloud that drifted through the dining room and brought Mrs. Dudley after it" (*idem*: 84-5).

The contrasting duality between the meals she prepares and her character seems to be in tune with a duality intrinsic to the space of the kitchen in general and, more specifically, to kitchen appliances. At the same time that the kitchen is the space of food preparation, something necessary to human survival, it is also where violent aspects of eating take place. As Lorna Piatti-Farnell points out: "the kitchen is full of instruments of 'violence', aimed at chopping, cutting, mashing, and, overall, the complete physical disintegration of matter" (Piatti-Farnell 2017: 183).

In an ordinary house, kitchen appliances can bring us face to face with violence and horror; in Hill House, the kitchen itself seems to achieve this effect, assuming the duality safety-danger. The kitchen, like the dining room, is also described as pleasant, yet one particular of its architecture suggests the possibility of it being a site both of safety and vulnerability, as expressed by Eleanor when she first sees it:

> I wonder if she had Dudley cut extra doors for her. I wonder how she likes working in a kitchen where a door in back of her might open without her knowing it. I wonder, actually, just what Mrs. Dudley is in the habit of meeting in her kitchen so that she wants to make sure that she'll find a way out no matter which direction she runs. I wonder— (Jackson 2006: 82)

It is interesting to note that Eleanor goes from the more negative to the more positive aspect of the kitchen's doors; from the idea that something dangerous could enter the kitchen through one of those doors without being noticed to the idea that those doors could mean a way of escaping, of surviving whatever supernatural thing might be a presence in the house.

More interesting, however, is the active role Eleanor ascribes to Mrs Dudley. She wonders if the housekeeper herself is responsible for the placement of those extra doors. Even though she attributes the installing of those doors to the cook's husband, the unfinished last "I wonder…" at the end of her thought process could also indicate a more intimate relationship between house and housekeeper.

Curiously enough, that thought process is interrupted by Theodora's mention of the more common aspect associated with cooks and the food they prepare: "'Shut up,' Theodora said amiably. 'A nervous cook can't make a good soufflé, anyone knows that…'", suggesting that Mrs Dudley could be listening behind one of those doors (*idem*: 82), or perhaps implying that, just like Hill House, the cook could hear them.

Mrs Dudley seems to work well with the house, in symbiosis, as long as she, like her husband, doesn't stay there "in the night, in the dark" (*idem*: 26). While she is clearly afraid of the house, she, more than anyone else, understands and coexists with it. For instance, in the passage mentioned above, when the housekeeper shows Eleanor to her room, Mrs Dudley seems to be talking not to Eleanor, but to the house, since she talks, as the narrator lets us know, "apparently to the wall" (*idem*: 27). This idea is confirmed later in the novel when the housekeeper shows Theodora to her room and Eleanor feels that maybe Mrs Dudley thinks that the house can hear them (*idem*: 31). In the same way, her emphasis on not waiting on people could be seen as a trait of her personality, pride perhaps, as shown in the following passage: "I don't wait on people. What I agreed to, it doesn't mean I wait on people" (*idem*, 27). However, if we shift the focus from the action to its receiver, we open up the possibility that what Mrs Dudley is denying is not the act of waiting itself, but of waiting on *people*: if she does not wait on people, does she wait on anyone or anything else? The house, maybe?

Haunted Houses or Houses that Haunt: The Case of the Hangry Houses

Going back to the categories that summarise the relation between food and horror, we are left with the final one: the hangry monsters or monster-like creatures or entities. This is where both Hill House and the House of Usher share a common ground and it is in this aspect that the influence of Poe can be more clearly perceived in Shirley Jackson's book.

According to Dale Bailey in the book *American Nightmares: The Haunted House Formula in American Popular Fiction*, Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne influenced the contemporary haunted house tale, including Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*, by shifting the traditional European gothic tradition in two particular ways. First of all, both writers, especially Hawthorne, transformed the classic European castle into the common American House or, as Bailey describes it: "a magnificent house with a storied history, to be sure - but a mere house nonetheless" (Bailey 1999: 23). Secondly and most importantly, both nineteenth-century American authors "displace[d] the supernatural focus of the text from the figure of the ghost - the revenant spirit of a human being - to the house" (*idem*: 21).

Bearing this last aspect in mind, we can conclude that the house ceases to represent a haunted place and takes a more active role in the process of haunting; the houses themselves haunt their inhabitants or visitors, despite the presence of ghosts, demons or spectres. Bailey thus distinguishes between the ghost story represented, for instance, by Henry James and Judith Wharton, and the haunted house tale represented by Poe and Hawthorne.

Unlike the traditional ghost story, in Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" and Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*, the focus is not on possible ghosts or demonic forces that inhabit the house; in this case the house itself becomes a ghost-like figure, personified, assuming human characteristics in order to devour and ultimately consume its inhabitants. As once again pointed out by Bailey, the sentient character of the houses "does not possess the house, but derives from its very structure" (*idem*: 22).

This sentient character intrinsic to the dwelling's own structures is made clear by both narratives, so we find Roderick Usher blaming this character on the very stones of the house: "The conditions of the sentience had been here, he imagined, fulfilled in the method of collocation of these stones — in the order of their arrangement…" (Poe 2006: 136). This is even more evident in *Hill House*, where the narrator even considers that the house has formed itself: "This house, which seemed somehow to have formed itself, flying together into its own powerful pattern under the hands of its builders, fitting itself into its own construction of lines and angles, reared its great head back against the sky without concession to humanity." (Jackson 2006: 24).

The two houses are also presented to the reader in a very similar way, especially regarding the tumultuous feelings they cause to the observers. For instance, Hill House is first described as follows:

> No human eye can isolate the unhappy coincidence of line and place which suggests evil in the face of a house, and yet somehow a maniac juxtaposition, a badly turned angle, some chance meeting of roof and sky, turned Hill House into a place of despair, more frightening because the face of Hill House seemed awake, with a watchfulness from the blank windows and a touch of glee in the eyebrow of a cornice. Almost any house, caught unexpectedly or at an odd angle, can turn a deeply humorous look on a watching person; even a mischievous little chimney, or a dormer like a dimple, can catch up a beholder with a sense of fellowship; but a house arrogant and hating, never off guard, can only be evil. (*ibidem*)

This passage seems to echo Poe's narrator's first encounter with the House of Usher, especially if we consider his experiment of observing the house from its reflection in the tarn to see if the horrible impression of those "badly turned angles" would change:

> It was possible, I reflected, that a mere different arrangement of the particulars of the scene, of the details of the picture, would be sufficient to modify, or perhaps to annihilate its capacity for sorrowful impression; and, acting upon this idea, I reined my horse to the precipitous brink of a black and lurid tarn that lay in unruffled lustre by the dwelling, and gazed down — but with a shudder even more thrilling than before — upon the re-modelled and inverted images of the gray sedge, and the ghastly tree-stems, and the vacant and eye-like windows. (Poe 2006: 127)

In both cases, the narrators come to the conclusion that the impression of evil cannot be dissipated by a mere change of angles and must be intrinsic to the houses themselves, especially regarding their human-like features.

Later on, however, we find out that the personification is not exclusive to the face-like appearance of the houses and extends to their adoption of human actions. In this context, Hill House seems not only to listen to Doctor Montague's party, but also to want to devour them or, as pointed out by Eleanor in relation to her blue room: "I am like a small creature *swallowed* whole by a monster, she thought, and the monster feels my tiny little movements inside" (Jackson 2006: 29). Just as Hill House seems to be alive and invoke the possibility of eating, swallowing, Eleanor,

the House of Usher opens one of its "ponderous and ebony *jaws*" to reveal Madeline Usher just before her final collapse with her brother. (Poe 2006: 143) The sentient and personified houses, however, seem to want not only to devour their prey, but also to assimilate them, making them part of their own structure, as is noted by Theodora and Eleanor: "The sense was that it wanted to consume us, take us into itself, make us part of the house…" (Jackson 2006: 102).

At the end of the stories, both hangry houses achieve their goals; more than simply embodying Eleanor and the Usher twins, they seem to merge with them in a subtle yet persistent way. At the end of the narratives, their victims are unable to escape their fate, remaining in the houses' grounds in one way or another. Poe summarises this consubstantiation by asserting, right at the beginning of his story, that the name of the mansion merges the house and the family (Poe 2006: 128).

Regarding *Hill House*, although Mrs Dudley, the cook, is the one who is described throughout the narrative in a symbiotic relation with the house, at the end of the story it is Eleanor who is in that position, even using the kitchen as medium of escape, this time not from the perils of the house, but from her companions who intend to separate her from the mansion. On the one hand, Mrs Dudley survives Hill House by coexisting with it, but Eleanor, like Roderick and Madeline, does not survive and the hangry house finally achieves the ultimate act of consumption by killing her within its confines.

Curiously, in Poe's tale, where the house does not survive, the more ordinary aspect of food is brought to the narrative not by the characters sharing a meal or by the description of the kitchen or dining room, but by the house itself becoming material to nourish the fungi on its stones. The hangry monster, capable of consuming human lives, is also consumed by the fungi spread all over it almost as an omen of its ultimate destiny – the final consumption of the house by the tarn. Hill House, on the other hand, survives, as strong as it was before Doctor Montague's party arrived. The cyclic narrative, ending as it began, could indicate the cyclic character of the hangry monster itself, with Hill House standing there, as it was at the beginning of the narrative, possibly awaiting new victims.

Final Considerations

It was my intent with this essay to show how horror fiction can be fertile ground for approaches that wish to combine horror and food studies. In fact, the complex relationship between food and the achievement of the effect of horror is usually taken for granted. Within horror literature, the presence of food is more than a mere accessory or symbol; it actually works in the construction of horror itself. Furthermore, it is important once again to consider Lorna Piatti-Farnell's ideas about the relationship between food horror and a larger context which covers the social aspects of the communities where this food horror is developed or on which it is based. That is to say, by analysing food and food-related activities in works of fiction, we can find out more about them besides the texts themselves. In this respect, Piatti-Farnell asserts that food horror relies on "a conceptual exploitation of the audience's visceral responses, which are inevitably mediated

by their cultural context" (Piatti-Farnell 2017: 23). This visceral response is essential not only to food horror, but also to horror itself and even, to go back to Stephen King's *Danse Macabre*, to gross-out and terror stories. Food, for its part, seems to be one of the first and foremost ways of appealing to human visceral responses, even though that is taken to a more extreme degree within horror fiction, where it appeals quite literally to human viscera.

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Notes

1. *The Castle of Otranto* was first published in 1764 and republished the next year with the subtitle "A Gothic Story".
2. A recent example of the continuing popularity of the haunted house formula is, for instance, the success of the movies belonging to the world of *The Conjuring*, with multiple films being released yearly.
3. The book has received a couple of different cinematographic adaptations since its first publication at the end of the 1950s. The first one in 1963, called *The Haunting*, was directed by Robert Wise. The movie was then remade in 1999 by the director Jan de Bont. The 1963 movie also influenced the 2002 *Rose Red* mini-series scripted by Stephen King. The last adaptation, premiered on 12 October 2018, restored the original title, *The Haunting of Hill House,* and was directed by Mike Flanagan for Netflix.
4. Regarding the slaughterhouse narrative and its relation to food studies, see Lorna Piatti-Farnell's "A Taste for Butchery: Slaughterhouse Narratives and the Consumable Body" in her book *Consuming Gothic: Food and Horror in Film*.
5. The term "hangry", an official entry in renowned dictionaries such as *The Oxford English Dictionary* and *The Cambridge Dictionary*, is a portmanteau of the words "angry" and "hungry" and indicates the feeling of being angry because of hunger. The origin of the word dates back to the 1950s.
6. The preparation of food or the place where it is prepared is repeatedly used in the *Final Destination* movies to create the effect of suspense thanks to the possibility of harm being caused by food preparation instruments. Take, for instance, the scene of the death of the teacher in the first movie or the agonizing fire scene at the lottery winner's apartment in the second one. In the opening scene of the first *Scream* movie, the popping of the popcorn on the stove creates the atmosphere of suspense that accompanies the mysterious call that the Drew Barrymore character receives from the iconic murderer.
7. Regarding the relation between horror and contemporary consuming societies, see Lorna Piatti-Farnell's *Consuming Gothic: Food and Horror in Film* (2017).
8. According to Piatti-Farnell, edible can be defined as "what is acceptable within the human cultural framework" (Piatti-Farnell 2017: 13).
9. Stephen King summarised this distinction in a 2014 Facebook post in which he stated: "The Gross-out: the sight of a severed head tumbling down a flight of stairs, it's when the lights go out and something green and slimy splatters against your arm. The Horror: the unnatural, spiders the size of bears, the dead waking up and walking around, it's when the lights go out and something with claws grabs you by the arm. And the last and worse one: Terror, when you come home and notice everything you own had been taken away and replaced by an exact substitute. It's when the lights go out and you feel something behind you, you hear it, you feel its breath against your ear, but when you turn around, there's nothing there…" (King 2014).
10. Regarding these "voracious monsters", see Fabio Parasecoli's book *Bite Me: Food in Popular Culture*, especially the chapter "Of Breasts and Beasts: Vampires and Other Voracious Monsters" (Parasecoli 2008: 37).
11. The "Manifesto Antropófago" translated by Leslie Bary as "Cannibalist Manifesto" was a manifesto published in 1928 by the Brazilian Modernist author Oswald de Andrade in the context of Brazilian Modernism. It was an update on Andrade's previous manifesto "Poesia Pau-Brasil" that argued for a more nationalist approach to literature. With the "Cannibalist Manifesto", Oswald de Andrade proposed the assimilation of other cultures and their adaptation while still maintaining typical characteristics of national culture in Brazilian literature.
12. In light of Shirley Jackson's book *Life among the Savages*, the use of the term "civilization" can easily assume a colonial connotation, especially when read together with the word "uncharted" that follows it ("through the *uncharted* wastes of Hill House"). In this context, the dining room could be seen as the place where the guests of the house felt more in control, almost taming the unwelcoming characteristics of the house after Dr Montague figured out how to transit throughout all of its rooms. It can also assume the sense of the word as used by Lorna Piatti-Farnell in relation to food, when she claims that "cooking is a civilized practice" employing the term "as a signal to those ritualistic practices that we subconsciously regarded as essential for our cultural constructions of appropriate behavior" (Piatti-Farnell 2017: 24).

Refectories and Dining Rooms as "Social Structural Joints":

On Space, Gender and Class in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*

Joana Caetano, Mariana Oliveira & Miguel Ramalhete Gomes

Introduction

In "Restaurants, fields, markets, and feasts: Food and culture in semi-public spaces" (2016), Clare A. Sammells and Edmund Searles state that: "One can eat alone, but one can never truly eat in a way or in a place that is devoid of public meanings. It has long been clear that what, how, and with whom one eats indicates social status and economic class" (129). As members and collaborators of ALIMENTOPIA / Utopian Foodways Project, we have explored the social, political and economic implications that foodways have in shaping societies. It is therefore in the framework of this project that we, as researchers of different fields of Literature and Architecture, have come together and will jointly discuss primarily gender but also class dynamics, by projecting and analysing specific food-related spaces in Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*.

From a multidisciplinary perspective, this chapter proposes a reading of particular spaces where meals take place in Ursula K. Le Guin's text. This analysis will make use of two specific lenses, gender and class, to argue that these spaces can be perceived as "social structural joints", in the sense that an "architectural structural joint", as architect Petra Čeferin proposes, is a junction where building elements meet. Using a three-dimensional view (space, gender and class), we will analyse how food spaces can be platforms for social aggregation or segregation and reveal gender and class dynamics.

The Tectonic Structural Joint: Joining Architecture and Utopian Thinking

The intersection between architecture and utopia has a long tradition. The ideal city has been one of the most common tropes of utopian literature ever since philosophers such as Plato, More and Campanella conceived ideal societies. However, this utopian impulse of constructing ideal urban spaces has gone far beyond the theoretical projections on literary texts and drawing maps

of imaginary places. There have been numerous more-or-less successful attempts from both theorists and architects to fulfil visions of ideal communities. The industrialist José Ferreira Pinto Basto's Vista Alegre Factory (Portugal) that very much resembles Robert Owen's New Lanark (Scotland), Le Corbusier's partially built Cité Frugès (France) and Lúcio Costa's planning of Brasilia (Brasil) are but a few examples. Although some projects can be perceived as more utopian than others, a transformative capacity is inherent to architecture as a whole, since the simple idealisation of a building presupposes the idea of improvement. We may even claim that architecture is the material realisation of utopian thinking. As Petra Čeferin claims, in "Architecture: Constructing Concrete Utopias" (2017),

> architecture – insofar as it is practiced as a creative practice – is always, already, utopia realised. To be more precise: architecture is a utopian practice by virtue of its structural logic; that is, by the way the activity of architecture itself is structured, and by the way this activity appears and functions in the world. And if we really are interested in constructing a better world with architecture, we should insist precisely on its utopian structure, on enacting architecture in the world as a utopian, that is, creative practice (137).

Of course, architecture can also be dystopian. It may at times be a castrating force and a punishing structure of society (e.g. prisons and reformatories). However, this ambivalence only proves the social, economic, political and artistic intervention of architecture, that is at the same time contemporary and transtemporal. In other words, architecture can be a testimony to its time, a symbol of collective memory, as well as a time-transcendent structure.

The Portuguese modernist architect Fernando Távora wrote in 1962 that when we draw a dot on a piece of paper we could say that this dot organises such paper, such surface, such space, in two dimensions, its position being defined by two entities (*x, y*), in relation to a specific system of coordinates. If, however, we consider such a dot standing up, away from the same piece of paper, we could say that it organises the space in three dimensions (*x, y, z*), in relation to a specific system of coordinates. There is nevertheless a third hypothesis – that the same dot is not static but moving. So, in this case, another dimension is added *t* (time) to the three entities or dimensions (*x, y, z*) that define it; it thus becomes possible to situate the same dot in each position of its trajectory and in relation to a specific system of coordinates (1999: 11). This dot, the inceptional moment (and movement) of the architectonic project, is the perfect metaphor to illustrate and introduce the concept of the *tectonic structural joint*: the dot that joins the structural elements of a building.

Architectural or tectonic joints are the dots that connect different elements of the building in a strong secure whole. As a fundamental part of the construction, these joints have to be resilient and sturdy, otherwise the building will collapse. This pragmatist and basic system of support in building construction was first used to illustrate the poetics of architecture by Kenneth Frampton in the late 1990s and expanded more recently by Petra Čeferin. According to Frampton, architecture is the art of construction or the poetics of construction, and therefore should reject the process of trivialisation or commodification that architecture seemed to have been going through in recent decades (see Čeferin 2017: 72). Indeed, in *Architecture and Utopia: Design and Capitalist Development* (1976), Manfredo Tafuri had already denounced architecture as a tool for the development of capitalism. Tafuri's text is possibly the strongest critique of modern architecture as an instrument of capital, forgetting its utopian identity as an entity for social transformation. Although we should acknowledge Tafuri's highly pessimistic view, we should also recognise that architecture, apart from some specific author architecture, seems to have been gradually (and in very general terms) reduced to what Frampton calls "a giant commodity" (see Čeferin 2017: 140). To reclaim their transformative power, architecture and architects should return to the creation and production of *architectural things* (Frampton) or *architectural objects* (Čeferin). Since architecture is an activity that is transtemporal, "anachronistic by definition" (Čeferin 2017: 141), its objects (from the simple joint to the entire structure) should be durable and timeless.

Frampton, who defines the structural joint as "the fundamental nexus around which a building comes into being, that is to say, comes to be articulated as a presence in itself" (2017: 142), considers this architectural element as "the presence of architecture" itself. As Čeferin explains, this means that in this "key architectural element around which architecture as a thing is articulated", the "*materiality of architecture as a thing* is present" (*ibidem*). By understanding Frampton's notion of the materiality of the architecture present in the joint, we will make use of the image of the tectonic joint as a symbol for specific social spaces. In this case, food-related spaces.

One of the most interesting features of architecture is the sense that the space should somehow be an extension of the human body. The architect's aim should be to articulate the users' needs with the physical/geographical conditions of the construction. It is a two-way relationship that, to be lasting and successful, should be almost organic in its adjustments. And this purpose should affect, mould and guide every type of construction, whether it is a private building or a public one. We believe that each space is a culmination of purpose, pragmatism, creativity and perception of time. Creativity is the glue that combines purpose and pragmatism in the sense that it allies the design of the building with its environment, fulfilling the intention of taking the best advantage of the space limitations but never forgetting the aesthetics of the plan. The perception of time underpins the architectural design, whether it is faithful to contemporary art, looking towards the future or a tribute to the past. In any case, it will result from the conflict between all these forces: time, space, architect, client/user and art itself. Moreover, it will be a reflection of its society, by accommodating the parameters and paradigms its *status quo* promotes or, on the contrary, by rejecting them. This applies to every space of the construction, but we find that it applies especially to common/public spaces, particularly dining and living rooms in private homes and dining rooms, refectories and canteens in public buildings. Spaces connected to food, as spaces of communion between the many users, are always somehow hybrid by converging the private and the social. Similar to the role played by the tectonic structural joint in architecture, which unites several elements of the building, these spaces assemble the dynamics of the buildings. We shall call these spaces *social structural spaces* because, when closely analysed, they reveal their users' social, cultural, and economic behaviours.

Space and food as tools to expose technologies of gender

Since the main purpose is to unveil gender and class dynamics underlined in a specific corpus, it is fundamental to understand how space and foodways, as conceptual tools, can be combined and aligned in order to expose technologies of gender.

In *Space, Place and Gender* (1994), Doreen Massey explores the way in which gender is intrinsically connected to space by exposing "the intricacy and profundity of the connection of space and place with gender and the construction of gender relations" (2). As Massey explains, these connections can work through the actual construction of real-world geographies and the cultural specificity of definitions of gender. She asserts that "geography matters to the construction of gender, and the fact of geographical variation in gender relations, for instance, is a significant element in the production and reproduction of both imaginative geographies and uneven development" (1994: 2). In fact, the way a space is planned and organised reflects its purpose to unite or separate other spaces and its users. For example, and in general terms, in architecture, the common spaces are usually larger than private ones, since they are expected to accommodate more users, and normally private spaces are smaller since they are aimed at transmitting comfort and privacy. This simplistic view of architecture, restrictive as it is, is nevertheless useful to understand social and economic dynamics. Space is planned, filled and arranged by individuals and society, taking advantage of geographic factors. However, it may also affirm, test or break cultural, social and economic restrictions. Therefore, the analysis of space involves relevant considerations concerning social order, specifically gender, since it is in the space – geographic and social space – that technologies of gender are inscribed.

Starting from Foucault's theory of "technology of sex", Teresa de Lauretis elaborates on the concept of gender as a complex entity that embodies several layers of meaning. As Foucault claimed regarding sex, de Lauretis argues that "gender, too, both as representation and as self-representation, is the product of various social technologies, such as cinema, and of institutionalised discourses, epistemologies, and critical practices, as well as practices of daily life" (1987: 2). We should think of gender as a product and a process of a number of social technologies, of techno-social or bio-medical apparati, a continuous mutating entity.[2] As de Lauretis explains, the concept of gender is the representation of a relationship, of belonging to a group, category or class (not economic class), and it is also the construction of these relations, "thus gender assigns to one entity, say an individual, a position within a class, and therefore also a position vis-à-vis other pre-constituted classes" (*idem*: 4). This means that gender is not sex, a biological characteristic, but the representation of each individual in terms of a specific social relationship, which pre-exists the individual and is established on the conceptual and rigid structural opposition of two biological sexes: "the sex-gender system". The sex-gender system is always intimately interconnected with political and economic factors and usually prescribes stereotypical ideas that shape the cultural conceptions of male and female, as complementary yet mutually exclusive categories. How individuals are placed in these categories constitutes within each culture a gender system, a symbolic system, which correlates sex to cultural contents, social values and hierarchies. From this perspective, de Lauretis points out, "the cultural construction of sex into gender and the asymmetry that characterizes all gender systems cross-culturally (though each in its particular ways) are understood as 'systematically linked to the organization of social inequality'" (*idem*, 5; Collier and Rosaldo 1981: 275). In order to investigate and identify these social (in)equalities, we should perhaps consider specific questions that combine two factors: space and gender. For instance, do people from all gender identities have access to the same spaces or not? If not, why not? Are they allowed to circulate in these spaces? Or, on the contrary, are they confined to a specific space? If so, why? Are these circumstances different from or identical to a specific society? The answers to these questions may allow for social critique and will certainly lead to other pertinent questions.

However, if we add another factor – food – to the space-gender equation, other components will become involved in the matter, raising another set of relevant questions. Do people from all genders have access to food-related spaces? Or, is there a gender-specific food-related space, for instance, a kitchen? As Sammells and Searles mention in relation to the class implications of food and eating habits, the same could be said in relation to gender. This argument is also shared by Lyman T. Sargent in "Everyday Life in Utopia: Food" (2016), in which Sargent explains how foodways reveal and denounce social, political and economic aspects of a specific society depicted in a utopian/dystopian text (25-27).

"Foodways" is, in fact, the key concept to understanding the significance of food either in literary texts or in everyday life. Julie Parsons explains that foodways usually refer to the production and distribution of food at a macro level and are used in anthropology when exploring food cultures or shared common beliefs, behaviours and practices relating to the production and consumption of food. For Parsons, however, foodways can also be considered at a micro level, by reflecting the multiplicity of ways of "doing" food that incorporate all aspects of everyday food practices, from acquiring food, growing it or shopping for it, preparing, cooking, sharing and eating, to the consumption of food media. This means that the notion of foodways also incorporates an essential aspect of an individual's identity and cultural habitus, which are cultivated and inculcated over time. Parsons goes on to explain how foodways are "ongoing emotional, socially constructed, embodied, situated performances infused with sedimented social and personal history" (2015: 1-3). Foodways have multiple meanings and, Parsons continues, they work within three interconnecting domains:

1. on an "individual" level, through socialisation, internalisation, identity work and the construction of the self;
2. through interactional "cultural" expectations and "othering" of practices; and
3. via "institutions" that control access to resources, as well as ideologies and discourses (2).

Hence, foodways are validated, constrained and facilitated by reference to wider institutional and cultural contexts that restrain the "individual" choice, and are incorporated into many "layers of identity", as we call them. Some of these layers of identity are gender, class, race, sexuality, nationality, ethnicity and age. These layers of identity or, if you prefer, these multiple codes, are inscribed in spaces and bodies, which reversely build and shape identities. Bodies are thus the

surface (the skin) and the space (containers of ingested food and ideas) moulded by these layers or codes, regulating the tension that can sometimes arise between them.

As Henri Lefebvre points out in *The Production of Space* (1991),

> Space – my space – is not the context of which I constitute "textuality": instead, it is first of all my body, and then it is my body's counterpart or "other", its mirror-image or shadow; it is the shifting intersection between that which touches, penetrates, threatens or benefits my body on the one hand, and all the other bodies on the other. (184)

As the body is the physical and metaphorical space in which the individual layers of identity are inscribed, the same could be said about specific social spaces, these "architectonic bodies" being inscribed with multiple meanings that could be perceived as a cultural practice which promotes a system of hierarchies of gendered bodies.

To understand this continuous process of overlapping these layers of significance – space, gender and food – and how they act, react and interact together, we propose analysing a few food-related spaces in Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*, which, as hybrid social structural spaces, also function as symbols of macro entities: the Urrasti and the Anarresti societies. They are the "dots", as perceived by Távora, through which we will examine the social, political and economic dynamics that aggregate or segregate individuals. To fully understand gender dynamics in the text, besides analysing the gender implications inscribed in architectonic bodies, we will also decode the female bodies of the main societies depicted by Le Guin, for they, too, are considered social (structural) spaces.

Food-Related Spaces in Le Guin's The Dispossessed

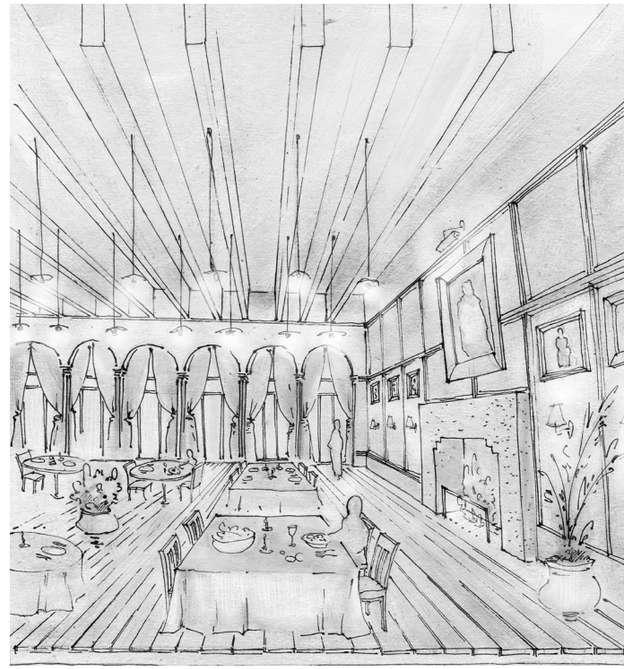
> There was a wall. It did not look important. [...] Where it crossed the roadway, instead of having a gate it degenerated into mere geometry, a line, an idea of boundary. But the idea was real. For seven generations there had been nothing in the world more important than that wall. Like all walls it was ambiguous, two-faced. What was inside it and what was outside it depended upon which side of it you were on. (Le Guin 2004: 1)

The starting lines of *The Dispossessed* bring forward the crucial importance of spaces, and within spaces, their boundaries. Lines – both geographical and metaphorical – that separate human beings and worlds and, at the same time, invite transgression. This idea of separation and the possibility of transgression unfolds throughout the novel, as does the multi-layered entity of space. Architecture, and space in particular, seem to be important aspects for Ursula K. Le Guin, not only to bring imaginary worlds to life, but because spaces are embedded with multiple meanings. In order to execute this interdisciplinary exercise of ours, and analyse the same spaces from different perspectives, we tried to understand what kind of influences Le Guin had had that could help us draft a few spaces depicted in the novel.

In an interview for *Harvard Design Magazine*, Le Guin elaborates on the fundamental role her family home had on her conceptualisation of space. Her Berkeley family home, designed by Bernard Maybeck (1862-1957), awakened her to the architects' power in influencing human behaviour through their use of space. Contrary to the usual practice at that time in architecture, Maybeck's style was functional and organic, adapted to users' needs, which played with form, proportion and materials. Using Le Guin's descriptions of the spaces, Maybeck's style, as well as those of Maybeck's pupil Julia Morgan (the first female architect to work in California) and William Wurster, we designed two food-related spaces with the same end: an Anarresti refectory and a University Urrasti refectory. These two very dissimilar architectonic bodies illustrate our views of the gender and class dynamics implicit in Le Guin's descriptions of the spaces, and will be analysed in detail in the next section.

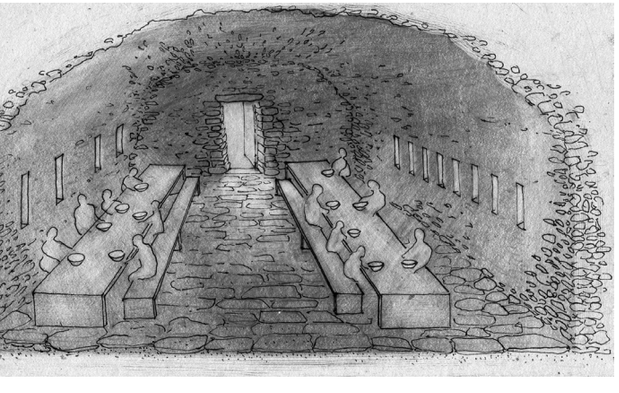
Refectory in Urras © Mariana Oliveira[3]

As Urras is a planet rich in natural resources, Urrasti architecture is distinguished by its diverse construction materials, large-scale rooms and lavish decorations. The large spaces enhance the users' experience by allowing them to eat in privacy (in small groups or by themselves) and in great comfort. Due both to the large number of high windows and to the excessively ornate decoration and furnishing, and the detailed construction of the finishes, the spaces are described as "erotic" and "feminine". Indeed, since the architecture is described with qualifiers credited also to Urrasti women, society assigns them a decorative role. The drawing clearly exposes these social inequalities of the Urrasti societies and illustrates women's position in the social scale by being completely empty of female silhouettes.



Refectory in Anarres © Mariana Oliveira[4]

In Anarres, however, the pragmatistic use of space demonstrates the main social need that is the survival of a species in an inhospitable environment. Ornaments, decoration and variety of materials are not only rare, but also frowned upon by the anarchist society. As the North American architect Louis Sullivan (1856-1924) used to say, "form follows function". Therefore, the bare cave-like construction, inspired by a refectory in Chakar, perfectly depicts the Anarresti social organisation: no interest in artificiality, wealth or comfort that may distinguish individuals. As an anarchist society, people eat together at communal tables regardless of their gender, as the genderless silhouettes in the sketch portray.



Keeping these drawings in mind as indicative of power dynamics inscribed in social structural spaces, the next section will focus first on decoding gender politics by combining an analysis of both architectonic bodies (food-related spaces) and female bodies (as social spaces), and second on class politics.

Gendered Food-Related Spaces

In "Is Gender Necessary? Redux" (1987), Ursula K. Le Guin revises herself on gender issues present in her fiction. Especially clear in her writings about the planet Gethen, Le Guin acknowledges the importance of gender in conceiving societies and solves the inequality problem by imagining biologically androgynous human beings. This, however, is only the first step in this "thought-experiment", as she calls it. She then puts the question of gender differentiation to rest and focuses on the social and political issues that remain in a genderless society. This exercise allows her to consider questions such as: how would society be organised if human beings were free from gender and sexual constraints? Would they become naturally less violent? Would there be no war? Would there be hunger? Nevertheless, these are cross-cutting questions in all her fiction, even in those of her writings where gender issues seem less evident, such as *The Dispossessed* (1974). Regarded by many literary critics as a great example of critical utopia (Moylan 2014: 87), *The Dispossessed* has been the focus of several researchers interested in the politics of the Anarresti anarchist society. However, gender issues have not yet been studied in relation to their connection to food, an issue that clearly mattered to Le Guin.

"A Rant about 'Technology'" (2004) is the text in which Le Guin specifically declares her interest in what may be termed "low technology", highlighting the importance of food, clothing and the production of energy in the creation of imaginary worlds:

> [T]echnology is how a society copes with physical reality: how people get and keep and cook food, how they clothe themselves, what their power sources are (animal? human? water? wind? electricity? other?) what they build with and what they build, their medicine - and so on and on. Perhaps very ethereal people aren't interested in these mundane, bodily matters, but I'm fascinated by them, and I think most of my readers are too. (2004, n.p.)

This fascination with food (how it is cooked and served, with whom it is shared) and its political importance are very clear in several of Le Guin's texts, in particular *The Dispossessed*, in which one can find more than fifty references to food-related aspects and behaviours. We will see that the analytical value of these food references goes far beyond their quantity, since they reveal power dynamics in the different societies depicted in the novel.

The nearly 200-year-old Anarresti society was founded by a group of exiled Urrasti inspired by the philosophical writings of Laia Odo, one of the revolutionary leaders who in a time of social, political and economic crises stood against the ultra-capitalist Urrasti system (cf. "The Year of the Revolution"): a woman. Although she herself never set foot on Anarres, her philosophy inspired an expedition by a few Urrasti revolutionaries to barren Anarres, who rushed in the utopian experiment of an anarchist society based upon ideals such as egalitarianism and solidarity.

As an anarchist society, there is supposedly no leading government, authoritarian institutions or any form of social hierarchy, and, in terms of gender, it seems egalitarian: women can engage in any kind of work, as Shevek explains to the sceptical Urrasti doctor, since machinery makes physical strength redundant (Le Guin 2004: 22). Genders enjoy the same rights and share the same living conditions and social arrangements. Names and clothes are genderless and sexual orientation is also a non-issue. Marriage, as an institution, does not exist. Instead, companionships are established by the elements of the relationship, which exists for as long as they want it to. It seems that the whole society is an undifferentiated mass of people that find a purpose in following social rules and in blending in. However, as Tom Moylan stresses, "Anarres is a community of individuals, not a collective", whose ideological apparatus is based primarily on the social conscience (Moylan 2016: 93). Indeed, the worst insult that any Anarresti might endure is to be accused of "egoizing", of putting their needs above their duties as citizen, because "the social conscience, the opinion of others, was the most powerful moral force" (Le Guin 2004: 90), and the most efficient regulator. Therefore, a system of latent communal surveillance has been inculcated, that any kind of divergence is faced with general disapproval and, at times, open resistance or sabotage, as it is the case of Shevek's confrontation with the senior physicist, Sabul. Nevertheless, individuals are also allowed to leave the community peacefully, if they so want.

This antagonistic dynamics between the individual and the collective in an anarchist society has been amply explored (cf. Lawrence and Burns)[5] and is embodied by the main character, Shevek. Shevek is the unsatisfied scientist, the uncomprehended genius, who is forced to desert his world and identity in order to protect his work, which he believes will enable the creation of technology that will eventually benefit the League of the Worlds. He travels to the twin planet, Urras, dominated by two rival power nations, Thu and A-Io, and based upon stratified systems.

As a socialist dictatorship (Thu) and a capitalist state (A-Io), the social systems implemented in Urras are highly hierarchized. Contrary to the egalitarian Anarresti society, Urras has been built on the premise that one class or group has more rights and privileges than the rest. This becomes clear in a conversation between Shevek and Atro, who proudly admits that the basis of Urrasti's societies is "discrimination":

> There's a great deal that's admirable, I'm sure, in your society, but it doesn't teach you to discriminate—which is after all the best thing civilization teaches. I don't want those damned aliens getting at you through your notions about brotherhood and mutualism and all that. They'll spout you whole rivers of 'common humanity' and 'leagues of all the worlds' and so on, and I'd hate to see you swallow it. The law of existence is struggle—competition—elimination of the weak—a ruthless war for survival. And I want to see the best survive. (Le Guin 2004: 186)

This ideology permeates the tissue of all Urrasti societies. In terms of gender, what we need to bear in mind is that these societies are "phallocratic-capitalist systems" (Moylan: 97) that hypersexualize women and commodify sex through marriage and prostitution.

Throughout the novel, it becomes clear that Urrasti women have but one purpose: to be a symbol of ostentation. The large majority of women is relegated to the private sphere and their existence is reduced to pleasuring men, as explained to Shevek during a dinner party (Le Guin 2004: 94-95). Faced with Shevek's bewilderment concerning the absence of women scientists, Oiie and Pae attest that there are a few female specimens that try to contest the idea that women are incapable of mastering abstract thought, who Pae describes as "God-awful brainy women with vaginal atrophy" (*idem*: 105). Yet, not even those women are allowed to study beyond the certificate level. Indeed, A-Io universities and other governmental institutions are exclusively male (*idem*: 105), as illustrated in the first sketch.

In private spaces, women are allowed to circulate, but in a controlled way and following subliminal rules. During Oiie and Vea's dinner party, it is clear how women are used for male entertainment only. What is expected of them is solely to be a decorative piece at the table. The sexual innuendo that their clothes and manners transmit, "the bare breasts, pushed upward" (*idem*: 256-7), the extravagance of their physical appearance, half naked, shaved, ornamented, white-skinned, soft and affected, and barely eating themselves, make them the perfect meal for the men. Like the food on the table, the women present themselves as meat for male degustation. Women are required to perform an ideal of womanhood that relegates them to a standard of objects of desire and places them at an ornamental level, in front of those men who create, determine and compose social spaces. Although they believe that they can use their power of seduction to manipulate men, women have only the illusion of power, because, in reality, women are always confined to the private spheres – to marriage and motherhood, to the bedroom and the house – which are perceived as biologically and socially inferior.

From the standpoint of the outsider, Shevek feels absolutely overwhelmed by the sensual powers of both food and women. As a vegetarian who does not drink alcohol, like most Anarresti, Shevek consumes food and drink which he was not used to and succumbs to this toxic social atmosphere. Although at the beginning he is shocked by the Urrasti egoizing of food and sex, he too surrenders to them, culminating with him sexually assaulting Vea.[6] This episode is so symbolically charged that in one scene the antagonistic ideologies of the two planets collide in Shevek's actions. This social space that is the private dining room of a wealthy industrialist is thus experienced as corruptive, corrosive and abject by Shevek, who ends up vomiting "all over the platter" (*idem*: 309). In other words, Shevek rejects the opulence, the excesses and the intrinsic corruption of Urrasti societies. On the contrary, in Anarres the relationship between food and gender asserts the egalitarian and the solidarity values of the anarchist community.

Due to the extreme conditions of the planet, the Anarresti diet is scanty and essentially vegetarian (*idem*: 102). In times of hunger, the entire community suffers the consequences and organizes itself in order to provide rations for everyone. In terms of work distribution, although people are allowed to pursue a career, jobs are rotational, preventing the formation of professional groups. These three aspects are fairly illustrative of the kind of cooperation that the Anarresti society promotes, even in terms of gender. The private and the public spheres are organic in the sense that the individual is something less significant in the large scale of things. Social duties and responsibilities always prevail. So, the respect and comradery for fellow human beings do not depend on preconceptions such as gender. Evidence of that is the fact that both men and women navigate social spaces, including refectories. There is no specific organisation of the space that promotes segregation of the genders. Indeed, the refectories promote communication between users and at the same time allow some privacy (*idem*: 132-3). In terms of food, the Anarresti are served equal portions. However, they may have seconds if there is plenty of food (*idem*: 132-3; 144-5). Contrary to Urras, women's thoughts and opinions are not silenced or voiced through their appearance or by resorting to the sexual manipulation of men. Anarresti women are naturally perceived as equals, if not admired for their "toughness", endurance and intelligence (*idem*: 22), of which Odo is the ultimate example. Therefore, the subjects of conversation during meals are very different from those in Urras. For instance, during the small picnic parties that Shevek joins in, boys and girls talk about "the spatial representation of time as rhythm, and the connection of the ancient theories of the Numerical Harmonies with modern temporal physics", or simply about love and suffering and their childhoods (*idem*: 76-77). These group meals are rituals that can be called "social meals", recalling Sarah Sceats's notion of "social eating". According to Sceats, eating in cases like these is not simply a question of group function, it is linked to the cultural and political relation of individuals or groups to larger groups and eventually society (2000: 165). These rituals gather the individuals of the group together, and in some cases they become the starting point of resistance. In this case, the group meals serve as a space for Shevek and his friends to share memories, debate their ideas on the future and discuss the evolution of Anarresti society.

Even the relationship that Anarresti women have with their bodies is completely opposite to that of Urrasti women. Anarresti people's bodies (both men's and women's bodies) are a space of conformity (in the Anarresti context) and of resistance (when compared to Urrasti societies). They are a surface marked by the scars of the harshness of the environment and rotational jobs, but more important than that is the fact that women are perceived as partners instead of ornamental lascivious objects. Differently from "the body profiteers" (Le Guin 2004: 278), as Takver describes the Urrasti women, Anarresti women do not shave or adorn themselves, a fact that appals Vea (*idem*: 280). Curious is Shevek's reflexion on Takver's physical appearance. After a long separation between the two, Shevek returns home from a faraway post and observes how Takver has aged more than the years they have spent apart, has lost some of her teeth and the freshness of her skin (*idem*: 413). Indeed, people on Anarres – whether men or women – are not beautiful: "they have big hands and feet, like [Shevek] and the [Urrasti] waiter… But not big bellies" (*idem*: 299). However, when observing Takver, none of this seems to matter to Shevek, because "he saw her as she was" (*idem*: 413). As the hero that breaks walls and builds bridges, Shevek functions too as a connecting dot between two opposite versions of womanhood. As he explains in his revolutionary speech, "on Anarres nothing is beautiful, nothing but the faces. The other faces, the men and the women. We have nothing but that, nothing but each other. Here [in Urras] you see the jewels, there you see the eyes. And in the eyes you see the splendor, the splendor of the human spirit. Because our men and women are free" (*idem*: 299). The gender inclusiveness of Shevek's speeches and dialogues should also be noted as a key indicator of Anarresti society's gender egalitarianism.

The single distinctive factor between men and women seems to occur during the state of pregnancy. When Anarresti women become pregnant, they are entitled to extra helpings in the refectories and for anything else they need (clothes and so on). So much so that when Takver is pregnant, she feels very much like a traitor to the community, especially during the hunger crisis. During this period, she was still entitled to extra rations and calcium supplements when her "milk was running short" (*idem*: 332), while other people endured the shortage of food. She even acknowledges that "pregnant women have no ethics. Only the most primitive kind of sacrifice impulse. To hell with the book, and the partnership, and the truth, if they threaten the precious fetus!" (*idem*: 433). As a successful biologist and ecologist, Takver admits that it is a racial preservation drive that can work against the community, and that vexes her deeply. For her, and possibly for all Anarresti women, pregnancy provokes an ambiguous feeling: joy and fulfilment for contributing to the continuity of the community, on the one hand; and, shame for the maternal instincts that may blind them in the face of adversity, on the other.

However, this is indeed individual shame and personal reproach, because pregnancy is accepted unreservedly by the community. This can be proved by social interactions. For instance, when Takver is pregnant and carries on working, her colleagues bring her food from the refectories every time she forgets to eat. Contrary to Urrasti women, who are perceived as inferiors due to their biological reproductive abilities, Anarresti women are valued.

Anarres is thus a society that acknowledges and accepts the biological differences of the sexes, but does not discriminate either sex on the basis of those differences. Instead, society ensures that it is the community's responsibility to promote the welfare of every individual, but it is especially their duty

to protect the next generation, as happens with the education of the Anarresti children. The whole community takes care of its individuals, and each individual works for the community. Foodways and food-related spaces – both architectural bodies and female bodies - clearly demonstrate that. They have proven to be social structural joints, which function as platforms of aggregation in Anarres and segregation (both geographically and metaphorically) in Urras. The inclusion of women in or their exclusion from food-related spaces and the manner in which they display or are meant to display their bodies at the table – hypersexualised in Urras and desexualised in Anarres – expose explicit systems of discrimination in the first case, and egalitarianism in the second. Systems of discrimination extend, however, to issues of class, which need to be explored as a complement to a gender-based approach in order to arrive at a more totalizing understanding of Le Guin's novel.

Class and Dialectical Spaces

Elaine Graham-Leigh ends her *A Diet of Austerity: Class, Food and Climate Change* (2015), a discussion of how the eating habits of the working class are being blamed for climate change, with a chapter titled "What we would eat in utopia" (187-192), in which she begins by briefly mentioning the role of food in William Morris's and Edward Bellamy's utopias, only to turn her attention to the importance of food in Ursula Le Guin's utopias. In contrast with the frugal habits recommended to the poor in late capitalism during the recent years of austerity, Graham-Leigh points to Le Guin's novel *Always Coming Home* as a truly utopian programme regarding food: "Le Guin ends this passage with what is possibly the most optimistic summary of what we might eat in Utopia that I have ever come across: 'The Kesh were not a thin people'" (Graham-Leigh 2015: 190). With this quote, Graham-Leigh's book ends where it started, refusing to blame overweight people and affirming instead the satisfaction implicit in carrying more weight than the slim ideal of our day. However, this ending is introduced as a corrective to Le Guin's depiction of food in a much-better-known novel, *The Dispossessed*, "an ambiguous utopia" in which wasteful consumption is rigidly controlled:

> This portrayal of unmaterialistic scarcity might resemble some environmental calls for restrained consumption, but it shouldn't be taken as an attempt to imagine what a post-revolutionary world might look like. The point in *The Dispossessed* is that the people of Anarres are not alone, but live in the shadow of a wealthy neighbouring planet, Urras, from which their ancestors came as settlers. The Anarresti were allowed to leave Urras and set up their socialist colony because exiling them to a planet so barren that it could barely support life was the easiest way of dealing with them, but their fate is related to that of their sister planet. The Anarresti are effectively practising socialism in one country, with all the difficulties that implies, not living in a post-revolutionary Utopia. (*idem*: 189)

Graham-Leigh correctly links this aspect of the world of Anarres to its semi-allegorical correspondent in Le Guin's 1974 world, that is, the doctrine, proclaimed by Joseph Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin in 1924, of pursuing socialism in the Soviet Union in spite of the failure of socialist revolutions in the rest of the world.[7] This isolationism, contributing as it did to scarcity, famine and the final demise of the Soviet Union, cannot ultimately be advanced as a successful model for moderate consumption, which is why Le Guin's protagonist, Shevek, repeatedly talks of breaking walls, in a thinly veiled reference to real-world walls (both symbolic and literal), such as the Iron Curtain or the Berlin Wall. Graham-Leigh, who is looking for utopian images of post-revolutionary food practices, must then turn to *Always Coming Home*, after noting but leaving relatively unexplored the dialectical potential of the central fact that "the people of Anarres are not alone, but live in the shadow of a wealthy neighbouring planet, Urras". Indeed, in its back-and-forth movement between one world and the other, between one time and several others, *The Dispossessed* provides us with a fascinating picture of dialectics at work in these two interlocked worlds. The dialectics will be explored here in terms of its manifestation in the consumption of food, in particular in the specific sites where food is provided, served and eaten; these sites can thus be seen to function as "social structural joints" in revealing class dynamics throughout Le Guin's novel.

Indeed, food works as a metaphorical joint not only in each world understood separately but also in both worlds as a binary set. Near the beginning of *The Dispossessed*, as Shevek and his friends are still undergoing their political and historical education, they remember "a class on the History of the Odonian Movement" (Le Guin 2004: 37), in which a famine in the Nation of Thu is described by a commenter:

> "A famine in Bachifoil Province in the Nation of Thu," the commenter's voice had said. "Bodies of children dead of starvation and disease are burned on the beaches. On the beaches of Tius, seven hundred kilometers away in the Nation of A-Io (and here came the jeweled navels), women kept for the sexual use of male members of the *propertied class* (the Iotic words were used, as there was no equivalent for either word in Pravic) lie on the sand all day until dinner is served to them by people of the *unpropertied class*." A close-up of dinnertime: soft mouths champing and smiling, smooth hands reaching out for delicacies wetly mounded in silver bowls. (*idem*: 38)

Throughout the book, food is often the object of comparison, from the special-beverages ration saved up in Anarres for the purposes of a party to the excess of food at a luxurious lunch in Urras, but the specifics of this contrast are worth pausing over: the contrast between famine and dinner is also one between one nation and another, and thus a contrast of different spaces. We soon learn that the nation of Thu is a socialist dictatorship, whereas the Nation of A-Io is a capitalist state, but also that Thu had undergone a collapse of government in 771, shortly before the establishment of the anarchist society in Anarres; we thus begin to realise that Anarresti descriptions of Urrasti nations are historically dated, preceding the establishment of the Anarresti colony. The description of the famine in Thu might plausibly refer to a pre-

revolutionary convulsion, remembered by the Anarresti but not updated. The contrast in the quotation serves a simple, but effective, political purpose, that of revealing the inequalities between these national formations on the basic level of food distribution, overdetermined, in the case of A-Io, by the reference to prostitutes and to the distinction between propertied and unpropertied class affiliations (here estranged through the need to use a foreign language to name concepts alien to the Anarresti) in who eats the food and who serves it, compounded by a description of the first group as having "soft mouths" and "smooth hands". These last elements serve an obviously crude ideological purpose, not too distant from the stereotype of the capitalist fat cat, holding a large cigar, but their critique is not only of the world of Urras for its inequalities; it is also of its inequalities along national lines, compounded by the historical dimension of the scene and its instrumental use in inculcating a repulsion for Urresti societies. Shevek and his friends immediately question the age of the film they have seen and its applicability to describe the present societies of Urras (*idem*: 38); they soon become aware of the undue simplifications needed to make such indoctrination effective, which is also why Shevek struggles throughout the book to make each world's views of the other more complex. At one point, once more partly in the context of food, he engages in a reverse stereotype, adopting a mocking tone when it comes to what he imagines the Urresti think of the Anarresti:

> "You are right," Shevek said. "No fun. Never. All day long on Anarres we dig lead in the bowels of the mines, and when night comes, after our meal of the three holum grains cooked in one spoonful of brackish water, we antiphonally recite the Sayings of Odo, until it is time to go to bed. Which we all do separately, and wearing boots." (*idem*: 179)

Scenes of food include noticeable gender and sexual elements, as we have seen; here, for example, in the alleged negation of sensuality in an austere work culture and, in the previous quotation, in the smooth passage from gender to class exploitation; yet the class coding of food is perhaps the most salient element and thus the easiest to track down. Nevertheless, as we have also seen, it is often steeped in a series of narrative and historical complexities which continuously ask us to refine our interpretations. Depending as it does on a dialectics between an anarchist moon and a planet divided into capitalist, dictatorial and underdeveloped nations, the central oppositions of the novel must almost necessarily hinge on issues of class; the relationship between class and food becomes perhaps even stronger than in other utopias on account of the long descriptions of famine in Anarres, which not only puts the equalitarian society to a severe test, but also helps to explain the attention paid to food by the older Shevek, once he arrives in Urras.

This means that any attention to food in relation to class yields very little if analysed only in the context of Anarres, class dynamics in Anarres being residual at best. Although rules regarding food in Anarres are closely adhered to by practically everyone – if these rules do happen to be broken, as when Shevek takes a double helping at the commons, during a famine, the deviation is met only with a frown (*idem*: 216), a manifestation of peer disapproval – there seem to be institutional allowances. When Shevek starts working at the Central Institute of the

Sciences, he notices the quality of the food and of the refectory and even helps himself twice to the "stewed preserved fruit" (*idem*: 87); later, he notices that dessert is a daily occurrence:

> Of course there were local variations: regional specialities, shortages, surpluses, makeshifts in situations such as Project Camps, poor cooks, good cooks, in fact an endless variety within the unchanging framework. But no cook was so talented that he could make a dessert without the makings. Most refectories served dessert once or twice a decade. Here it was served nightly. Why? Were the members of the Central Institute of the Sciences better than other people? (*idem*: 94)

On the one hand, the reader may be pleased to notice that, in a more realistic utopia such as this one, local variations do occur, and these may take several forms, so that planning has not yet achieved the drearier uniformity characteristic of more classical utopias. On the other hand, Shevek does call our attention to this one instance of inequality, which, however, is not repeated. Later instances of the use of force to get food during the famine do not appear to have a class basis, revealing only the inevitable strain in a society dealing with scarcity. In these cases, one might in fact call attention to how it manages to overcome a natural difficulty with varying degrees of success. Although Shevek tells of having had a job allotting insufficient food rations to sick people, hence condemning them to starve, and although a truck driver is said to have run over people trying to assault a provisions' truck (*idem*: 257), so that we know that the famine in Anarres was indeed fatal for many, we do find many more instances of that society being held together by a mixture of solidarity and peer-enforced austerity. One instance of this is Takver's right to an extra meal as a pregnant woman (*idem*: 197), which, however, she often misses at the commons on account of her work schedule; we are told that this stringent work ethic is compensated by friends who save food which they then bring her.[8] But, already during the famine, we are told that she continues to be granted supplementary food allowances as a nursing mother (*idem*: 206, 210). The opposite case, however, also occurs, as is later revealed by Shevek to Efor, when he retells how "There was a famine, you know, eight years ago. I knew a woman then who killed her baby, because she had no milk, and there was nothing else, nothing else to give it" (*idem*: 235). Although Shevek does not relate this to class differences, this extreme story reminds one that not all nursing mothers were as well taken care of as Takver. And, granting that this may have had to do with the importance of Takver's job to alleviate the famine, Shevek does not make this link himself, although, as we have seen, he does connect the nightly desserts to the faint aura of privilege in the Central Institute of the Sciences.

These instances, however, make us realise that class as a category yields little when Anarres alone is taken into account: that is, class as a tracer reveals above all its negation as an active principle in Anarres. This is noticeable in the description of the commons of Chakar, a cavernous room in which equality rather than social gradation is stressed:

> They went a block to the commons, the largest building in Chakar. Regular dinner was over, but the cooks were eating, and provided the traveler a bowl of stew and all the bread he wanted. They all sat at the table nearest the kitchen. The other tables had already been cleaned and set for next morning. The big room was cavernous, the ceiling rising into shadow, the far end obscure except where a bowl or cup winked on a dark table, catching the light. The cooks and servers were a quiet crew, tired after the day's work; they ate fast, not talking much, not paying much attention to Takver and the stranger. One after another they finished and got up to take their dishes to the washers in the kitchen. One old woman said as she got up, "Don't hurry, *ammari*, they've got an hour's washing yet to do." She had a grim face and looked dour, not maternal, not benevolent; but she spoke with compassion, with the charity of equals. (*idem*: 264-265)

As a fully functioning category, class can, therefore, only be seen at work in the much more dialectical world of Urras, or in the contrast between Urras and Anarres, as we have already seen. Whereas in Anarres scenes of plenty result from very deliberately saving up daily allowances for a party, to the point that some of the guests even become unwell from overindulgent eating – "The rich plentiful food was intoxicating. Everybody got very merry, and a few got sick" (*idem*: 51) – they are common fare at the Evening Commons of the University in A-Io:

> He was used to that grace and comfort now, it had become familiar to him. So had the food, in all its variety and quantity, which at first had staggered him. The men who waited table knew his wants and served him as he would have served himself. [...] He enjoyed dinner very much. He had gained three or four kilos since coming to Urras; he looked very well now, sunburnt from his mountain expedition, rested by the holiday. He was a striking figure as he got up from table in the great dining hall, with its beamed ceiling far overhead in shadow, and its paneled, portrait-hung walls, and its tables bright with candle flames and porcelain and silver. (*idem*: 112)

The luxurious, traditional design of the Urrasti Evening Commons seems to complement the change in the well-fed Shevek's looks, although this is also the result of his isolation in an affluent setting. However, he eventually gets sick of the opulence of this milieu, to the point of very literally throwing up on it: "He ran up against a table. On it lay a silver platter on which tiny pastries stuffed with meat, cream, and herbs were arranged in concentric circles like a huge pale flower. Shevek gasped for breath, doubled up, and vomited all over the platter" (*idem*: 191). The hungover revelation he has on the following day is once more symbolised by food: "It was not only the alcohol that he had tried to vomit up; it was all the bread he had eaten on Urras" (*idem*: 225). This marks the moment he decides to escape, leading him to explore the underside of A-Io's class-based society, after a revealing conversation with Efor, in which his servant breaks his polite diction and frankly tells him of the hardships of his life, so that Shevek is led to reflect that

> This was the Urras he had learned about in school on Anarres. This was the world from which his ancestors had fled, preferring hunger and the desert and endless exile. This was the world that had formed Odo's mind and had jailed her eight times for speaking it. This was the human suffering in which the ideals of his society were rooted, the ground from which they sprang. It was not the real Urras. The dignity and beauty of the room he and Efor were in was as real as the squalor to which Efor was native. To him a thinking man's job was not to deny one reality at the expense of the other, but to include and to connect. It was not an easy job. (*idem*: 235)

It is worth noting that, given Shevek's isolation in the university grounds, far from the geographical loci of poverty, his only access to this world comes from the inevitable inequality inside the grounds, particularly the fact that he has been given a servant, who finally tells him about the other side of Urras. Shevek quickly comes to a conclusion that is similar to the one he was taught in class near the beginning of the book: instead of only seeing the dignity and beauty of the university room as an illusory appearance screening Urras' squalor, he understands that Urras is a dialectical reality. His university guardians are thus ultimately betrayed by an unavoidable class structure, which they cannot keep out of the grounds.

Food spaces, then, serve as a social structural joint between the classes in A-Io, between the nations of Urras, and between Urras and Anarres. Though both A-Io and Urras make use of refectory spaces in institutional milieus, these are markedly different, one equalitarian and seemingly devoid of decoration, the other attended by waiters and characterised by imposing ornaments. For Shevek at least, it is outside these spaces that a sharper confrontation with the combination between food and class takes place, notably in restaurants, in a private home in A-Io and in his own room at the university, in the company of a servant. Yet, one passage should make us pause, by calling our attention to the centrality of food, its makers and those who serve it in *The Dispossessed*. Chapter eight begins in the Anarresti city of Abbenay, with the description of

> a street festival and feast with cooking over open fires. It was the midsummer holiday, Insurrection Day, commemorating the first great uprising in Nio Esseia in the Urrasti year 740, nearly two hundred years ago. Cooks and refectory workers were honored as the guests of the rest of the community on that day, because a syndicate of cooks and waiters had begun the strike that led to the insurrection. (*idem*: 194)

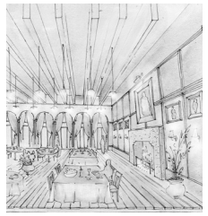
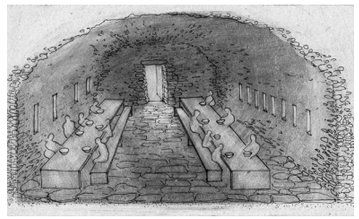
The shift from "waiters" to "refectory workers" is not only one of name: it refers importantly to a change of function, but also to one of space. The holiday registers the decisive importance of a strike of cooks and waiters, leading as it did to an insurrection and the ultimate establishment of an anarchist colony off-planet. It thus places practices related to food at the centre of the politics dialectically linking both worlds.

Conclusion

Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Dispossessed* is a good example of how social spaces, be they architectonic bodies or physical/human bodies, expose gender and class dynamics. In this interdisciplinary exercise, we have approached the text from different perspectives in an attempt to attain a more complete understanding of the (in)equalities depicted in the divergent societies. As an author admittedly concerned with issues such as gender, class, food and space, Le Guin proves to be a fertile source of multi-layered writing material for the use of complementary lenses of analysis.

As we have seen and the graphic below sums up, in terms of gender, social structural spaces serve as a platform, in the sense that they are moulded by and reflect the intrinsic political order of the two main societies depicted in the novel: a system that segregates individuals in terms of class and gender, in the first instance, and a system that aggregates, in the second. By analysing and illustrating the food-related spaces in detail, it becomes clear how geographic spaces mirror social parameters, how physical bodies (mainly female bodies as marginalised bodies) are displayed and how they are performances of gender standards and inculcated social values. Class would appear to be a simpler tracer in a novel about anarchist and capitalist societies, yet, because it exists only negatively or residually in Anarres, it can only become truly operative if Urras and Anarres are understood in dialectical terms, an operation that then needs to be reproduced for smaller and smaller sets: the nations of Urras and the classes in A-Io. This approach then needs to be further complicated by an awareness of the potentially misleading narratives learnt and told by each group about each of the other groups. If images of food excess in A-Io might encourage an unflattering comparison with the austerity of Urras, it must be remembered that A-Io is a class society, where food excesses are not universally available; whereas some of the food-related hardships experienced in Urras may be made worse due to problems with its concept of work. The result of an inquiry into class and food in *The Dispossessed* will thus reveal the centrality of food and its spaces in the history of class warfare in A-Io's past and its continuing importance as an object of scarcity in the communitarian though vulnerable society of Anarres. It should above all allow us to appreciate the complexity of Le Guin's dialectical conception. This interdisciplinary exercise proves, therefore, to be a useful approach to the text, offering us a multimodal and layered understanding of the (non) stratified social systems of the main societies depicted in Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*.

Power Dynamics inscribed in Food-Related Spaces in Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*

	Urras	**Anarres**
		
Architectural Bodies (Refectories)	Universities and governmental institutions are exclusively male; Ostentatious decor and massive rooms and buildings; Individuality; Differentiation in terms of the class composition of its clientele; Class differentiation in terms of the class composition of consumers and cooks/ waiters;	Organic and gender-free spaces; Basic and merely essential decor; Communitarianism; Almost no differentiation in terms of its users, with few exceptions; No apparent class differentiation between refectory workers and other workers;
Human Bodies (Women)	Confined to private spheres; Controlled circulation; Ostentatious, ornamental role in society; Considered biologically and socially inferior; Hypersexualised and sexual commodities; "Phallocratic-capitalist systems" (Moylan); Discrimination and exclusion; Segregation.	Rotational jobs and pursuit of careers; Unlimited circulation; Free from socially imposed gender performativity; Considered socially equal and pregnancies are considered as individual and socially beneficial; Desexualised and sexually liberated; Gender-free and egalitarian system; Inclusion; Aggregation.

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Notes

1. To illustrate this thesis, de Lauretis states four propositions: 1. gender is (a) representation; 2. the representation of gender is its construction; 3. the construction of gender is continuous, involving institutions, the media, the academy and schools, the arts, the family, among others; 4. the construction of gender is also effected by its deconstruction (1987: 3).
2. References that inspired the design: House in Berkeley – Architect Bernard Maybeck.
3. References that inspired the design: Trulli, Alberobello, Italy; Refectory, Monastero d'Astino, Bergamo, Italy; Man-made caves, Monte Erusheli, Georgia; Refectory, Convento de Cristo, Tomar, Portugal; Medieval Fortress, Marvão, Portugal (detail); Refectory, Mont St Michel, France.
4. See Burns 2010 and Davis & Stillman 2005.
5. It is interesting to note that there has been little reference to Vea's sexual assault by critics. In fact, during our research, we could find only one: Sean Guynes' "Sexual Violence in Le Guin's *The Dispossessed*" (2015), published in his blog. See https://seanguynes.com/2015/11/03/rethinking-the-dispossessed/. Last accessed in February 2019.
6. Le Guin acknowledges another limiting aspect of the history of socialism in the twentieth century, namely the fact that Karl Marx expected a socialist revolution to succeed in a fully industrialised nation such as the United Kingdom or Germany, not in the feudal, unmodernised terrain of Russia. This is echoed in the narration of the establishment of the colony in Anarres, when this is contrasted with the plans of its founder, Odo: "Her plans, however, had been based on the generous ground of Urras. On arid Anarres, the communities had to scatter widely in search of resources" (Le Guin 2004: 81). Shevek himself reflects on the limits of his society's solidarity during the famine, due to the moon's natural conditions: "he had grim thoughts about the reality of hunger, and about the possible inadequacy of his society to come through a famine without losing the solidarity that was its strength. It was easy to share when there was enough, even barely enough, to go around. But when there was not enough? Then force entered in; might making right; power, and its tool, violence, and its most devoted ally, the averted eye" (*idem*: 212).
7. The willingness to sacrifice oneself for one's duty to the community is related to the ethical role of work in Anarres. We are told that "The identity of the words 'work' and 'play' in Pravic had, of course, a strong ethical significance. Odo had seen the danger of a rigid moralism arising from the use of the word 'work' in her analogic system" (Le Guin 2004: 223). A social morality based on work risks developing a Puritan work ethic; the identity of "work" and "play" makes work more bearable by presenting it as something that the individual will willingly engage in for the sake of the community, not as an imposition on the individual. However, this leads to imbalances such as that of the pregnant woman who, by foregoing meals in order to work, becomes the object of the solidarity of others, who give her part of their own food rations, at the same time that she does not take advantage of her allotted food rations. That is, while food supplements are planned for her, Takver's strong work/play ethic ends up overtaxing her friends' solidarity, otherwise easily remedied.

What May Happen in the Next Hundred Years: Joanna Russ's Food Forecast

Marinela Freitas

In 1900, John Elfreth Watkins, Jr published a (now famous) forecast entitled "What may happen in the next hundred years". In that piece, Watkins, an American journalist,[1] made twenty-eight predictions about what the world would be like "before the dawn of 2001", and most of them were quite spot-on. Of course some have missed the mark, like when he predicted that we would be able to go from the USA "To England in Two Days" or that "Automobiles will be Cheaper than Horses" (although in this case, it gets more accurate by the day…) (Watkins 1900: 8). Other predictions are becoming dangerously accurate – "There will be No Wild Animals except in menageries" – and a few point to changes we are still hoping for – "There will be No Street Cars in Our Large Cities" or "How Children will be Taught (A university education will be free to every man and woman)" (*ibidem*).

As far as food is concerned, Watkins's forecasts about the preparation, distribution and production of food have totally hit the mark: he foresaw the development of genetically modified crops ("Peas as Large as Beets", "Melons, cherries, grapes, plums, apples, pears, peaches, and all berries will be seedless" [*ibidem*]); modern farming techniques ("Oranges will Grow in Philadelphia"); the general use of refrigerators and the growing concern about food sanitation ("No Foods will be Exposed. […] Liquid-air refrigerators will keep great quantities of food fresh for long intervals [*ibidem*]); the depletion of coal ("Coal will Not be Used for Heating or Cooking"), and its replacement by renewable resources such as hydroelectricity ("Man will have found electricity manufactured by water-power to be much cheaper"), electro culture in greenhouses ("Vegetables Grown by Electricity. Winter will be turned into Summer and night into day by the farmer." [*ibidem*]); and, finally, the rise of convenience food and other commodities of the on-the-go world: takeout food, home deliveries, catering services or industrial cooking. Here's a short excerpt from the last prediction:

> **Ready-Cooked Meals will be Bought** from establishments [...] at a price much lower than the cost of individual cooking. Food will be served hot or cold to private houses in pneumatic tubes or automobile wagons. The meal being over, the dishes used will be packed and returned

> to the cooking establishments where they will be washed. Such wholesome cookery will be done in electric laboratories rather than in kitchens. These laboratories will be equipped with electric stoves, and all sorts of electric devices such as coffee-grinders, egg-beaters, stirrers, shakers, parers, meat-choppers, meat-saws, potato-mashers, lemon-squeezers, dish-washers, dish-dryers and the like. [...] Having one's own cook and purchasing one's own food will be an extravagance. (*ibidem*) [2]

Watkins's forecast was based on data collected from the leading experts on science and technology at the time. As he explains at the beginning of the piece,

> [t]hese prophecies will seem strange, almost impossible. Yet they have come from the most learned and conservative minds in America. To the wisest and most careful men in our greatest institutions of science and learning I have gone, asking each in his turn to forecast for me what, in his opinion, will have been wrought in his own field of investigation before the dawn of 2001 – a century from now. These opinions I have carefully transcribed. (*ibidem*)

It seems obvious that these predictions answer people's anxieties and hopes regarding food at the beginning of the century: they were anxious about overpopulation and food scarcity, and they were hopeful that science and technology would solve these problems (hence, the "super foods" –"Strawberries as Larges as Apples" and "Peas as Large as Beets" – which we also find in speculative fiction written around the same time, such as in *Food of the Gods*, by H.G. Wells).[3] Indeed, nineteenth-century fascination with gadgetry and automation, as well as the rise of modern capitalism, contributed to the dream of "a modern urban experience where goods are available" with a minimum of effort or even interpersonal contact in a growing technological environment (cf. Belasco 2007: 174).

On the other hand, if we look at our own century, it is also clear that the problems we are now facing have emerged out of the fulfilment of many of these predictions. In consumer capitalism, uncontrolled growth and waste go hand in hand. So, instead of fighting food scarcity like in 1900, in industrialised Western countries we are facing the problem of food surplus and waste. Add to it the new high-tech consumerism, and we are left with a problem of technological addiction and tech-waste. Especially in our kitchens. The electric kitchen dreamed by Thomas Edison and others (which Watkins refers to) turned into reality during the 20th century and, soon enough, advances in electronics made the vision of a fully automated, Smart Home possible (i.e. a house with centralised control). In the 21st century, it won't be long until "home automation and interconnection elements of our own living place" run our lives through what is known as the Internet of Things (Lee 2017: 258).

Bearing this in mind, I propose a similar – more modest – survey to understand the twenty-first century. Inspired by the fact that this piece was published in the *Ladies' Home Journal*,[4] I suggest that instead of asking "the most learned and conservative minds in America", "the wisest and most careful men in our greatest institutions of science and learning", we "ask" one

of the most learned and radical minds in America; one of the wisest and most controversial and revolutionary women in our great institutions of literature and learning: the award-winning writer, renowned academic and literary critic, Joanna Russ.

Together with writers such as Marge Piercy, Ursula Le Guin, and Alice Sheldon (aka James Tiptree, Jr.), Joanna Russ was one of the female voices who revolutionised American science-fiction in the 1960s and '70s, transforming it, as Jeanne Cortiel has already pointed out, into "one of the richest spaces for feminist utopian thinking and cultural criticism" (Cortiel 1999: 1). Russ was very much interested in the "re-perceiving of experience", which she associated with the writing of science fiction and the process of "anali[zing] reality by changing it" (Russ 1995: xv). As Russ once put it, "Science-fiction is *What if* literature" and, therefore, "the perfect literary mode in which to explore (and explode) our assumptions about 'innate' values and 'natural' social arrangements, in short about Human Nature, Which Never Changes" (Russ 2007: 205, 206).[5]

So if we were to extract a set of predictions about the future of food from her work we would always have to bear in mind that Russ, like any writer, is as much concerned with the future as she is with the present, and is as much concerned with changes as she is with the consequences of those changes for human nature. And this is very clear in two of her short stories, both of which can be found in Russ's *The Hidden Side of The Moon: Stories* (1987), a book containing a selection of texts written over a period of 25 years. The first one is "Nor Custom Stale", published in 1959, in the popular *Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, and the second one, "The Throwaways", published ten years later, in 1969, in the magazine *Consumption*.

These are two dystopian cautionary tales about the allure of technology and the perils of the consumer society, in which food plays a significant role. Warren Belasco would say that these short stories belong to the "soft" or "cornucopian" variant of dystopias, the ones where "life is too easy, with few struggles, so humans become weak, dumb and vulnerable" and "in which abundance and security are achieved but at the cost of free will and thought" (Belasco 2006: 99). Let's begin with "Nor Costum Stale".

"Nor Custom Stale" was Joanna Russ's first short story, published when she was in her second year at the Yale School of Drama (Cortiel 1999: 1). It is about an "intelligent" house that provides for everything its occupants need, while prolonging their lives for a good many years. The title of the short story is taken from Shakespeare's play *Anthony and Cleopatra*, from a well-known passage describing Cleopatra's charms: "Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale / Her infinite variety: [...]" (Shakespeare 2.2: 242-3). In Russ's story, this description refers to *the house*: there is nothing – neither time nor repeated use – that may end its infinite ability to take care of those who inhabit it… so we are told at the beginning of the story:

> They had discovered immortality. Oh not for people, not at all; it was Houses that were immortal. Harry and Freda's House had been in their family for fifteen generations. [...] They were proud of their House, for, as the Company always said (after proving to Harry and Freda that their House was in perfect working order), "Our Houses last, not a lifetime, but forever." (Russ 1989: 124-5)

The House consisted of a tightly controlled environment, totally artificial and isolated from the outside world (typical of technological utopian fantasies) (cf. Belasco 2007: 167). It "stood on a little hill some three or four miles on the highway" (*idem*: 125), like a beacon of technological exceptionalism – as the Winthorpean "city upon a hill" rhetoric fully reminds us:

> The House was attractive and semi-spherical and stood on a little hill some three or four miles on the highway. [...] The House was perfect. It gave them Air (for all the windows were sealed), it gave them power, and it would let you choose any delicious dish you wanted and then send its electric voice calling and calling to the nearest city to bring it to you. Or if you wanted Food to cook yourself, it would make that for you too, from the rock under its own foundation. (Russ 1989: 125)

The House provides Air, Power, and Food, which means it has a central information system – a Panel – that coordinates security, maintenance, energy use, and so on. One day a red light appears on this Panel, followed by another red light, and another, and another… and a few weeks later, Harry and Freda have to give up the majority of the technological commodities provided by the House: they lose their car, magazines and newspapers stop coming in, the electric calendar stops on March 17, they are unable to see any broadcasted images, their communications are out of order, and they become more and more isolated from the outside world. Ready-fixed meals are no longer available as well, so they must resort to cooking real food – Freda, does, let us be clear. And the reason it needs clarifying is because the imagery surrounding the "home of the future" that dominated the end of the 19th-century and that continued well through the 1950s, with the Populuxe[6] era, and the mid-60s, was often presented as a "re-visioning of housework in order to liberate women from [tedious] domestic chores" (Belasco 2007: 109). However, in this new "push-button world" women never really left the kitchen. The fact that Thomas Edison predicted that thanks to electric cooking the housewife of the future would be a "domestic engineer" is evidence enough (Edison 2008: 259).

As time goes by, Freda and Harry become disconnected from the world, alienated in a perfectly timed monotony, a never-ending loop, consisting mainly of breakfast, lunch and dinner:

> In the morning Freda would get up at exactly 8:30 by the electric clock and make breakfast consisting of scrambled eggs and real bacon. At 9:30 she would wake up Harry and the two of them would eat breakfast. While the house cleaned the dishes and made the beds, they would do the morning's crossword puzzle (one apiece) and then read a book until lunch time. At lunch they always had the same menu and at dinner, too (after finishing their books). [...] Then the next morning, Freda would get up at exactly 8:30 and the morning after that she would get up at exactly 8:30 and then the next morning… (Russ 1989: 129)

Eventually the House ends up disintegrating into a million atoms, leaving Freda and Harry unprepared and unprotected to deal with the natural catastrophe that had meanwhile occurred: the air of the earth had frozen and a wall of snow had engulfed the entire landscape. Only "old-fashioned", "archaeological survival" (Russ 1989: 131) could now save them, but they were not prepared for it… as such things go.

Unlike Victorian utopias, in which automation freed people for higher pursuits (cf. Belasco 2007: 112), in "Nor Custom Stale" automation just pushes people into isolation, endless monotony and eventually death. Interestingly enough, five years later, when Isaac Asimov writes about the technological kitchens of the future (after visiting the General Electric Pavilion at the New York World's Fair of 1964), he echoes some of Russ's concerns, when he points out that the only downside to smart kitchens is boredom. In a piece published in *The New York Times*, called "Visit to the World's Fair of 2014", Asimov writes that gadgetry will continue to relieve people of tedious jobs, since kitchen units will prepare "automeals". EVEN SO [*sic*]", says Asimov, "mankind will suffer badly from the disease of boredom [...]. This will have serious mental, emotional and sociological consequences, and I dare say that psychiatry will be far and away the most important medical speciality in 2014" (Asimov 1964: 20).

Joanna Russ goes back to this theme in a later short story called "The Throwaways", but this time her target is less people's dependence on technology and more people's eagerness to consume and throwaway. The setting is a capitalist consumer society in the future, in which bodies are purchased; heads are used as hats, for decoration; husbands are owned in pairs or more – and everything is commodified and disposable. This is how the story begins: two women meet at a cafeteria – one is a Traditionalist, the other a Fashionable:

> They met in a cafeteria (kah-*fet*-er-*ee*-yuh, n. origin unknown. An establishment where fet may be obtained) and the Traditionalist took one slot while the Fashionable took the other. Both were young, barely ninety. Clothes were a bit drab that week and the Fashionable was wearing the 'natural look', somebody else's body, of which she had several spares at home. She had also thought of bringing along an extra head, but did not wish to appear gaudy. The Traditionalist, on the other hand, was genuinely in her own skin. Nothing but." (Russ 1989: 98)

"Fet" is the most fashionable food of the moment. It's a *must*. It hangs in the air, "little pieces detaching themselves from the main mass [...] and drifting gently from side to side" (*idem*: 99) – a sort of "Cocaigne-meets-Gernsback's Appetizer room in Scienticafe" kind of thing.[7] The Fashionable loves fet, and everything else that is "in". That's why she lives in a Disposable House – an automatic house, which sets "the machines in the walls to extrude the proper furnishings and accessories for each particular time of the day", as well as a pattern decoration according to one's mood: it can be a "French Provincial" theme, a Hawaiian theme, or even random designs (like we usually do on our computer desktops or screensavers) (*idem*: 99). Of course, the Fashionable doesn't live with the same pattern for more than a day, since that may lead to boredom or, even worse, attachment – which is not "in". There are other kinds of houses, of

course, like the Instantaneous, which anticipate people's needs and desires, but they make you feel very passive, so the Fashionable is undecided (*idem:* 100).

Now, the Traditionalist doesn't want any of that. She lives in a proper House with walls and only uses throwaways:

> "I," said the Traditionalist, [...] "live with solid walls and Throwaways."
> "Throwaways!" gasped the Fashionable.
> "There's a little shop where you can get them," said the Traditionalist, lowering her voice. "Illegal, of course. A factory in the Rockies. I go there every week and pick out everything. Guaranteed for a week. They're delivered through a secret underground organization. At the end of the week my husbands and I smash the hard things with our feet and put the whole mess down the disposal chute. Then I go back again."
> "Oh!", gasped the Fashionable. "Oh, my!" (*idem*: 101)

Weighing in on this secret, the Fashionable finally finds the courage to ask the Traditionalist about what everybody is now craving for, the "must-have" commodity of the moment – "Things":

> "Did you ever hear," she hissed, "of Things?"
> "Of what?" said the Traditionalist.
> "Things," said the Fashionable breathlessly. "just Things. You make them with your own hands. Everything. To sit in. To sleep on. To eat from. You just make them. First you make them and then you put them around and then –" (she almost choked) "then – you just leave them there."
> "You leave them there?" said the Traditionalist slowly.
> "Yes," said the Fashionable faintly. "You just leave them there. They're permanent."
> The Traditionalist jerked away. She tottered. She turned ashen. She almost fell. "Permanent!" she cried in horror. "How can you say such a thing to me? I may be a Traditionalist but I'm not a – savage! A pervert! A – *nonconsummer!* Permanent? I'd rather die!" (*idem:* 101)

This dread of being identified as a *nonconsummer* is a very insightful critique of wasteful consumer economy. The world's carrying capacity is being strained in the name of "a desire to own and control everything", very typical of "capitalism in its advanced, industrial phase, whether in its ascendant or disappointed phase", as Joanna Russ points out in one of her essays written in the 1970s (Russ 1995: 36, 38). In 2019, standing at the dawn of the 4th Industrial Revolution, we would say that this is a fine example of how "advanced capitalism thrives by selling life-styles and brands of identity", as Rosi Braidotti has already pointed out, producing differences for the sake of commodification, in a logic of hyperindividualism or "quantitative proliferations of the self" (Braidotti 2005-2006: [7]). And this is something Russ understood early on in the 1970s and that will probably be aggravated with the rise of Artificial Intelligence in our present day.

To conclude, I would like to try to extract some predictions from these two short stories, by imitating Joanna Russ's style (she was a brilliant essayist and I will loosely follow the structure

she used in her essay "Somebody is trying to kill me and I think it's my husband: The Modern Gothic" [Russ 1995: 113-4]):

Predictions

1. Technology will be 100% reliable and autonomous.
2. Intelligent Houses will feed us and make sure our daily routine runs flawlessly.
3. Smart houses will take care of boring domestic chores, freeing humans for higher pursuits (such as reading).
4. The House of the Future will anticipate all our needs and desires.
5. Artificial food will be everywhere.
6. *Nonconsummers* will be vilified.

Translation

1. We won't understand how 98% of technology works. But, if we must be controlled, let's do it luxuriously and with the utmost comfort.
2. We will be utterly dependent on our Houses and unable to fight for our lives, should we need to.
3. When technology fails, women are still expected to go to the kitchen and solve the problem. (*read*: we'd better learn how to cook… or how to reprogram the robots).
4. Artificially-controlled environments encourage addictive behaviour, emotional isolation, and boredom. (*read*: Asimov was right – psychiatry is still the right career choice).
5. Real Food will only be available on the black market, in the dark web or in any other dark-coloured underground space (such is the schizophrenic nature of advanced capitalism: you crave for what you don't have, and someone always profits from it).
6. Let's hope they can save the world.

CONCLUSION: We should all go and read another Joanna Russ book. She is definitely a "Keepaway".

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Notes

1. His father was a Curator of Mechanical Technology at the United States National Museum (today the Smithsonian Museum).
2. Supermarkets of the late 1930s introduced packaged, chilled meats and 'frosted foods' (Belasco 2007: 175).
3. In *Food of the Gods*, first published between December 1903 and June 1904 in *Pearson's Magazine*, Wells explores the idea of a superfood (*Herakleophorbia*) that can feed the entire population, thus creating a race of giants.
4. The *Ladies' Home Journal* was a sister publication of the *Post*.
5. As Russ further explains, "[a]ll sorts of definitions have been proposed by people in the field, but they all contain both The What If and The Serious Explanation; that is, science fiction shows things not as they characteristically or habitually are but as they might be, and for this 'might be' the author must offer a rational, serious, consistent explanation" (Russ 2007: 205).
6. Populuxe refers to low-cost consumer goods that are still perceived as being fashionable or luxurious. Many of the products produced at the time were based on 1950s architecture and design and they were advertised as "popular luxury" or "luxury for all". The word was created by the author and historian Thomas Hine for his 1986 book of the same name (see Hine 1999).
7. Essences, liquid food and other emulsions were a common motif for female science fiction writers in the 1920s, particularly in pulp fiction (see Donawerth 1994: 138-39).

Empathy through Foodways in Colum McCann's *Let The Great World Spin*

Alvany Rodrigues Noronha Guanaes

Colum McCann's textuality establishes a dialogue between Irish people and diverse marginalised communities around the world, whose substrate is built upon his perspective of Ireland added to his nomadic experience. Born in Dublin in 1965, McCann left Ireland at the age of 21 to live in The United States, whence he set out on an eighteen-month cycling journey around forty North American states to gather stories that would enlarge his storyteller repertoire. Despite having left Ireland at such a young age, he had already graduated from the former College of Commerce in Rathmines and started a journalism career. His job allowed him to enlarge his views about Ireland through research and by living in different places as required by his position. This experience helped McCann financially during the trip to the United States as he kept writing a column for the *Evening Press*, an Irish paper, although he also worked "[…] as a bicycle mechanic, dishwasher, ditchdigger, fence builder, housepainter, ranch hand, and waiter" (Cusatis 2011: 4), collecting stories shared with him along the way. During an interview, he declared that those accounts made him "[…] understand the value of stories and storytelling". Before settling down as a writer, McCann got a degree in English and History from the University of Texas in Austin, worked in Texas as a wilderness educator for wayward teenagers in 1988, and taught English as a foreign language in Japan. He now resides in New York where he is a distinguished professor of Creative Writing at Hunter College and dedicates his life to writing. Such multifaceted experience is mirrored in McCann's oeuvre, which despite consisting mostly of fiction, is firmly grounded on real (or real-ish) characters, locations and, situations. Although he took inspiration from everyday life and everyday people, his relationship with his peers was more than that of observer or gatherer of material for his books; he was, above all, an empath. He bonded, shared, and rightfully gained their trust, which caused even strangers to open up to him. (*idem*: 5).

To build up the characters, McCann has lived in subway tunnels with homeless people, and in Gypsy camps around Eastern Europe; he has travelled to Russia to research about Nureyev: "[…] stayed with black families in South Carolina; Native American families in New Mexico; Christian right-wingers in Texas", people scattered around what, in his words, are the "anonymous corners"[3] of the world, whose voices are not often or easily heard. Nonetheless,

McCann refuses to be a spokesperson: "[…] as writers we don't speak for people, we speak with them. That's where the dignity comes in", he declares.

Such a dignified task allows the creation of empathic bonds, established by getting to know others through the stories they share, which foregrounds McCann's narrative. He conceives the literary text as democratic story-sharing spaces through which "[…] we are allowed to become the other we never dreamed we could be" (McCann 2009). For McCann, "literature is linked to the politics of empathy" (McCann 2016) since a narrative is the only possible vehicle to exercise the human capacity of walking in other people's shoes, in other words, to understand the world from another person's perspective through imagination. Different from sympathy, solidarity or any other semantic relative, empathy is about intersubjective suture generated by imagination. Furthermore, the author believes in 'radical empathy,' which arises from one's willingness to get to know others, despite drastic differences.

Because of its importance in McCann's work, empathy is the core of the present research, whose object of analysis is food-character interaction in Colum McCann's *Let the Great World Spin.*

The ubiquitous cultural presence of food allows it to be a key element to identifying alterity. To give a literary example, let us take into consideration one of the leading voices in the novel mentioned above. Corrigan, an Irish priest, talks of hunger, thirst and weariness as "immemorial feelings" (McCann 2009: 27), which convey both organic and emotional instances bound together. There is then, on the one hand, the pervasive dimension of food; its materiality, the solid part which fulfils everybody's organic needs, which can be considered an element of intersection among humans since food is a basic element of survival. On the other hand, there is food choice, its usages and any non-material components invested in food, revealing individual traits. Sarah Sceats observes that "What people eat, how and with whom, what they feel about food is why […] are of crucial significance to an understanding of human society" (2000: 1). The point is then, taking the connotations regarding food in the novel, looking at how the habits of the central characters in the story regarding eating (and or drinking) reveal elements strong enough to foster imagination, and consequently facilitate empathy.

Let the Great World Spin, published in 2009, is set in New York in the seventies. More precisely, the narrative time is 7 August 1974, the day of Philippe Petit's legendary feat. A French high-wire artist, Petit rigged a steel cable to cross the Twin Towers during their construction. Not only did he go on the tightrope, but he did it artistically: for forty-five minutes he walked, hopped, and even laid down on the cable stretched between the two towers. A historical anachronism, Petit sent a message of redemption in opposition to the horrors that would occur in the same area twenty-seven years later. There is a pervading atmosphere of possibility in this act, of alternative outcomes, of proposing a different history (or still, new histories). Under the shadow of Petit's daring 'physical poetry,' the lives of Irish and New Yorkers converge and dialogue, unveiling traumas and grief, while they walk their own tightropes in search of redemption.

Roland Barthes declared that a food item is "[…] a system of communication, a body of images, a protocol of usages, situation and behavior" (2013: 24). As such, food signifies through a large set of themes and situations that it is a cultural object, appropriated by society and transformed into

a "system of tastes and habits" (*ibidem*). The individuals within societies have their preferences of taste and develop personal habits concerning food. It dovetails with Deborah Lupton's ideas about food and eating being at the core of one's subjectivity. Lupton argues that the whole experience of living "[…] in and through our bodies […]" (1996:1) is "[…] inextricably linked with subjectivity […]" (*ibidem*), crystallising the idea that the way individuals choose to nurture their bodies, people's material presences in the exercise of humanity, is a fundamental key in the construction of subjectivity and of cognizance of other's selfhood. As food is an associative element, it allows communication with alterity.

Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik point out that there has been an explosion of studies and texts about food since the eighties. In general, they attribute such proliferation to three key factors. The first is feminism and women's behaviour studies as it legitimises "[…] a domain of human behavior so heavily associated with women over time and across cultures". The second factor has to do with the "interdisciplinary work on food politics." Finally, the third concerns the links between food and "body and soul, self and other, the personal and the political, the material and the symbolic", researched by a great many scholars from different fields (2013:2). Parts of the three propositions are involved in the present research, since they help to understand the characters' constitutions.

The characters chosen are analysed within the heterotopic framework in which they are inserted. Foucault divides what he calls "other places" in society into utopia and heterotopias (1997: 330-336). Utopias are unreal and immaterial spaces, invested with desires and individual or collective expectations contrary to actuality, or sometimes as an improved extension of reality. In contrast, heterotopias are actual places, temporal-spatial fragments within societies. Those are complicated places, crossed by several positionings or counter-positionings, anchored on the subjects' experiences and their physical and mental alterities. There is, then, this idea of particularity connected to heterotopias and, by extension, of difference. The localities focused on in this work convey marginalised geographical spaces but also emotional states that isolate the characters in a margin of grief, thus, 'other places'. Discussing such localities means casting light onto difference, periphery, heterogeneity, implying a rupture with homogeneous discourses of power as heterotopias of crisis offer opportunities for transformation. It is about agency and being the protagonist during one's own 'tightrope crossing.' In *Let the Great World Spin* two characters occupy emotional and physical heterotopic transformative locations: John Corrigan, the Irish monk cited above and Claire, a wealthy woman, grieving her son who died in Vietnam.

John Corrigan's radical empathy.

John Corrigan, an Irish priest, living in the Bronx is one of the eleven voices of *Let the Great World Spin,* whose story is narrated by his brother Ciaran. Corrigan was inspired by the life of the activist and poet Daniel Berrigan, a Jesuit who dedicates himself to assisting the poor and is known for his fierce anti-war activism, especially against the Vietnam War (Polner 1997). Like Berrigan, Corrigan incorporates the liberation theology postulates (Boff 1987) about

committing to the poor, pursuing an end to historical and social injustice and promoting action for liberation. As his physical counterpart, Corrigan chooses to be around the people he wants to assist. As young as eleven, Corrigan gives away his blankets and clothes to those in need and starts spending time with homeless drunks along the canal. He drinks and smokes with them and uses his pocket money to buy alcohol and cigarettes. Those people viewed him as "[…] just another snotnose trying on the poorman shoes […]" (McCann 2009: 16). What people failed to understand is that he really was "trying on the poorman shoes" but not out of laughable teenage rebellion; on the contrary, it was to get to know the outcasts of society and being "[…] some bright hallelujah in the shitbox of what the world really was" (*ibidem*), as Ciaran conceives his brother. He tried to bring people close to him, 'pulling' them by sharing their habits instead of trying to convince them of change, or still 'pushing' them as if he was a moral role model. Corrigan had this idea that people were looking for some Eden where they could get relief from their fears. As for fear, Corrigan understands that "You're breathing it in. You touch it. You drink it. You eat it. But it's so fine you don't notice it. […] What I mean is, we're afraid." (*idem*: 30). He includes himself in the discourse by swapping 'You' for 'We,' thus demonstrating he does not consider himself to be different from anybody else. Drinking with people means 'to share his fears and to embody others'. If drinking is the way out people found in order not to despair and, in his own words to "keep going" (*ibidem*), he views it as a legitimate life choice. By ingesting the drinks he is symbolically incorporating the others within himself. Ciaran summarizes his brother's religious perspective thus: "What Corrigan wanted was a fully believable God, one you could find in the grime of the everyday." (*idem*: 20).

Furthermore, Corrigan was playing his part in materialising a "flesh-and-blood-savior" (Cusatis 2011:185). After being sent by his order to live in the projects of the Bronx, he aids neighbouring prostitutes by offering his apartment as their headquarters and getting beaten up to the extremes of martyrdom by their pimps for doing so. Accepting it as a 'job hazard,' Corrigan acquiesces. His mission was his own: who he helps and the way he reaches out to people lie within his power of decision.

The priest chooses to live on the edge of precariousness, communicated through his dwellings, clothing and meal plan. In his house, there was "Just tea and sugar and milk" (McCann 2009: 16). Tea is Corrigan's only food choice. It is the only drink he has, and there is no other reference to food intake, with one exception that is discussed below. It is possible to infer the other foods (signs) that have been excluded since the tea is the only visible sign. This idea, along with the few items in his possession – barely one set of clothes, a prayer kneeler and few books – indicates, first, the limits of the precariousness in which Corrigan chose to live. Secondly, tea embodies Corrigan's national identity as it is commonly associated with the traditional Irish choice of drink. Tea is the first thing he asks about when his brother arrived from Ireland to stay with him – "[…] five boxes of his favorite" (*idem*: 26). He insists on having it hot, the way it is drunk in Ireland, despite the hot weather of American Summer, instead of putting ice in it, as suggested to him by locals. Finally, as drinking tea is the way Corrigan establishes a direct identity between himself and his country, it symbolises the life he left behind and the emotional grief he carries.

His father had left the family while he was still a baby, the only fatherly "presence" in the house being a monthly check that came in the mail and the clothes his mother neatly kept. He meets his father again only after his mother's death, refusing to socialise.

Ciaran describes men and women in their house yard after the funeral, sauntering along with their father's old suits, hats, scarves and a pair of shoes accompanied by female counterparts all happy with their mother's clothes. Meanwhile, a quite drunk and shirtless Corrigan went among them grinning and waving at their barefoot and stupefied father standing at the front door – Corrigan's way of showing "some sort of triumph that went beyond theological proof" (*idem*: 20), a display of optimism against "the meek" (*ibidem*). Nonetheless, the liberating deeds in this passage did not suffice to end the sorrow and heartbreak held back in his teenager constitution. Ciaran asks why he had not attended their father's funeral, but he kept on preparing tea instead of answering. For some reason, the way Corrigan is moving around reminds Ciaran of one occasion when his brother was along the shore and voices were calling him and then, at this moment, "The kettle whistled, louder now and shrill" (McCann 2009: 27).

Corrigan's grief is crystallised in such memory-invoking scene only to highlight the priest's spiritual transcendence who chose to continue tending to the voices that keep calling him, despite his human suffering. Long after finishing drinking the tea, Corrigan still did not answer Ciaran's question: "Little dribbles of tea sat in his palm. He brought his hand to his mouth and tongued it. […] He kept tilting the teacup on his hand as if trying to get the last drops out." (*idem*: 30). Tea was meant both to rescue the past and to alleviate the burden of grief. On one occasion Jazzlyn, one of the local prostitutes, drinks tea from his mug leaving a lipstick smudge on the rim. Ciaran noted that his brother drank from the same cup without cleaning the rim. It can be inferred that Corrigan did not mind a closer contact with other people, another symbolical amalgam with a marginalised subject. Tillie, who is also a prostitute, as a narrator, describes an occasion when she makes Corrigan a birthday cake: "He cut up the cake and gave a piece out to everyone. He took the last piece for himself" (*idem*: 230). This exemplifies Corrigan's path of giving himself out to people through the sharing of food. Tillie's description alludes to the Last Supper, inclusively because it implies it was Corrigan's last birthday. Corrigan had this idea about Christ being "[…] easy to understand […]" (*idem*: 20*)* as he was just everywhere he was needed. He says Christ "[…] took little or nothing along, a pair of sandals, a bit of a shirt, a few odds and ends to stave off the loneliness. He never rejected the world" (*ibidem*). Corrigan and Jesus Christ are juxtaposed in these two statements. In Ciaran's voice, it is impossible to infer when he is speaking about his brother or about Christ. Corrigan initials cooperate with this allusion: J.C. which sets him in both the human and spiritual spheres, validating his work.

Corrigan overcomes his father's absence by being present for others. If heterotopy means other spaces, we may say that Corrigan inhabits others' spaces to find his place in the world in a continuous transformation of people's lives and his own. Characterised by one drink and one food item, Corrigan perpetuates the idea of the body and the blood of the holy communion. In this way he embodies the everyday Jesus he believes.

Claire – lighting up.

Claire is introduced in the novel at her penthouse on Park Avenue receiving the breakfast tray that Solomon, her husband, brings in. Her "[…] nerves jangle in her […]" (*idem*: 73) and, despite the detailed description of the character's moves since she has woken up, there is no mention of her eating her breakfast, conveying the idea of inappetence. Claire's disempowered position is highlighted by the paternal attitude of Solomon's offering of food plus the fact that "[…] He even lay down on the bed in his suit and touched her hair" (*ibidem*). Claire is about to host a group of mothers who, like herself, have lost their sons in the Vietnam War. She has not still recovered from her loss, and her present apprehension is due to her displaying her wealth, mainly to Gloria, another woman in the group who lives close to Corrigan, in a rundown area of the Bronx. Claire's inappetence accounts for "lack of appetite" for her traumatic life. Claire recollects her doctor's advice about drinking milk for calcium which she scorns: "Calcium indeed. Drink more milk, your children won't go missing" (*idem*: 108). The recurrent question in her mind could be "what is the point of being alive and healthy once my son is dead?"

Instead of eating, Claire smokes cigarette after cigarette, a habit that disgusts her husband, which is why she does it in secret. She has read somewhere that smoking could help to overcome grief as the body will be busy dealing with poison instead of the suffering, which makes her think that this is why the soldiers are given cigarettes. Lucky Strikes, she sarcastically declares. Claire is attempting to reach a state of numbness through a surrogate replacement for food which is also a point of intersection with her soldier son. While lining tea bags up to resemble a formation of troops, the mother thinks that she "Can't indulge this heartsickness," (*idem*: 84) and advises herself to "Imagine endurance" (*ibidem*). Claire fasts and smokes to undergo a soldier's routine but also to keep herself alive.

Joshua was asked to go to Vietnam to work as a computer programmer. His squad's job was to write codes which would make it possible to keep track of American casualties. Joshua describes his routine in Vietnam in detail in the many letters he writes to his mom. Whenever he had a difficult task, Claire would place Joshua's correspondence by the freezer and "allow it to cool him down" (*idem*: 100). After his death, she would look for any electronic devices in the house as an allusive reference to Joshua and his computer. For example, leaning against the fridge allowed a journey along with electricity. There is a juxtaposition between Joshua's computer and the fridge as both have wires, cathodes, and transistors as displayed in the text. This meant that as she opened the fridge it would feel as if "[...] she was in the very same room, right beside him [...] (*ibidem*). So, while her husband is asleep, Claire sits by the fridge and reads Joshua's letters. She imagines smoothing his hair and giving motherly advice about sleeping time and eating properly to make sure that he "wasn't fading away" (*idem*: 89). This connection with the fridge conflates nurture, presence, and grief. A refrigerator is a place to keep foodstuffs and from where Claire would get ingredients to prepare meals for her family, fulfilling her motherly duties. Joshua's memory, like food, is preserved in the same environment. The fridge provided the luminosity she needed to read – the material instance of light – but she also needed the metaphorical brightness of the spiritual connection with her son.

However, while on one hand the fridge epitomises preservation and light, thus life, on the other hand it is a sad portrayal of death. It evokes a mortuary refrigerator as besides all the specific elements already discussed; Claire turns to it to 'see' her son again "[…] through the ether" (*idem*: 86). Nonetheless, even though Claire herself understands the group of mourning mothers' meetings as "A revival of funerals […]" (*idem*: 114) she also views it from a transformative perspective, as she says those moments are occasions "[…] during which we hurt, and have one another for the healing" (*ibidem*). Since she allows herself to make connections, as the tightrope walking implies, she takes on her "mission" of finding her way out of darkness, as implied by the meaning of her name.

Corrigan's relationship with food displaces him to an inhuman sphere, applying to him a numinous aura whereas Claire's scant foodways materialise the void left by her son's death. Both lives are permeated by traumas linked to absence, which set them in marginalised lonely places in the search for self-redemption. There is an unimaginable alliance between them alluding to the invisible link between the two towers envisioned by the funambulist. It engrosses the empathic chorus about the importance of interrelations present thorughout the narrative, which is the case with Claire and the other mothers and Corrigan and the outcasts of society. McCann's text therefore compels readers to continually reflect upon otherness, since difference and connection are intertwined tacitly or explicitly.

Food images may reach the reader in an almost subtle way, stimulating thoughts and feelings that connect them to the characters, accepting or rejecting them, but invariably being added to by them. The intersubjective suture is vividly generated by the creative imagination reaching emotional instances, thus opening space for empathic response.

Focusing on the text rationally or allowing themselves to be affected by its production of senses will provide each reader with a different experience. Both aspects may happen more intensely in some passages or have a broader appeal in others. Nonetheless, an "active attempt by one individual to get 'inside' the other" is needed (Davis 2018: 5).

Literary narratives offer readers the opportunity to foster their creative mind by interpreting the symbolic subtexts. The centrality of food displayed in the present analysis stimulates the reader to think about their own food choices and addictions, thereby establishing a dynamic dialogue with the characters.

Cognitive and affective instances are recognised as part of the empathic process and pertain to the reading act. Therefore, it is only the reader's imagination through foodways, instilled with the richness of literary language, that allows both intellectual and emotional correlations which, transformed into feelings or emotions, will plausibly create an empathic bond between text and reader.

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Better Than Being Fossilised![1]

Ian Watson

At first sight the reference book to go to about all matters science fictional (not only in the English-speaking hegemony!) would seem to be *The Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* edited by John Clute and Peter Nicholls. The *Encyclopedia* began in 1979 with 672 pages. The new edition of 1993 has 1,370 pages. By now the Encyclopedia is on-line, forever expanding and revising itself, with almost 6 million words and rising; it's free to consult.

As well as entries about individual SF authors, the Encyclopedia has nearly 900 comprehensive entries devoted to 'Themes', ranging from 'Adam and Eve' to 'Zoo'. But amongst the many hundreds of themes, there is precisely ***one*** entry referring to Food.

This may be because the editorial team themselves aren't personally very interested in eating. Supreme editor John Clute recently complained on Facebook, à propos music played in restaurants, that *he* goes to restaurants to *talk*. Or it may be because *science fiction itself* doesn't pay much attention to food.

The food theme which *does* feature in the Encyclopedia is "Food Pills". FOOD **PILLS**.

Who started the fashion for future food pills? The answer, if we follow the *Encyclopedia*, ought to be the French chemist Marcelin Berthelot who published an essay in 1894 on "Foods in the Year 2000"[2], declaring that synthetic food manufacture would completely replace agriculture. This essay appeared in a popular monthly magazine (*McClure's Magazine*) founded in New York the previous year when a World's Fair was taking place in Chicago. Prior to the World's Fair, the American Press Association had been asking notable writers to promote the event with essays. Berthelot was one of the most famous scientists in the world at the time. He had proved that no vital 'life-force' was needed to produce organic sugars and fats and so forth, but simply the same universal laws which also govered inorganic chemistry. There was no mystical magic in meat, despite the pseudo-science *vril* of Bulwer-Lytton (in *The Coming Race,* 1871) which became part of the trade-name for the meat extract Bovril, popular from the 1870s onwards, along with other food extracts of the era.

Berthelot's crusading vision was utopian, of a world without warfare about resources. The young H.G. Wells may have paid attention to Berthelot in a negative way – or else the idea of

food extracts was very much in the air in general. Only five years after Berthelot's essay, Wells published the *dystopian* novella "A Story of the Days to Come", referring to unspecified "pastes and cakes" as the food of the future – which was not a welcome prospect.

Food pills became mixed up with votes for women. Populist agitator Mary Elizabeth Lease predicted in her *Problem of Civilization Solved* of 1895 that by 1993 women would be liberated from slavery in the kitchen because a "small phial" – a "phial" being a little glass bottle – of life force from the heart of corn or wheat would provide enough substance for people for several days. Bye-bye, cooks and cooking! An anti-feminist called Anna Dodd mocked this notion in her *Republic of the Future* of 1887, her narrator declaring, "When the last pie was made into the first pellet, women's true freedom began" (1887: 31).

Returning to the *Encyclopedia*, food "Tablets" turn up in 1915 as the diet of the 40th Century. And in the 1950s Ray Bradbury mentioned that a "matchbox of food pills" for space pioneers would replace the covered wagon filled with real food. By now the idea of food pills had become a mostly satirical cliché, ignored by writers although forever popular with cartoonists.

Food pills won't do as a general diet, because pills can't provide enough calories even if they can supply all necessary vitamins and minerals. What you need as regards miniaturised food is the military food such as that which nuclear submarines carry, according to Joe Haldeman. In an amusing interview in 2012 Haldeman relates that a real-life nuclear submarine carries food for perhaps three months in a very limited space, but you can concentrate and freeze-dry food so much that you can pack an awful lot of food aboard. Distilling a lot of drinkable water to rehydrate your food is no problem if you have a nuclear reactor for power.

On the other hand, according to Kyle Mizokami (2018), a different picture emerges, one of newly-baked bread, and of fresh food only running out after a couple of weeks, yielding in turn, for weeks more, to masses of tinned food crammed into every available space, including under floors.

By now we must give up on the vast *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* for any guidance. A shame. Is this lack due to the *Encyclopedia* being hosted in England, famous for its native cuisine? Ahem, this is a *joke*, which I do not think is at all accurate nowadays. Millions of Brits watch a regular diet of Masterchef and a dozen other celebrity chef programmes on TV. British cuisine is no longer a contradiction in terms.

However, due to Brexit this *will* become true again. Starving Brexiters will soon be catching pigeons and rats in the streets to barbecue. We have the opportunity to witness the collapse of a modern high-tech Western state into barbarism due to stupidity.

The site *www.technovelgy.com* – "where science meets fiction" – jumps to our assistance with many more sources of food in SF. This site has sieved SF literature – at least the literature written in English from 1933 onwards – like a whale gathering up krill. Much of what is gathered up isn't actually much more significant than krill, namely small fry. Nevertheless, some highlights are...

In January 2014 the newsletter of the major SF & Fantasy publisher Tor.Com[3] hosted a virtual round table featuring six authors, including Aliette De Bodard who also blogs about Vietnamese cuisine, and Fran Wilde who runs the blog "Cooking the Books" interviewing authors who feature meals in their works of fiction. Heroines, and heroes, of food awareness! Many SF and especially Fantasy writers themselves are personally keen on cooking, to the extent that the "trade union" SFWA, Science Fiction & Fantasy Writers of America, has published a cook book[4] to raise money for its legal fund, edited by the same Fran Wilde in collaboration with the current president of SFWA, Cat Rambo. However, that's a fannish fun book, not concerned with actual future food.

Personally, I would divide future food into two categories. Number one: food to feed would-be colonists of other worlds or of habitats in space. Number two: food to feed the mass of human beings on Planet Earth, which is heading into an era of considerable climate instability, which will have a large impact on agriculture and on the "natural world", too – such as the fish in the seas, in our warming and more acidic seas. Not to mention that sea levels will rise and many major cities will start to flood. Porto is wise to have steep sides. Because of these steep sides, Portugal may rule the oceans once more when Barcelona and Rotterdam and such ports are submerged.

To deal with food in outer space first of all... I am becoming quite sceptical as regards any successful large-scale colonies in space itself, or upon our Moon or on Mars, or on other moons of our solar system. My scepticism is primarily because our human bodies have been finely tuned by evolution upon our own particular world, importantly as regards the *gravity* of Planet Earth. I do not see Moon colonists successfully adapting to *permanent* Moon gravity. Likewise with Mars. Instead, I see medium-to-long term metabolic failure. According to Dr Iggo Magan in 2017, "Brief exposure to weightlessness causes space *adaptation* ... Long-term exposure to the *zero gravity* causes multiple health problems."

Our experience so far of zero gravity is showing up more and more potential micro-problems, and many micro-problems will add up to, well, system failure. I suspect that the same will prove true in the long term for human colonists in Moon gravity at under 17% of Earth's gravity and even Martian, at under 40% of Earth's gravity. Our bodies will not adapt, nor will our children's nor their children's. Defying gravity isn't going to work, no more than defying the speed of light.

According to a 2017 experiment aboard the International Space Station, mammalian cells fully adapt to zero gravity in less than a minute. Real-time readings on the ISS reveal that cells compensate ultra-rapidly for changes in gravitational conditions. Here is a comment by Cora Thiel (University of Zurich) of the team that designed this experiment: "It seems paradoxical. Cells are able to adapt ultra-rapidly to zero gravity. However, they were never exposed to it in the evolution of life on Earth. Therefore, the results raise more questions regarding the robustness of life and its astonishing adaptability."

Can the behaviour of individual cells be scaled up to predict anything meaningful about the behaviour of the whole body (including the brain) consisting of 37 trillion cells?

We so much *want* to be able to expand into space over the millennia to come, so that our eggs are not all in one basket. To me "astonishing robustness" verges on the rhetoric of confirmation bias.

Unfortunately, the main question mark over future food is the likelihood of a future in the sense of some form of organised civilisation. And even as regards our planet remaining hospitable to life, beyond extremophile bacteria. However, let's leave this extreme possibility aside. Probably

Earth will avoid the fate of Venus – namely a runaway greenhouse effect resulting in an average surface temperature of 467 degrees Celsius and a crushing atmosphere 100 times thicker than Earth's, equivalent to us being about a kilometre underwater.

Kim Stanley Robinson is a fine utopian SF writer, as well as being a bit of a secular saint, though a perfectly reasonable saint, not like Mother Theresa for instance. In Stan Robinson's view the only way for a human civilisation to continue realistically is to achieve a realistic utopia by the disappearance of capitalism. Yet how does the transition come about? How does capitalism get replaced? Near-future *Now* we can portray, and we can imagine a future utopia and try to work towards it by taking little measured steps. Yet in between is the mystery of the non-catastrophic transition which time will either reveal to us during the course of events; or not. Possibly Brexit is beneficial in so far as a capitalist economy will start shrinking instead of measuring its state of good health by constant expansion – which is actually an indicator of wreckage as regards our planet.

In his three novels, *Red Mars*, *Green Mars*, and *Blue Mars* – the traffic lights trilogy – Robinson has charted a possible long-term route to 'terraforming', making Mars habitable for human beings just as Mars once was habitable hundreds of millions of years ago. In his more recent novel *Aurora*, Robinson looks at what would be involved realistically in sending a self-sufficient multi-generation spaceship to a very nearby star, assuming that a suitable world is there to colonise. The basic answer is that *we cannot do this* even in an imaginary future of superior engineering and wealth 500 years from now. As regards maintaining a miniature self-sustaining world, with breathable air, drinkable water, healthy food – with self-contained copies of Earth's different ecologies but one trillion times smaller than the Earth's surface – biological systems are very difficult to keep in balance, crops tend to fail, bacteria mutate rapidly. Importantly, Robinson's starship takes 160 years – generations of people on board – to reach almost the *closest* star system to Earth. That is using the fastest travel that *future* Earth can produce, 10 per cent of the speed of light. With current technology the same trip for a big vessel might take 4000 years. A little as if a Pharaoh had launched a pyramid into space. The Earthlike world that Stan Robinson's starship arrives at proves to be fatally unsuitable.

By now we have identified several thousand planets orbiting stars within a couple of hundred light years of Earth, and none seem Earthlike. Nor does our own solar system – where life provenly *did* arise – seem *in the slightest typical* of solar systems. Having complex life arise on Planet Earth is like winning first prize in a lottery twenty times running. Having intelligent, conscious life here is maybe winning the lottery twenty times more. Or fifty times. Or five hundred.

There is no planet B for us, probably not in the whole of our own galaxy, which in any case is out of reach. So, the only reason to imagine *extraterrestial* food of the future is for entertainment.

I do realistically foresee Chinese asteroid miners sucking hot soup with noodles out of self-heating bags. I sincerely honour these future volunteer worker ants sacrificing their bodies and their lives. They will not mainly mine rare elements as used in mobile phones, but rather masses of water, raw materials for fuel, and possibly way out in the Oort Cloud of comets they will mine for "CHON" food – basic artificial food made from Carbon, Hydrogen, Oxygen, and Nitrogen. Carbonaceous chondrite asteroids are rich in CHON elements. (The acronym "CHNOPS" adds Phosphorus and Sulphur, vital to life.) These materials will be vital for nourishing human habitations in space, but I strongly suspect that no such habitations will remain viable for more than a century due to "bad gravity." After a while, only robots will colonise space, not biological bodies, and robots do not eat – except in Stanislaw Lem's witty *Cyberiad*.

Therefore, basically all Food of the Future will be eaten on Earth.

One science fiction anthology, published in the UK in 2013, which set out especially to deal with the future of food is called *Looking Landwards*. This came about because of the British Institution of Agricultural Engineers. This organisation was founded in 1938 as a professional forum uniting enthusiastic scientists and engineers involved in farming management and technology. In 1988 the Institution published a book surveying the past 50 years of tractors and things. But for their 75th anniversary the Institution sponsored a science fiction anthology in order to look into the future. This happened because the wife of the Institution's accountant was a member of an SF writers' group which, coincidentally, I myself had founded years earlier, and which gave rise to one of the two leading small press SF publishers in the UK, by now responsible for over 100 books by leading authors. A few established authors were commissioned for *Looking Landwards*, but otherwise anyone known or unknown could submit to be chosen based on style and originality. The Institution paid all the costs of the book, to be regained from sales.

To cut this story short, very few members of the Institution were interested enough to buy a copy of the anthology and the general public seemed uninterested. Thus the book lost a considerable amount of money. When the Chief Executive Officer of the Institution – who had enthusiastically supported the book – departed from his job, the Institution completely lost interest, although *Looking Landwards* is still on sale from the publisher, NewCon Press, and it is worth reading as regards visions of future food, as well as because its stories are well written.

Certain common themes emerge. Such as the automated farm, whether arable or animals, operated by drones and simple robots, with the "farmer" sitting in a control room at the hub. Only when the farm hub crashes is our farmer forced outdoors to try to solve things with his own hands, or at least by using a tractor. On a vast automated farm, it's useful to have genetically engineered ants programmed to carry the harvest back to the silos, grain by grain. Instead of eating the same grain, for instance. Or growing fungi upon the grain inside their nests. After the harvest the ants should drop dead, as fertiliser.

Europe's millions of pigs live closely confined in automated mechanised "Pig Towers" but they experience a virtual reality of nice grassy muddy fields right up until the hour of their programmed euthanasia – a lovely and utopian idea; may we ourselves be so lucky. In this same future China bought all the farms in Australia. Vertical "Pig Towers" are definitely better than sprawling "Farm Cities" surrounded by the vast wastelands which they cause, probably due to the amount of biological waste one needs to get rid of. I believe that in Portuguese "wasteland" = "terra inculta". Personally, I think of devastation and ruin, because of T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* – not simply of lack of use by human beings. To me, the Italian expression "terra desolata" sounds more like it. Devastated, ruined land. This goes back to Latin *vastus* = de-*vast*-ated rather

than 'available for development'. Within the word "wasteland" there is a war between opposite meanings. The ruthless development of the Amazon rainforest will lead to the ruin of that same land, producing a desert, thus reconciling the two conflicting meanings.

"Ecostrophy" – ecological catastrophe – is the new word in fashion in one tale of the future, which very appropriately refers to the time "when things altered beyond our ability to change them back." *This* is the huge unknown factor regarding future food.

The main crops in a future UK will be soy, "European rice", and oilseed rape. Rape is the crop which currently turns UK fields a beautiful bright yellow every year, defying the unofficial national anthem *Jerusalem* by the poet William Blake, which refers to "England's green and pleasant land." No way nowadays! It's England's bright yellow land. I don't know about here in Portugal but in Spain next door *colza*, oil seed rape, is sold nowhere in shops due to a mass poisoning scandal. A failure to wash out the tanks of transporters which previously carried rape oil intended for industrial, not domestic use, resulted in over 200 deaths. Rape seed oil itself was blamed, never to be seen again on the shelves of shops in Spain. As my plane was coming down towards Porto airport, I saw one solitary bright yellow field, which might (or might not) have been an experimental archive zone of oil seed rape, surrounded by guards in case some escaped.

We've mentioned the cartoonists' cliché, food pills. Those are more pictorial than the reality which arrived, namely food bars.

From Apollo 11 in 1969 onwards, The Pillsbury Company pioneered the "Space Food Sticks" as safe energy snacks for NASA, eatable through a special Velcroed feed port in the helmet of a spacesuit, as well as other cubed and "compressed" foods. These food bars became wildly popular in grocery stores; these and similar ones ultimately became a 5 billion dollar global market. Can we *really* believe it is *pure coincidence* that *Pills-bury* was the name of the family which founded the company which later produced the nearest thing to actual food *pills* for use in space? Yes, it's a coincidence! The world is full of coincidences rather than conspiracies. That is because our population is much greater in number than the carrying capacity of the planet.

Margaret Atwood's novel *Oryx and Crake* of 2003 has "chickienobs" – masses of chicken breasts and thighs grown in vats, sprouting as bulbs from a central body which neither feels pain nor even thinks. This is directly in line from the "Chicken Little" in the very insightful science fiction novel *The Space Merchants* of 1953, originally serialised as *Gravy Planet* in 1952, satirising consumerism *a full fifty years* prior to Atwood's flight of satirical fancy. Thus do snobbish mainstream literary authors typically steal from science fiction while at the same time proclaiming how their own variations upon old themes are special and superior.

Meanwhile, genuine news reports of 2018 say that Memphis Meats – which despite its Elvis Presley name is a Silicon Valley food tech company – has beef, duck, and chicken flesh-masses under development – with investment from a conventional meat giant, Tyson Foods. As of last year, Just, a company based in San Francisco, has a chicken product based on cells originally isolated from the feather of a chicken. (Rather than from a tiny bit of the chicken's actual flesh; thus eating "Just" nuggets will not really be full-on carnivorism.)

I am a bit disturbed to learn that the chicken – now allegedly kept in a happy sanctuary in northern California, is called **Ian**. Ian is a nice clean white chicken with a healthy red comb (= cresta) and wattle (= buche). I have watched a video of the folks on the farm eating nuggets of Ian at an outdoor table, while Ian himself walks around contentedly on the grass beside them. Praise be to Ian, the saviour of our planet! If you don't believe that Ian will provide protein for our planet, just google right now on your phones: chicken feather Ian.

(I think the real reason for the name "Ian" is that one of the stem cell biologists involved is called Aparna Subraman*ian*. Mr Subramanian is a vegetarian, so he can never eat any nuggets of Ian, even though the nutrients for the ever-expanding mass of chicken flesh all derive from plants!)

Chicken nuggets sound a bit basic to me compared with *Coq au vin*. But if a large future *non-vegetarian* population demand access to meats such as posh parts of the First World currently enjoy, then *all* the meats in the world must come from vats, not from fields, otherwise our planetary ecosystem will collapse. Of course, depending upon preparation, meals of vat-meat and vat-fish can equal 'real food' in taste and texture.

Must we say a sad goodbye to complete gastronomy as Rossini would have understood gastronomy? A farewell to fine dining? Must we pronounce an obituary upon haute cuisine? In the necessary transition from all-consuming rapacious capitalism to a relatively utopian society, obviously the privileges of a rich minority must disappear. Wave bye-bye to wagyu beef! Away with actual abalone!

Yet wait! If high technological civilisation continues and is able to sustain sufficiently sophisticated *virtual realities*, then Virtual Reality is where complete Gastronomy, and chefs, will flourish.

Michelin stars will guarantee the validity of the menus, which are not the mere products of programming, the way that machine-made food would be, but of *authentic simulated cookery in real time by real chefs using avatars*, which will require skill and effort, as well as the customers to appreciate this. These virtual restaurants will be fully realised multisensory realities and, since multiple customers can probably each time-share a single avatar if the avatar refreshes rapidly enough, virtual reality restaurant visits and tasting menus will be democratic, inclusionary, and low cost. VR restaurants – pronounced VVRRRestaurants – will include a full range of gourmet vegetarian dishes as well as the forbidden carnivore classics.

As regards those classics, the extinct species of the pre-ecocatastrophe past will be caringly prepared and served – species such as cattle and cod.

There is cause for celebration! Thanks to cuisine, there is existence after extinction. It's better than just being fossilised.

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"What we need is here": Food, Sustainability, and American Myths and Projects

Maria Teresa Castilho & Sofia de Melo Araújo

I

In his introduction to Berry's *Bringing It to the Table: On Farming and Food,* Michael Pollan, one of the most active proponents of food reform in the United States, stresses the great relevance of Wendell Berry, who, in spite of not being directly committed to a particular food movement, is indeed someone who has undoubtedly encouraged the rise of the Food and Slow Food Movements in the United States. Actually, Berry is known to many as a great inspiring reference to sustainable food movements in the United States, having thus greatly contributed to the food studies programmes in American higher-education institutions which started to crop up in the period around the 1990s.

Looking at the future through the lens of a New Agrarian Movement in the United States, Wendell Berry, a Southern writer poet, essayist and New Agrarian cultural critic, is a strong defender of an agrarian revolution for a better and sustainable world and society. In his view, there is an important connection between food and the land, and while arguing that "eating is an agricultural act" (1988), Berry has observed that the industrial and economic practices are largely responsible both for the current dystopian "ep*idem*ic" of chronic diseases such as obesity and type 2 diabetes and even for his own homeland insecurity. For almost six decades, Wendell Berry, dialoguing with a quintessential American pastoral tradition, has spoken out in defence of caring for the land and nature, which is visibly upheld in both his writing and his own alternative lifestyle on a small farm near Port Royal, Kentucky. Echoing some of the voices of his literary and intellectual Agrarian ancestors, like John Crowe Ransom or Robert Penn Warren in *I'll Take My Stand*, and offering enlightened contributions to the debate on relations between environment and sustainability while longing for the reconnecting of people and place, Berry ends up raising questions about food, food production and about what we eat.

While seeking to emphasise Wendell Berry's more human conceptions of the American land and nature, which indubitably contributed to making some consider him a Thoreau of today, and taking into consideration the publication of "The Pleasures of Eating" in 1989, we also maintain

that it is evident that this Southern academic and man of letters became, in the very end of the1980s, the soul of an agrarian revolution towards a sustainable food world of an "honorable peace with nature" (Ransom et al 1977: 7). Thus, the American spirit was able to save – or rather, to recover – its belief in a bountiful, generous, man-intended and God-given Nature. The early myths (and expectations) of abundance – condensed into colonial and post-colonial tales such as "The Big Rock Candy Mountain" – can live on, transformed into a mature, rational hope of industrious sustainability. Challenging Americans to reflect on

> the kind or quality of the food [they eat], or where it came from, or how it was produced and prepared, or what ingredients, additives, and residues it contains — unless, that is, [Americans undertake] a close and constant study of the food industry, in which case he or she might as well wake up and play an active an responsible part in the economy of food (Berry 1998)

and recovering some values and perspectives inherited from the Southern Agrarians of the 1930s, Wendell Berry certainly strongly contributed to promoting an American food movement.

I'll Take My Stand embodied the indignation of the region at the changes imposed by the process of Americanization and its high capitalist economy, materialism and industrialism in the first decades of the 20th century. The Agrarians sought to confront the widespread and rapidly increasing effects of modernity, urbanism, industrialism and a new money economy in the country and, above all, in the culture and traditions of the South. Indeed, these intellectuals did not believe in their contemporaries' dominant optimistic notion of continual progress based on industrialism. In John Crowe Ransom's words, the twelve Southern Agrarians warned that "what is called progress is often destruction" (Ransom 1934: 310). As a matter of fact, their dilemma seems to foreshadow some of the features of today's global societies, marked by uncontrolled dehumanising mechanisation, technology and economy. Ultimately, these intellectuals, affiliated with Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, expressed dissatisfaction with the increasing loss of Southern identity in favour of the Northern model of progress, modernity and industrialism. The confrontation found its first outlet in the Agrarians' Manifesto of the 1930s.

In 2001 a kind of a new Agrarian Manifesto was published: *The New Agrarianism: Land, Culture and the Community of Life* represents, indeed, a kind of multiregional "rebirth" of the *I'll Take My Stand* manifesto. The editor, Eric Freyfogle, opens the book with a compelling introductory essay entitled "A Durable Scale", in which he states, "collectively, the [Agrarians of *I'll Take My Stand*] expressed alarm over the effects of industrialism and materialism on the mannerly, leisurely, humanistic culture they viewed as the South's greatest treasure" (Freyfogle 2001: xxxviii).These old Nashville Agrarians were, in fact, involved in a process of rejection of the integration of their region into the modern social and economic dominant American model, which, in those days, promoted the view of a never-ending progress brought by post-First World War technology and industry. Nevertheless, if the Agrarians of the Thirties advocated a rural South devoted to farms, crops, and animals, against the modern Yankee North with its high capitalist finance and industrialization, the New Agrarians of today also believe, as Wendell Berry assumes quoting Allen Tate, that

> there is another way to live and think: it's called agrarianism. It is not so much a philosophy as a practice, an attitude, a loyalty and a passion – all based on close connection with the land. It results in a sound local economy in which producers and consumers are neighbours and in which nature herself becomes the standard for work and production" (in Kimbrell 2002: 39).

Undoubtedly agrarianism is inherently conservative, and in the past one of the problems with this Southern movement was that it upheld a Southern way of life, which was a core part of the American cultural mechanism responsible for both racism and cultural and social elitism in the South. However, the current understanding of the Nashville Agrarians' manifesto of political, cultural and economic conceptions indicates that their main goal was to articulate a philosophy rooted in love and respect for the land, with the enormous changes the traditional rural South was undergoing. Indeed, they were trying to reformulate a regionalist impulse and at the same time to promote the distinctive traditional Southern values along with a healthy, agrarian way of life. They affirmed their convictions and values as a decisive alternative to urban life and industrialism, which the Yankees, forgetting the founding American pastoral ideal, were blindly advocating, unaware that such progress, as the Agrarians stressed, would sooner or later become dystopia itself. As noted by Eric Freyfogle, who quotes John Crowe Ransom in *I'll Take My Stand*, "industrialism 'was the latest form of pioneering and the worst', its driving energy the 'principle of boundless aggression against nature'". "Although", Freyfogle also notes, "[Ransom] admitted that the industrial mind displayed 'almost miraculous cunning', it was, he urged, 'rightly a menial': 'It needs to be strongly governed or it will destroy the economy of household'" (xxxix). Yet, the 1940s saw the end of the Agrarians' project and in 1945 John Crowe Ransom acknowledged that their principles would not succeed in making America go back to the simpler agrarian values that characterised her past. However, it should be noted that some sectors of American society have revealed a certain awareness of the mistakes and dangers caused by an industrial corporate economy.

In 2001, during the Bush administration, Freyfogle also recorded:

> [I]t is as unsurprising as it is heartening that agrarian ways and virtues are resurging in American culture, prompted by a wide range of public and private ills. To the diseases and degradations of the modern age, a New Agrarianism is quietly rising to offer remedies and defenses, not just to the noise, vulgarity and congestion that have long affronted urban dwellers but to various assaults on land, family, religious sensibilities and communal life that have tended everywhere to breed alienation and despair (xiv).

On the other hand, in 2002 Wendell Berry himself enthusiastically pointed out in "The Agrarian Standard" that

> [I]t is not useless or wrong to suppose that urban people have agricultural responsibilities that they should try to meet. And in fact this [was] happening. The agrarian population [in the United States] is growing, and by no means is it made up merely of some farmers and some country people. It includes urban gardeners, urban consumers who are buying food from local farmers, organizers of local food economies, consumers who have grown doubtful of the healthfulness, the trustworthiness and dependability of the corporate food system – people, in other words, who understand what it means to be landless (Berry 2003: 150).

The New Agrarians of today gathered in *The New Agrarianism,* which was quite curiously published immediately before 9/11, and marked the resurgence of a new agrarian movement claiming for the rebirth of agrarian practices and values, thus harking back to the Jeffersonian homeland founding principles "of America, free from England, as a boundless Utopia of farms taking a thousand generations to fill" (Ransom et al 1977: 69-70). The New Agrarians resemble, in this respect, their spiritual fathers: John Crowe Ransom, who in "Reconstructed but Unregenerate" defended that a happier human destiny should be secured through "an honorable peace with nature" (7); and Robert Penn Warren, who warned against the destructive effects of industrialism and materialism (see "The Briar Patch"). They yearn for a current agrarian revival not only within a particular region, but within a multiregional and multiracial America. They try to articulate, as Gene Logsdon states in "What Comes Around", "the best of urban life with the best in rural life in a new admirable agrarianism" (Freyfogle 2001: 89). However, while the Agrarians in 1930 aimed at defending and affirming their own region, which they regarded as their homeland in the context of the entire nation, todays' new Agrarians, and especially Wendell Berry, often combine the discussion about land use and the industrial system with the discussion about a growing dissatisfaction with the corporatist *status quo*. Reacting to the 9/11 attacks, Berry states:

> We [Americans] now have a clear, inescapable choice that we must make. We can continue to promote a global economic system of unlimited 'free trade' among corporations, held together by long and highly vulnerable lines of communication and supply, but now recognizing that such a system will have to be protected by a hugely expensive police force that will be worldwide, whether maintained by one nation or several or all, and that such a police force will be effective precisely to the extent that it over sways the freedom and privacy of the citizens of every nation. Or we can promote a decentralized world economy which would have the aim of assuring to every nation and region a local self-sufficiency in life-supporting goods. This would not eliminate international trade, but it would tend toward a trade in surpluses after local needs had been met (Berry 2005: 4).

By the 1970s, a new community of intellectuals and writers began to gather around Wendell Berry, who established a small farm near Port Royal, Kentucky, and who for five decades has been working his land and writing his texts to preserve and defend, as he states in "The Ecological Crises as a Crises of Character":

> [T]he concept of country, homeland, dwelling place becomes simplified as 'the environment' — that is, what surrounds us. Once we see our place, our part of the world as *surrounding* us, we have already made a profound division between it and ourselves. We have given up the understanding — dropped it out of our language and so out of our thought — that we and our country create one another, depend on one another, are literally part of one another; that our land passes in and out of our bodies just as our bodies pass in and out of our land; that as we and our land are part of one another, so all who are living as neighbors here, human and plant and animal, are part of one another, and so cannot possibly flourish alone; that, therefore, our culture must be our response to our place, our culture and our place are images of each other and inseparable from each other, and so neither can be better than the other. (Berry 1996: 22)

As a matter of fact, reacting against the dangers and signs of possible destruction brought by the enthusiastic heralds of unlimited technological progress and the global economy, Wendell Berry, an untiring advocate of a new Agrarianism and one of the foremost voices in rural America, has spoken in defence of local agriculture and of reducing resource consumption as a way of protecting the land of one's own. It is his strong conviction that only the healthy and respectful communion between people and the land can ensure a better, healthier and happier life since the land is an integral part of humans just as humans design their own land and life.

Yet, in the 1970s, nobody could predict the future and ironically, especially if we consider the current American administration, Berry went on, revealing an almost prophetical view in his distressed evaluation of the facts, behaviour and decisions in 2001,

> Starting with the economies of food and farming, we should promote at home, and encourage abroad, the ideal of local self-sufficiency. We should recognize that this is the surest, the safest, and the cheapest way for the world to live. We should not countenance the loss or destruction of any local capacity to produce necessary goods. (Berry 2005: 8-9)

In fact this writer and poet is undoubtedly one of the greatest and most enthusiastic representatives of the New Agrarians of today, and he has spoken in defence of local agriculture and of reducing resource consumption as the only way to get a desirable and dreamed-of society of sustainable eating.

Since the publication of his book, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture*, in 1977, this agrarian writer has been a harsh opponent of industrial agriculture while at the same time warning against the destructive action of industrialism and technology. Thus, he has given enlightened contributions both to the debate on sustainable food movements in the United States and to the discussion on the devastating effects on the environment brought about by the industrial economic system that structures Americans' lives.

At the very beginning of the 21st century, in one of the first paragraphs of "The Agrarian Standard", Wendell Berry, strongly opposed to industrial agriculture, sounded a warning against the destructive action of industrialism and technology, and once again rose in defence of the preservation of the land:

> The way of industrialism is the way of the machine. To the industrial mind, a machine is not merely an instrument for doing work or amusing ourselves or making war; it is an explanation of the world and of life. Because industrialism cannot understand living things except as machines, and can grant them no value that is not utilitarian, it conceives of farming and forestry as forms of mining; it cannot use the land without abusing it. Industrialism prescribes an economy that is placeless and displacing. It does not distinguish one place from another. It applies its methods and technologies indiscriminately in the American East and the American West, in the United States and India. It thus continues the economy of colonialism (Berry 2003: 144).

Wendell Berry has indeed spoken about the dangers caused by not caring for the land and nature and, in the face of the United States' vulnerability, as revealed in the 9/11 attacks, he warns that,

> [Americans] should reconsider and renew and extend [their] efforts to protect the natural foundations of the human economy: soil, water, and air. [They] should protect every intact ecosystem and watershed that [they] have left, and begin restoration of those that have been damaged (Berry 2005: 9).

Berry's life as an agrarian writer, as he himself stated in 2002 in "The American Standard", has been "an odd experience". However, nothing has prevented him from stressing that, when we work against nature, we are bound to pay the price sooner or later. His life as an agrarian writer and activist, he declared,

> has certainly involved [him] in such confusions, but [he has] never doubted for a minute at the importance of the hope [he has] tried to serve: the hope that [Americans] might become a healthy people in a healthy land (in Berry 2003: 143)

In the current political climate, these words certainly resonate as precious advice towards the agreement and the desire of a great number of Americans, wishing that "[their] nation will live up to the dreams and expectations of [their] founding fathers and that [they] duly reinvent [themselves] in the image of a more just, less materialistic, ecologically secure and spiritually enriched culture" (Berry 2005: iii).

Undoubtedly providing pathways of criticism and hope, Wendell Berry offers a precious contribution to a collective reflection and consequent response to the sombre atmosphere prevailing in US politics today, where daily announcements and decisions make many Americans long for a healthier, more inclusive, and sustainable American Homeland.

II

Food is often at the core of escape utopias, utopias which are structured around mythical solutions provided to – rather than created for – inherent human needs and cravings. These forms of popular utopia, even if they may sometimes have direct rapport with reality, are, by essence, perpetual and constant, beyond realistic human reach, unbound by either time or space, and unafflicted by them. Food is, then, a clear symbol, as it is no longer perishable or subject to climate or geographical coordinates. Escapist utopias also escape the control of established, earthly authority and even alterity itself: reduced to a contented, basic, animal essence, men are not instinctively at odds with each other and immediate competition is no longer necessary. And yet, it is usually achieved in a (pseudo-)natural way. Nature is presented as a miraculous version of itself: boundless and generous. The roots of this idea of a natural essence of Good extend across the frontiers of religion and civilisation. But how did it survive from the classical gods (and worship) of abundance to the Judaeo-Christian matrix on the West? Through balance and trust. It did so by replacing the limitless enjoyment of Bacchus with the idea of God-made Earth created for the sustaining of its respectful children. Thus, agriculture, farming, the managing of the Earth's offerings through labour, can be perceived as a guarantee of rightful existence and due reward. This belief extends to our common identification of "bio products", true to Nature, as being inherently better. The notion of a well-balanced, harmonious, God-intended relationship between Man and Earth is exemplified when confronting the industrialisation of farming, as Wendell Berry and Anne Buchanan did:

> Until well into the 19th century Western Europe was still – like the Third World today – a dominantly rural society. Farming was not merely the work of millions of peasants and the craftsmen who backed them up but the way of life of close-knit, small-scale communities. Increasingly, this century, people have been leaving the land [...]. They are being driven off because they don't have the money to compete with the extremely capital-intensive industry which is farming today. They are being replaced by machines [...]. But this flight from the land, this 'forced migration of people greater than any in history' as Wendell Berry puts it, should be questioned. For as it occurs, agricultural skills vital to the survival of humanity are being lost. Today's farmers are older and their children have left for the city. When our present high-energy agriculture is no longer sustainable (left alone in the event of a major war with all its implications) we may need these skills again [...]. Such a migration is also a complete break with both the centuries of our own past and the accumulated wisdom of most other cultures which see the land and the people as inseparable, which see the land as the very foundation of human civilisation (Buchanan 1982: 101-3)

America comes out to European minds as a utopia itself, the very embodiment of a New World. Colonisation goes hand in hand with the expectation of a solution to all the hindrances to happiness in the old continent. Understanding America demands the full awareness of this

myriad of dreams, hopes and projections that were shared, at times authenticated, and mostly frustrated. The American dream was, in fact, converted into the puritan-based belief in self-made, hard-working, self-sacrificing heroes achieving wealth and success. However, the dream of a land of plenty was initially paramount and converted the ideals desired into possibilities dreamt. The hardships endured – both at home and during the settling – justified both the longing for and the obtaining of endless commodities (and even pleasures). In the same fashion as Cockaigne illustrated the needs and desperation of people in medieval times, the tale condensed in the concept of "Big Rock Candy Mountain" was the escapism fitting American life:

> The descriptions of such fantastic places allowed people in Medieval Europe to escape the limitations of their everyday lives and enter a perfect dreamland. Escapism to attractive imaginary places belongs to all times and cultures, with each paradise reflecting the ideals of its creators and of the society at large where it originated. (Cunha 2002: 3)

'Big Rock Candy Mountain', the American oral tradition, and Cockaigne belong to a trend within escapist utopias. These utopias of desire are the perfect match for needy individuals and a response to societal clashes which chooses a "dream of social equality" (Rammel 1990: 37) rather than a scenario of *mundus inversus.* Jacqueline Dutton, looking at Cockaigne as the matrix of food-oriented utopias, makes a case for the idiosyncrasy of desire in utopia:

> Commonly held views of the utopian paradigm as the representation of a perfectly harmonious equilibrium, a society based on reason rather than passion, support the hypothesis that many literary utopias suffer from a deficit of desire. And perhaps for this very reason, the role that desire plays in the projection of an ideal place remains a relatively unexplored aspect of the utopian genre, an aspect which we will attempt to reintegrate into the debate via the fundamental opposition between greed and need with reference to the gastronomy trope. (Dutton 2002: 20)

Gorman Beauchamp is adamant that "there is another utopian tradition – even more venerable, and at least as persistent as that of the moralists and savants" (Beauchamp 1981: 345) – and resorts to Lewis Mumford's distinction between utopias of escape and utopias of reconstruction. The Freudian principles of desire and reality established in 1911 sustain, in a way, the everlasting nature of this tradition, what A. L. Morton calls "an almost secret tradition under the surface, while the mainstream of utopian thought passed through other channels" (Morton 1952: 171). In Morton's first chapter, 'Poor Man's Heaven', he connects this secret tradition to the core essence of utopian thinking itself: "In the beginning Utopia is an image of desire" (ibid: 11). Desire, rather than a perfect, rational, reasonable, balanced, and, most importantly, feasible utopia, is what lies at the bottom of escapist utopias like Cockaigne and Big Rock Candy Mountain, "the country's classic song of flight to a place of bliss", in John Dean's words (cf. Dean 1992: 244).

The official story of Big Rock Candy Mountain as an autonomous text is that of a folksong first recorded in 1928 by an itinerant singer called Harry McClintock, who claimed to have created it in 1895 based on his own hobo days, when he was known as 'Haywire Mac'. The connection to the historical period in the United States is highlighted by authors like Kimon Valaskakis: "In the depth of the Great Depression of the 1930s a popular folk song encapsulated in musical form the frustrations of an affluent society suddenly immobilized" (Valaskakis 1980: 1). Tradition has it, though, that the song may have been created earlier or, at least, be based on earlier popular itinerant songs. Michael Moon explained:

> Here at the beginning of the twenty-first century, it may be hard to hear much more in the song than some over-familiar strains of 'old-timey music', but at the time McClintock recorded the song seventy-five years ago it was just coming to the end of a long career as an anthem of a far-flung 'hobohemian' sub-culture that had strong affinities with such varied social movements as anarchism, communalism, and tramping. Although its topography of 'candyland' may sound innocuous, the song actually gives us a key back into the heyday of the ideal of roving camaraderie that Walt Whitman saluted in poems such as 'Song of the Open Road' and, even farther back, into the protosocialist utopias – social, economic, and sexual – planned by the French theorist Charles Fourier. (Moon 2006: 303)

Apparently, the 1928 version had already been washed of many extreme references (possibly including those to whores), but still included adult pleasures, including streams of whisky and cigarette trees, and the avoidance of adult perils and hobo fears, including police officers and bulldogs. In 1949 Burl Ives recorded a fully sanitized version aimed at child listeners, which will be responsible for much of the myth's afterlife as a children's tale, to the point of Hal Rammel, in his study of it, describing it as "a children's song" (Rammel 1990: 10).

In the tradition of the *tall tales* generated by the perspective of a New World, some direct aspects of Cockaigne on food were shared orally and even used to entice labourers. Thus, in the way of a confrontation with Puritan heritage, the tradition is transitioned into the realm of the cautionary. That became an intrinsic part of the history of the myth, as visible in the dissertation signed by Hal Rammel

> *Nowhere in America* focuses on the liberatory humor implicit in the Big Rock Candy Mountain and its historical antecedents, from carnival and saturnalian reversals to topsy-turvey nonsense, even when that vision lies buried in an otherwise moralistic or reactionary context. (Rammel 1990: 2)

This other side is not entirely new, as sin and pleasure are irremediably associated, and even the medieval Cockaigne depicted in monasteries was already described as having clear "anticlerical intent" (ibid: 14).. Lands of plenty are often read as cautionary tales in which sloth and gluttony are to be resisted and the metaphor comes to be read as such in works as the novel of Wallace

Stegner, *Big Rock Candy Mountain* or expressions like "pie in the sky", associated to delusion and even to deceit. This tension was always present in the idea of United States America, as is made evident in Benjamin Franklin's 1782 assertion:

> In short, America is the Land of Labour, and by no means that the English call Lubberland, and the French Pays de Cocagne, where the streets are said to be pav'd with half-peck Loaves, the Houses til'd with Pancakes, and where the Fowls fly about ready roasted, crying, Come and eat me!' (Morgan 2006: 281)

When, in 1943, Wallace Stegner published his autobiographical novel *The Big Rock Candy Mountain*, "Stegner's widely acclaimed classic of the American West" (Robinson 1982: 101) the myth was already a symbol of lost American dreams:

> *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* is in the tradition of the novel depicting the defeat of the American dream, a tradition including Cooper's *The Pioneers*, Hawthorne's *The Blithdale Romance*, Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha novels, Cather's *A Lost Lady*, Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, and Wright's *Native Son* [...] Stegner shows one fatally misdirected form of the American dream in *The Big Rock Candy Mountain* (Mason, 1986: 34)

Stegner himself reflected on the way the green light of the American Dream is read in his novel, and how dream and responsibility relate:

> I hope change doesn't wipe out the memory of the time when we were all free on wheels, when we could wheel around the West, any place we wanted to. That's not going to go on forever, you know. I had a feeling last fall going through southern Utah that it was probably the last trip of that kind that I was going to make. It becomes irresponsible after awhile to waste that much gas just to look at Bryce Canyon or Capitol Reef. So we'll all have to go by public transportation, find another way. As you know, I'm hooked on history, I am committed to the notion that we can change as the history changes. People like Bo Mason can't. They grow up without history, and they live without history, without any sense of history. They're trapped in the present. (Stegner 2010: 49)

Thus, his reading of his leading character:

> I never conceived Bo Mason as being either pathetic or funny. He is a strong, dominant kind of man, and in a way a dangerous one… but still deluded, socially deluded, the product of frontiers which now all of a sudden have closed. He was made to be a frontiersman, he's a frontiersman *manqué*. He would have done very well as a mountain man. Been just as careless, just as reckless, just as wild, just as greedy. Whatever else, the American way was made for him. (ibid: 47)

But the American Way is no longer one that can trust in Nature providing. As the 20th century progresses, the link between consumption and nature is no longer seen as inviting and sustainability becomes a core issue. Etta Madden and Martha L. Finch summarise the troubled relationship between America and Abundance:

> contradictory interpretations of America – as both a utopian land of abundant resources and possibilities and, because of that abundance, also a fallen nation of consumers who fret over their diets, health, and apparent cultural poverty – complicate meanings of America-as-utopia. In response, communities have developed distinct food practices to promote their own visions of how life should be lived in America [...]. From early travel narratives that described in vibrant detail the discovery of exotic new foods, to recent accounts that have presented the United States as 'breadbasket to the world', food has served as a primary symbol of American abundance [...] not unlike colonial travel narratives that served up as a cornucopia of American fruits, fish, and game to a European readership hungry for the exotic and for profit, it is still primarily food products – now Coca-Cola and McDonald's restaurants – that serve as the most potent emblems of the inherently conflict-laden myths of American abundance and consumption to the rest of the world. (Madden 2006: 7)

Abundance is never completely abandoned as a goal or even a rightful compensation for dutiful, honourable behaviour. Thus, industrialisation and science are at times directed towards the obtaining of abundance – albeit a utopian sustainable abundance – and Nature is less of a provider and more of a means:

> Not only is nature viewed as subservient and to some degree 'evil' in the mass-consumption paradigm but – strangely – also as bountiful and endowed with unlimited capacity to satisfy man's thirst (Valaskakis 1980: 4)

> The new polarization of the 1970s and 1980s seems to portend an imminent paradigm shift. The Big Rock Candy Mountain, logical sequel of the Industrial Revolution and the mass-consumption society, is now undergoing change. There is room for alternative life styles. The intellectual market for new development priorities is now wide open (ibid: 17)

Nature can now be seen as realm to be manoeuvred and led by science and technology, and the Cockaigne ideals of "plenty and liberation" (Wolford 1991: 92) are felt to be within reach through industrialized science which will allow for resistant crops or labouring robots, and for a renewed possibility of avoiding effort toil and escaping contingency, in a technological twist on escapist utopias:

> Second only to the plentitude of food, the absence of authoritarian restraint goes hand-in-hand with personal reward for activities such as sleeping, eating, drinking, or a lowly

> position in society. It is the clarity, simplicity, and familiarity of these basic features that make the Land of Cockaigne so adaptable to so many different, often quite contradictory, ends (Rammel 1990: 31)

And yet, it will be the dangers in the combination of the ambition of escapist utopias and the forms of attainability provided by technology that will lead to the current central concern with sustainability which drives the discourse of New Agrarians and thinkers like Wendell Berry. The need and desire are timeless, and one is forced to agree with Hans Hinrichs: "And so it goes. Wherever life is hard, men will dream. If there are poets among them, sooner or later a new Schlaraffenland is bound to be invented as a glorious consolation" (Hinrichs 35). In fact, the reasons that explain how Attic poets and American hobos share dreams are the same ones that support the defence of an agrarian revolution heading towards the reconnecting of land and Men, finding Utopia in Nature, but through balance and responsibility, rather than desire and reliance.

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Alternative Agri-Food Networks and their Implications for Social Policy: A Literature Review

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Introduction

The literature points out important implications of Community-Supported Agriculture - CSA for Food and Nutrition Security and for the creation of fairer, socially and environmentally responsible communities. It also highlights the implications of these networks for areas related to social policies by promoting rural and community development, strengthening family farming, preserving the environment and contributing to individual health, impacting on public health systems. Consumers play a fundamental and innovative role in the development of these alternative agri-food networks, and their behaviour constitutes one of the food systems elements.

CSA, a global movement, can be considered an alternative agri-food network because it acts against the conventional food systems, with the potential to transform them and create innovative forms of sociability. Characterised as a model of social organisation, it aims to bring together food producers and consumers through links based on ethical economic relationships as a way to create an environment where local knowledge, the ecosystems and solidarity are valued. Through advance payments by the subscribers, CSA promotes the sharing of agricultural production risk, thus favouring social welfare, preserving a collaboration space, and creating a healthy environment.

The relevance of this issue is confirmed by the implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which directs the world's attention to food issues. The proclamation of the UN Decade of Action on Nutrition (2016 - 2025), works alongside the global movement to create healthy and sustainable food systems that take the particularities of each territory into account, valuing food traditions and local biodiversity. From the perspective of the development of sustainable communities, community capital and collective actions for the solution of environmental, economic and social problems are extremely important.

This article aims to explore the innovative ways of producing and consuming food through alternative agri-food networks from the perspective of the consumer. It seeks to identify, from a literature review, the implications of these networks for social policy. The study begins by

addressing the relevance of the Food and Nutrition Security agenda for social policies and the need to create healthy food systems to achieve the objectives of sustainable development. It goes on to discuss the potential of alternative agri-food networks to promote the transformation of food systems and presents the CSA model. Lastly, the implications of these networks for social policy are analysed according to the literature.

Food and Nutrition Security and its importance for Social Policy

The concept of food and nutrition security is constantly under construction and is evolving as society advances and changes the forms of social organisation. In 1928, the League of Nations brought the food issue to its permanent agenda, publishing several reports which showed that over two-thirds of the world's population was suffering from hunger (Castro 1959: 59).

With the end of the second world war, food security came to be treated as food shortages caused by low production in poor countries. The Green Revolution was the solution found. However, the mass use of chemicals on crops and new genetic varieties of food resulted in soil contamination, reduced biodiversity and the emergence of resistant pests, without leading to any significant impact on reducing hunger and combating food insecurity (Burity et al. 2010). According to Josué de Castro,[1] this proves "the inability of governmental and scientific organizations to satisfy the most basic need of human beings: the need for food" (Castro 1959: 57).

From the 1980s, the surplus production generated by the Green Revolution resulted in the appearance of industrialised food, without any reduction of hunger. It is in this context that the debate begins to identify the lack of access to land and to income as causes of social problems related to food (Burity et al. 2010).

With the International Food and Nutrition Conference in 1992, organised by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), the concept of food security has incorporated the idea of safe food, produced in a sustainable[2] and culturally acceptable way: "good, clean and fair"[3] foods (Slow Food 2013). The nutritional question was covered by the concept of Food and Nutrition Security which associates processes of choice, preparation and consumption of foodstuffs with those of production and distribution (Burity et al. 2010).

Over time, the food and nutrition security concept has increasingly sought to promote and fulfil the human right to adequate food and food sovereignty, ensuring that countries are sovereign when it comes to promoting the food and nutrition security of their peoples, preserving the practices of their territories.

The right to adequate food is inseparable from human life and survival. Several international mechanisms understand this right as fundamental for anyone to be free from hunger and thus access other human rights. Although a large part of the world's population is still far from realising this right, associating it with food and nutrition security is the way to ensure access to quality food (*idem*).

Food policies involve several areas related to social policies: the environment, social inequality, health, cultural identity, and education are all related to food, as we discuss throughout this article. Lang, Barling and Caraher (2001; 2009), who discuss modern food policy thinking in their research, conclude that governance at various levels (public sector, food industry and consumers) and intersectionality should be considered for food policies that actually transform the food system and lead to better macroeconomic, health and environmental conditions. According to the authors, it is necessary to change to a "model of ecological public health" in which health and social dimensions are involved.

In 2005, the FAO issued guidelines to support the progressive implementation of the right to adequate food in the context of food security and has been working internationally to guarantee this right. The debate on food issues has been growing in international organisations, which demonstrates an advance in the discussion on the need for an ecological approach to social policies (Lang et al. 2009).

Healthy Food Systems to ensure Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Development

The introduction of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development confirmed the world concern about food issues. The relevance of the food and nutrition security agenda is concretely stated in the second goal to "end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture" and permeates 6 of the 17 goals that have been signed.

A report on Nutrition and food systems was released in 2017 by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE) of the UN Committee on World Food Security. It defines food systems as the combination of all elements (environment, people, processes, infrastructure and institutions) and activities related to the production, distribution, preparation and consumption of food, including their socioeconomic and environmental consequences. Therefore, food systems encompass the food supply chain, food environment and consumer behaviour.

The supply chain brings together all activities from production to consumption (production, storage, distribution, processing, marketing). The food environment refers to the economic, political and socio-cultural context in which consumers interact to acquire, prepare and consume food. Consumer behaviour completes the food systems trio. It encompasses the consumers' choices at individual or family levels on what kind of food will be purchased, stored, prepared and consumed, also relating gender issues to the household tasks division. Consumer behaviour is linked to individual preferences such as taste, convenience, culture and access (HPLE 2017).

The Food and Nutrition Security guarantee and its contributions to the achievement of sustainable development, therefore, depend on the efforts of society, individual countries and international organisations to transform food systems. Fairer and more responsible supply chains with farmers and the environment are needed; food environments should have easy access to local, fresh and healthy food and consumers need to be aware of their role and their power of choice

(*idem*). Also according to HPLE, consumer behaviour, a constituent element of food systems, is influenced by the current food environment. Collective changes in this consumer pattern could play an important role in the emergence of healthier and more sustainable food systems.

Alternative Agri-Food Networks definition

In a context in which environmental problems, food and nutrition security and the impacts of industrial food consumption on health emerge in discussions on food systems, Goodman (2002) analyses alternative networks in order to understand their contributions to the agri-food system. Called by the author a "quality turn" of the food question, it is characterised by a movement for quality food, based on trust, maintaining local habits and fairer forms of commercial relationships (*idem*; Cassol/Schneider 2015).

The emergence of alternative food systems as a way of creating shorter food chains between producers and consumers is based on concepts related to reciprocity, trust and solidarity (Connelly et al. 2011). These systems are characterised by modes of sociability and based on social networks (Brunori 2007). The author supports choosing local food as a way of modifying food systems, relying on the power of local food. The social actors related to these networks are linked directly and these socially constructed markets are based on trust, embeddedness and the appreciation of traditional local habits. According to Hinrichs (2000), embeddedness corresponds to social capital and trust, denoting the contribution of social bonds to the improvement of economic interactions.

D. Goodman et al. (2012) in *Alternative Food Networks: Knowledge, Practice and Politics* addresses the expansion of alternative agri-food networks for the defence of ethical and traditional values and against the global pattern of the food system, amid growing discussions and concerns about the environment and food insecurity. According to the authors, alternative networks are "reflexive communities of practice of consumers and producers whose repertoires create new material and symbolic spaces in food provisioning and international trade" (Goodman et al. 2012: 7). It is important to emphasise that the definition of this conscious and reflexive consumption depends on the specificities of each territory and the shared values and culture.

Cox et al. (2008) also analyse a number of studies that address the alternative of these networks as an opposition to the industrial food system, that are both initiatives that protest against this form of food supply and attempts to create innovative ways of consuming food.

The consumer is an important participant in the contemporary discussion related to food systems. Cassol and Schneider (2015) highlight the input of these actors in the development of alternative agri-food networks that play a role in opposition to the conventional food system. Connelly et al. (2011) reiterate that these initiatives depend on a change of consumers' eating behaviour.

The governance role of Social Networks

Social networks have been identified as a form of organisation that connects different actors, creating governance structures. According to Tompkins and Adger (2004); Marin and Wellman (2011); Bodim et al. (2006); and Woolcock and Narayan (2000), social networks can build resilience and increase adaptive capacity to change in the environment; they enable participants to gain access to power and representation by forming engagement networks that are crucial to improving vulnerable communities, and are important for governance processes and to stimulating the preservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

Social-networking studies are based on patterns of relationships rather than on isolated actors. Thus, the bonds that unite these actors create an interdependence relationship, determined by the type of social capital employed (Borgatti/Halgin 2011). One of the first authors to characterise social networks according to the type of social capital employed was Robert Putnam. For that author (2000), social capital can be divided into bonding and bridging. Relationships between actors of the same social groups are associated with bonding social capital. Those between actors of different groups are called bridging social capital. Both types of social capital need to be valued to strengthen governance processes. According to Newman and Dale (2005), not every social network is formed in the same way and it is therefore necessary to balance the two forms of social capital, bonding and bridging. While bridging social capital allows broadening access to tools and knowledge of other communities, bonding social capital is needed to absorb and consolidate the benefits obtained.

Therefore, social networks that promote social participation, with horizontal coordination, diversity of actors and employment of different forms of social capital, can play a good governance role in problem solving (Delgado et al. 2013).

Community Supported Agriculture - CSA: an alternative agri-food network that connects the rural with the urban

CSA is a food distribution model that has grown worldwide. The model emerged in Japan, where it was called *Teikei* [partnership], driven by housewives concerned with feeding a family and the use of pesticides in agricultural production in the early 1970s (Henderson 2010). At the same time, in Switzerland and Germany, farms already employed Rudolf Steiner's biodynamic agriculture and arrangements similar to those employed in CSAs (*idem*).

The term CSA was created by the North American activist Robyn Van En and by the 1980s the Northern European experiences began to spread also in the United States. Since then, initiatives have been emerging around the world. Although they have different names, AMAP - *Association pour le maintien d'une agriculture de proximité* [Proximity Agriculture Maintenance Association] in France, Re.Ci.Pro.Co - *Relação de Cidadania entre Produtores e Consumidores* [Citizenship

Relationship between Producers and Consumers] in Portugal, ASC - Agriculture Supported by the Community in Canada, the structure is the same and all are based on the sharing of risks and the abundance of agroecological agriculture. According to the Local Food Marketing Practices Survey conducted by the US Department of Agriculture in 2015 there were 7,398 farms participating in direct sales to consumers through CSA's social technology (USDA, 2015).

CSA can be considered an alternative agri-food network, a model of social organisation in which consumers support a local farmer, through links based on ethical economic relations and trust (Hinrichs 2000; Ertmańska 2015), sharing the risks and benefits of food production, usually high quality organic, agroecological or biodynamic (DeMuth 1993).

Allen et al. (2017) analyse the potential of CSA for challenging industrial food production: by shortening food supply chains, they allow capital to remain in the local economy and encourage the development of small related industries. These initiatives also provide financial benefits to family farming and improve the health of the consumers involved (Cohen et al. 2012).

In this model, consumers or subscribers, as they are called, finance the agricultural production of a local producer by means of prepayments and receive in return, in a place defined by the community, generally a community meeting point, a basket of organic foods. This model differs from other direct agricultural markets by building communities related to food, land, the environment and sustainability (Hinrichs 2000). According to Kaltsas (2015); Ertmańska (2015); and Tegtmeier and Duffy (2005), CSA networks create solutions for sustainability, for protecting the environment, for public health systems, for issues related to the global food system, including supply chain problems, as they promote local and fair trade and make it possible to exchange knowledge about local ecosystems.

At the Urgenci Kobe Conference (2010), Henderson presented the benefits of CSA to both consumers who access fresh and healthy food from safe sources and can reconnect with the land, as well to as farmers who benefit from more job opportunities and guaranteed markets. She also highlighted its advantages with respect to the environment in its use of environmentally responsible farming methods that enable local consumption, which generates lower emissions of pollutants in transport and uses less packaging.

Innovative initiatives that enable social change and the improvement of the quality of life and well-being of the involved actors can be characterized as social technologies (Bava 2004). By strengthening communities to reach their potential as social organizations, CSA systems spread the culture of stimulating local production and providing visibility to these regional food systems (Kaltsas 2015), and can, therefore, be characterised as a social technology. According to Tegtmeier and Duffy (2005), CSA also revitalises local economies by retaining capital in the community, enhances the interaction of rural and urban dwellers, encourages local and civic involvement, preserves rural landscapes and the environment, and strengthens the community.

However, Tegtmeier and Duffy (2005) mention some inconveniences reported by subscribers and farmers surveyed in the USA. The responsibility for storing food in quantity and creating daily recipes for all products to be consumed over time becomes a problem for some growers. According to the authors, consumers feel nostalgic about the freedom to choose the items that would be consumed weekly. Also, some surveyed farmers complain about low wages and overwork. After 30 years of the CSA model in the US, more in-depth information about the reality of communities is still needed to confirm sustainability and the CSA related concept.

In this article, research on CSA networks developed in countries such as the United States, England, Scotland, China, Canada and Australia has been used as literature, evidencing the incidence of studies related to the subject in countries with diverse social and economic contexts.

The power of consumer behaviour to transform Food Systems

Despite the proven economic, social and environmental benefits of these alternative agri-food networks, researchers have only recently emphasised the impact of food consumption behaviour on lifestyle and health. (Allen et al. 2017).

For much of the 20th century, the academy focused its studies on food production, leaving aside the effects of technological evolution on food consumption and eating practices. It was only in the 1990s that the food consumption issue and eating practices came to be addressed by some researchers (Cassol/Schneider 2015). Goodman (2002) treats consumers as the main actors in the world's food question, as they play a key innovative role in establishing the local agri-food networks. D. Goodman et al. (2012) portray consumers as significant agents for the changes in the social and ecological relations of food production, which, by valuing local and daily food practices, fight for food systems that are socially and environmentally more sustainable. For Popkin (2011), correcting the imbalance caused by the industrial food system requires a change not only in agricultural policies, but also in consumers' eating behaviour and social preferences.

It is in this context that the role of food consumption and consumers begins to gain space among scholars. Méndez and Benito (2008) analyse the connection between food consumption behaviour and health. Seyfang (2006) discusses how alternative agri-food networks that commercialise organic foods provide a sustainable mode of consumption by including economic, social and ecological issues.

For Truninger (2010), there are several factors that influence consumers' behaviour before and after the act of buying, with personal needs and choices being subordinated to previously established social practices. According to Allen et al. (2017), individual eating behaviours are complex and influenced not only by economic and political factors, but also by existing food environments and social networks.

All the uncertainty and subordination linked to the act of eating promotes the appearance of readjustment movements. According to Fischler (1988), this explains the growing interest in re-identifying food, resulting in the widening of debates on labelling, specification of ingredients of industrialised foodstuffs and searches for product quality assurances. This scenario encourages the emergence of "active and creative" consumers (Truninger 2010: 44), who seek to control aspects of their life, express their dissatisfaction with the conventional food system, resist the food system used by corporations and food industries that only satisfy neoliberal market

interests (*idem*), and oppose agribusiness supply chains (Cassol/Schneider 2015). According to DuPuis (2000), these consumers also value traditional knowledge about food preparation, as well as biodiversity and local food culture.

According to the literature reviewed by Connelly et al. (2011), changes in food systems require a broad discussion of values in our society, which will only be possible by increasing the scale and dissemination of these initiatives. The literature analysed by Cassol and Schneider (2015) suggests that alternative forms of local food consumption signal the need for policymakers to create sustainable practices by stimulating the expansion of alternative forms of food production, distribution and consumption.

Alternative agri-food networks implications for Social Policy

CSA networks play an innovative role in creating fairer and healthier food systems and contribute to individual and community well-being. Well-being can be defined as meeting the basic needs of individuals or social groups; when experienced by social groups, it provides social cohesion, stimulating people to feel responsible for each other (Spicker 2000).

In the 1990s the North American study by Kolodinsky and Pelch (1997) identified the potential of CSA, which should be considered by policymakers to create healthier and more sustainable food systems.

The Canadian study by Minaker et al. (2014) states that local administrations are already starting to adopt policies that promote local food systems, since 70% of consumers would spend more on locally produced products. These local alternative agri-food networks, in addition to contributing to environmental sustainability, play a role in generating local employment through a fair trade that values regional biodiversity and stimulates a sense of community.

The literature reviewed by Lea et al. (2006) research asserts that community supported agriculture provides solutions for the development of more sustainable agricultural practices, guaranteeing income to the farmer. According to the authors, consuming local foods also helps to reduce the emission of harmful gases due to transporting food for long distances, and to increase the farms' biodiversity.

According to the Chinese study by Shi et al. (2011), which analyses CSA in a growing middle-class context, the most important political document from the country's central government, published in 2007, calls for the strengthening of agriculture, which promotes social and environmental changes, as well the food supply.

Cox et al. (2008) also discuss the contribution of CSA to rural development as an important implication of these initiatives for social policies. Such initiatives have the potential to create social change and consumer participation, which can support the struggles for wider social and ecological causes and a movement against social inequalities.

According to Sumner et al. (2010), CSA systems foster civic engagement and local involvement to encourage environmental initiatives, preserve rural landscapes and biodiversity through community power. They also analyse the CSA's social movement character, that seeks to meet the social demand and need for healthy foods, from a social justice perspective. The authors believe that culture plays a fundamental role in maintaining traditional eating habits and forms of production, thus contributing to sustainability, justice and agroecology.

Most of the studies, however, analyse the implications of CSA, especially for public health policies. According to Minaker et al. (2014), the channels used by consumers to buy food are directly related to the eating behaviour and weight of each person. Consumers who participate in direct agricultural markets are exposed to more fruits and vegetables than those who buy in markets where there are a large number of processed products. This study concludes that CSA is associated with an improvement in diet, with a higher consumption of fruit and vegetables.

North American research by Allen et al. (2017) also indicates that CSA networks have the potential to influence eating behaviours and health outcomes. Several researchers and policymakers regard CSA as an innovative form of economic arrangement, which could play an important role in resolving food deserts,4 which are found in low-income areas. They also analyse the effects of financial incentives and the drafting of social policies for propagation initiatives.

In 2011, Senators Sanders, Gillibrand, Leahy and Tester proposed the US Supported Agriculture Promotion bill which would have provided financial support to expand CSA, since it has a positive role in public nutrition (Cohen et al. 2012). According to a database managed by Robyn Van En in collaboration with the US Department of Agriculture - USDA, in 2004 there were 1,034 CSAs established in the USA. According to Tegtmeier and Duffy (2005), the importance of alternative agri-food networks for consumer rapprochement with food production has been extensively studied and discussed in relevant academic journals in the US.

These studies prove the importance of supporting and stimulating alternative agri-food networks with public power as a way to contribute to public health. Lea et al. (2006), through their literature review, state that for people's nutrition to improve, is it necessary to integrate educational policies on food production and healthy eating with community-supported local food production strategies, and so develop a new food and health policy. CSA networks are therefore a way of integrating and influencing health, environment and community issues.

Lang et al. (2001) argue that food brings together several areas of social policy and it is up to policymakers to adopt a holistic approach to food policy, which they call the "new ecological model of public health": the dimensions of health and environment are linked to social justice. It is necessary, however, to explore new models and configurations of food systems that meet this pattern of increasing urbanisation and that link the social and environmental dimensions to food related policies. O'Connor et al. (2017) state that governments should regulate autonomous and sustainable small-scale agricultural practices that are adapted to local conditions and based on local agriculture knowledge, innovation and agroecological methods, as a way of ensuring food and nutrition security.

Conclusion

The literature review identifies four areas related to social policy impacted by CSA: it improves health by providing access to healthy food without pesticides; it boosts local food production, guarantee a market and income to family farmers and enhance local knowledge; it encourages community engagement; and it reduces impacts on the environment by preserving soil and water sources through its use of organic or agroecological production and thus generating less waste, especially plastic. Alternative initiatives that bring consumption and food production closer can create fairer markets, directly affect community food and nutritional security, promote healthy food systems and act as a resistance movement to the conventional way of producing and accessing food, clearly evidencing the political character of the act of eating.

They also contribute to sustainable development by addressing the particularities of each territory and enhancing local food traditions, knowledge and biodiversity. The literature affirms the importance of stronger social networks for solving environmental problems and creating innovative ways of interacting with natural resources, highlighting the governance role of these networks. They act, therefore, as a signal to the public power that food policies need to be collectively discussed and changed.

In conclusion, these agri-food networks point out the need for an ecological approach to social policies to create a healthier and more sustainable food system: the "ecological public health" model of Lang et al. (2009) which relates health issues to protecting the environment. They also point out that shared and collaborative solutions among the various actors involved in food policies may be more effective to tackle the new challenges of food and nutrition security, acting in favour of the ecological demand of the world today.

The limitations of CSA highlighted in the literature, such as limited access to consumers with sufficient income to finance healthy food production, and increased food waste that can result from the subscribers' lack of familiarity with the large variety of foods provided by CSA networks deserve to be remembered. There is still a need to expand the scale of these networks, making participation more heterogeneous, with subscribers from different social realities. Only then can their impact be significant to food system change, rather than increasing the inequalities in the food access due to income level. These facts, however, do not detract from their relevant impacts on ensuring healthy food, environmental protection and better conditions for rural workers. The involvement of the various actors, states and international organisations is essential so that the signals coming from these networks are understood as demands of society and thus can be absorbed in social policies that involve food.

CSA networks can be a channel not only to ensure food and nutrition security and sustainable rural development but also to discuss with the community the role of the whole family in household food and in environmental issues. There are already debates around the world about how the state could promote, strengthen and spread these networks, without mischaracterising the role of civil society in the construction of these initiatives. Cooperation between the State and civil society seems to be the most appropriate way for this social technology to gain scale, engaging society in creating its own solutions, without exempting the State from its responsibility. The literature emphasises that without the participation of the State and international organisations, these initiatives tend to be restricted to a privileged public, and without scale it would be difficult to counteract the global industrial food system. An important step for governments is to encourage participatory councils in which representatives of these networks can dialogue directly with the state, managing policies that bring their impacts to people who do not access them. Food guides would be a channel for discussing an ecological perspective on food policies with people, discussing the environmental impacts of food, from packaged food to the contamination of soil and water sources by pesticides.

These networks indicate a growing demand for health and environmental issues, highlighting the need for an ecological approach to food policy. Alternative agri-food networks that encourage rural development, community participation, strengthening family farming, protecting the environment and contributing to individual health, have important implications for social policies. They indicate, therefore, that policies which help to bring consumers and food producers closer to one another can contribute to the development of local economies, stimulate sustainable consumption and "ecological citizenship" (Seyfang 2006), securing access to "good, clean and fair" food "(Slow Food 2013) to all, in contrast to the industrial model of food production imposed by the Green Revolution decades ago.

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Notes

1. Josué de Castro was a doctor, professor, geographer, sociologist and politician and he made the fight against hunger his life. Author of numerous iconic works, he revolutionised concepts of sustainable development and studied in depth the social injustices that caused misery, especially in Brazil. His best-known work and what has been used as a bibliography of this work is *The Geopolitics of Hunger.*
2. An inseparable union of four characteristics: ecologically sound, economically viable, socially fair and culturally accepted (Slow Food, 2013).
3. Manifesto of the international Slow Food movement of 1989, which maintains that food needs to be good, referring to the aroma and flavour, and the skill of the production not to change its naturalness; clean, referring to sustainable practices of cultivation, processing and marketing - all stages of the production chain must protect biodiversity, the producer and the consumer; fair in the sense that agricultural working conditions must respect human beings and their rights, based on concepts of solidarity and respect for diversity and traditions.
4. According to HPLE's 12th Report, food deserts are areas where access to food is restricted or non-existent and supplies are inadequate or non-existent, forcing residents to travel long distances for food (HPLE 2017)

The Gendered Politics of Meat:

Becoming Tree in Kang's *The Vegetarian*, Atwood's *The Edible Woman* and Ozeki's *My Year of Meats*

Aline Ferreira

This essay addresses the vexed question of the gendered politics of meat, using three novels that powerfully dramatise these issues as case studies: Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman* (1990), Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats* (1998) and – to be treated first – Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* (2007). The topics of meat-eating and animal farming as well as the ways in which they intersect problematically with sexual politics are the main thematic concerns in the three novels, which can be seen as engaged in a critical dialogue.

The animalising and objectifying of women as meat in contemporary culture is a persistent feature, fictionally dramatised in these narratives. Women and animals become enmeshed in a tangle of signifiers that unite them as flesh to be consumed, used and disposed of as secondary and inferior. The three protagonists attempt to escape the patriarchal ideology that dictates their place in a world where they are subject to their partners' will in different but interrelated ways, by symbolically becoming more plant-like, with the aim of regaining their voices and identities, gradually erased in their androcentric society. Indeed, they develop an overpowering empathy with plants, which eventually leads them to avoid eating even these.

The protagonists of *The Vegetarian* and *The Edible Woman* are young women who feel trapped and constricted by society's strong patriarchal conventions, attempting to escape them by eschewing meat, equated with the exploitation of women, animals and the environment. While the main character in *The Vegetarian*, mimicking the mythological Daphne in her flight from Apollo, gradually wills herself to "become" a tree, the protagonist of *The Edible Woman* eventually extricates herself from a stultifying relationship in which she felt neutralised and instrumentalised. The protagonist of Ozeki's *My Year of Meats*, a young Japanese-American woman, for her part, gradually becomes aware of the many pitfalls of the meat industry, including how the animals are treated, what they are fed and how they are killed, leading to her efforts to expose and denounce a very unsavoury reality.

The three novels thus address the sexual objectification of women as meat to be consumed, a longstanding, vexed trope, as well as their strategies to disentangle themselves from their problematical situation. Indeed, as Carol Adams argued in her groundbreaking book *The Sexual*

Politics of Meat (1990), the recurrent interaction between the entrenched misogyny in present-day society and its fixation with masculinity and meat-eating can be seen as key factors in the continued exploitation of women as meat and domestic "slaves" in many cultures, which often associate virility with meat-eating and regard women as flesh to be consumed and abused.

The protagonist of Kang's *The Vegetarian* (2015), a young, obedient, submissive married woman, Yeong-hye, becomes a vegetarian in the wake of a dream involving meat and a pool of blood on which a face is reflected. This association, albeit unconscious, between meat and violence, coupled with a number of childhood memories revolving around cruelty to animals, conspire to lead her to gradually reject eating meat and fish and eventually most types of food, as a visceral rejection of her husband, her father and cultural conventions that dictate women's behaviour, especially in strongly patriarchal societies like South Korea, where the author comes from, which are severely repressive of women. Symptomatic of Yeong-hye's gradual retreat into herself is the almost total absence of her voice, only heard very intermittently. The story is told through the narratorial voice of her husband, her brother-in-law and later her sister, but the predominant lens of the narrative is a male one, indicative of the patriarchal networks of power that ensnare her.

Kang (2016a) considers that "[o]n the reverse side of the protagonist Yeong-hye's extreme attempt to turn her back on violence by casting off her own human body and transforming into a plant lies a deep despair and doubt about humanity". Kang further observes that Yeong-hye "refuses to eat meat to cast human brutality out of herself […] I think that, in this violent world, hers is an extremely awakened state, a horribly true and sane state" (Filgate 2016). Indeed, in the novel, Yeong-hye feels repulsed by the thought of all the meat she has consumed: "*The lives of the animals I ate have all lodged there. Blood and flesh, all those butchered bodies are scattered in every nook and cranny, and though the physical remnants were excreted, their lives still stick stubbornly to my insides*" (Kang 2015: 49; italics in the original).

The major crisis occurs when, at a family meeting, the protagonist's father, an overpowering man, insists on force-feeding her meat, which she violently rejects, going on to slit her wrists and being taken to hospital, and later to a mental hospital where her health gradually declines due to her refusal to eat. Her unswerving ambition and obsessive fantasy consist of nothing less than becoming a tree, exposing her naked body to the sun's rays at every possible opportunity, claiming that all she needs to survive is water and the sun to promote a type of photosynthesis.

Significantly, Han Kang had already written a short story in 1997 called "The Fruit of My Woman" (Kang 2016b), a tale that symbolically dramatises the objectification of woman into a beautiful artefact. In this tale a wife, similar to Yeong-hye, unhappy in her tiny flat and her married life, wills herself to become a plant, which her husband then keeps in a pot on the balcony and looks after.[1] Like Yeong-hye she gradually stops eating and her body is covered with bruise-like stains which take on distinct hues reminiscent of those of plants in different seasons of the year. As she puts it (*idem*: 2016b): "I've dreamed of this, of being able to live on nothing but wind, sunlight and water, for a long time now". To be passive in this context means to avoid conflict, to remove herself from the demands of conjugal life, but also physical and mental annihilation. "Soon, I know, even thought will be lost to me, but I'm alright". She will also lose her voice, symptomatic of her erasure from social contact but also, symbolically, of her will to preserve herself, like the mythological Daphne.

Analogously to Yeong-hye, the protagonist of "The Fruit of My Woman" has a recurring dream, in her case of becoming a tree, which will be reworked in *The Vegetarian*:

> Mother, I keep having the same dream. I dream that I'm growing tall as a poplar. I pierce through the roof of the balcony and through that of the floor above, the fifteenth floor, the sixteenth floor, shooting up through concrete and reinforcing rods until I break through the roof at the very top. Flowers like white larvae wriggle into blossom at my tallest extremities. My trachea sucks up clear water, so taut it seems it will burst, my chest thrusts up to the sky and I strain to stretch out each branching limb. This I how I escape from this flat. Every night, mother, every night the same dream. (*ibidem*)

In a kind of symbolic prefiguration of her fate, Yeong-hye's brother-in-law, a video artist, who falls in love with her, has a vision of her as a "tree that grows in the wilderness, denuded and solitary" (Kang 2015: 64), covering her body with paintings of blooming flowers and leaves, thus effectively turning her into a work of art to be admired but also an object of lust, while Yeong-hye wishes to escape the world of patriarchal desire and violence.[2] Again as in Kang (2016b) the woman is regarded as a piece of art to be consumed and objectified.

In the last section of Kang (2015), "Flaming Trees", Yeong-hye takes her goal to become a tree to its drastic, radical conclusion, by refusing to eat. She is taken to a psychiatric institution from which she often escapes to experience the natural world directly and mingle with the trees.[3] On one of these occasions she is discovered deep in the woods, "standing there stock-still and soaked with rain as if she herself was one of the glistening trees" (*idem*: 125). As she explains to her sister, "*leaves are growing out of my body, roots are sprouting out of my hands […] they delve down into the earth. Endlessly, endlessly […]*" (*idem*: 127; italics in the original).

This deep urge on Yeong-hye's part to identify with plants and to attain what Marder (2013: 94) has called an ontophytological state, "without projecting its own rationality upon the idealized plant", can be construed as a capitulation to the pressures of the patriarchal world that in many ways conflates woman and nature as entities to be conquered and subjugated. Conversely, Yeong-hye's impulse to become a tree can be seen not as a defeat and surrender but as a strategic action to circumvent a capitalist and patriarchal logic of domination and exploitation of women and nature.[4] In this reading, her "ontophytological" drive constitutes a refusal to be complicit with that logic, a retreat into another realm where she can be herself, aligned with what Merchant (1996: 223) has described as a "partnership ethic" which holds that the "greatest good for the human and nonhuman communities is in their mutual living interdependence". Even though it may also be interpreted as a cowardly act, Yeong-hye's retreat into nature, while emphasising an essentialist trope and potentially suggesting a measure of defeat (after all, her physical envelope will inevitably perish, deprived of nutrients) can also be inscribed in the context of a type of

plant awareness and vegetal life and agency that suits her better. Theoretically, by erasing the body, by becoming passive, women can evade patriarchal control. On the other hand, in what sense can we talk of plants and trees as passive?

A Vegetal Philosophy

"Follow the plants" (Deleuze/Guattari 2004: 12)

While the equation of becoming a tree with passivity can be reductive, it also signals a wish for a different type of interaction, a kind of rhizomatic communication devoid of power relations (to borrow Deleuze/Guattari's terminology where they use the term to represent a non-hierarchical way of relating), emphasising principles of "connection and heterogeneity" since "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be", unlike the "tree or root, which plots a point, fixes an order" (Deleuze/Guattari 2004: 7). As Stark (2015: 194) observes, Deleuze/Guattari propose a "vegetal philosophy in their privileging of the rhizome as the model for thought". In this Deleuzian context, Yeong-hye may be said to obey Deleuze/Guattari's (2004: 12) injunction to "follow the plants".[5]

Reflecting on the non-hierarchical structure of plant life Marder (2013: 85) observes that "enacting a veritable anarchy, the plant's 'body without organs' does not evince hierarchical organisation. It maintains conceptual horizontality even in the tree's spatial verticality". Yeong-hye's impulse to be like a tree can be seen as part and parcel of this non-hierarchical ontophytological way of being.

Yi Sang: "I believe that humans should be plants"

Modernist poet Yi Sang, quoted by Kang (2015), wrote "I believe that humans should be plants" as a reaction against the violence he witnessed in the world, a sentence that germinated Kang's inspiration to write *The Vegetarian*. In an interview with Sarah Shin, Kang herself explains that while writing the novel she had in mind "questions about human violence and the (im)possibility of innocence" (Siiin 2016).[6]

Luce Irigaray's philosophical reflections on plant being as not self-centred, in an effort to deflect and rethink the anthropocentrism of western societies, also reverberate strongly with Yeong-hye's efforts to become a plant as a strategy to resist violence and patriarchal control. As Irigaray (1999: 33) muses, "How can I abandon my love of the vegetal? Would you become a plant? Or are you too attached to yourself to become anything at all?". In related vein, Karen Houle (2011: 111) observes that "becoming-plant forces us to think […] the complex ways that plantness composes us", an insight that evokes Yeong-hye's plight.

While plants have traditionally been relegated to a passive stance and regarded as ornamental

artefacts, recent scholarship has called attention to what has been described as a type of plant consciousness or awareness. Gagliano (2015), for one, believes that "many of the sophisticated behaviours plants exhibit reveal cognitive competences", while Gagliano (2018) in polemical vein urges us to consider plants as people, with their own consciousness and voice (Gagliano started the field of bioacoustics).

Wohlleben (2016) considers the forest as a social network similar to a human family in the ways trees communicate, share nutrients and support each other, while Nealon (2015: x) points out that the plant, "rather than the animal, functions as that form of life forgotten and abjected within a dominant regime of humanist biopower". According to Karban (2008: 727):

> The best studied plant behaviours involve foraging for light, nutrients, and water by placing organs where they can most efficiently harvest these resources. Plants also adjust many reproductive and defensive traits in response to environmental heterogeneity in space and time […] Plant behaviours have been characterized as simpler than those of animals. Recent findings challenge this notion by revealing high levels of sophistication previously thought to be within the sole domain of animal behaviour.

Houle (2011: 95) sympathises with these gestures of extending ethics to plants but is also sceptical of these philosophical efforts, of the anthropocentric attempts to think the plant in relation to the human and the animal. For his part, Pollan (2001: xiv) assesses the multiple reciprocal interactions between humans and the natural world from the "plant's point of view", a perspective he takes seriously, thus reversing an anthropocentric stance.

Others, conversely, denounce the kind of anthropocentric stance that attributes human traits to plants.[7] Recently, a group of scientists strongly criticised the notion that plants exhibit a type of consciousness. Drawing on findings by Feinberg / Mallat, Taiz et al. (2019a, 2019b) consider that the "likelihood that plants, with their relative organisational simplicity and lack of neurons and brains, have consciousness to be effectively nil" (2019a). While pointing out the multiple adaptive traits exhibited by plants to better survive in a dangerous environment, Mehta (2018) emphatically denies that plants are conscious, in a critical response to Klein (2018), which was in turn a reaction to a study in which Yokawa et al. (2018: 747) concluded that plants are "sensitive to several anaesthetics".

In tune with Yeong-hye's behaviour, the protagonist in Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman* also experiences a strong visceral reaction against most types of food, going as far as to wonder whether the vegetables she is about to consume are sentient.

"Eat like a plant!" (Marder 2013: 185)

Like the main character in *The Vegetarian*, the protagonist of Atwood (1990), a young, professional, unmarried woman, Marian, gradually feels herself unable to eat any kind of meat, and becomes a vegetarian as a psychosomatic reaction to what she subconsciously perceives as the encroaching siege, closing in on her, of multiple social demands on herself and her condition as a young woman, in particular marriage, pregnancy and motherhood. Indeed, in their effort to escape the conventions and demands of patriarchal ideology, the protagonists of Kang's and Atwood's novels almost completely abandon social interaction and their relationship with food changes dramatically. When she gets engaged, she leaves her job, as is expected of her, and that is when her dietary problems start. Her rejection of the situation that is forced upon her results in psychological problems that lead to her eating disorder, where she finds herself unable to swallow meat. Indeed, this state of affairs comes to a head when she realises she is unable to eat a steak that Peter, her fiancé, has ordered for her. As Sanchez-Grant (2008: 86) asserts, many feminists have come to "understand the eating disorder, overwhelmingly a female problem, as a rebellion against culturally-defined experiences of womanhood".

Gradually she also refuses other types of food, such as eggs, soon after a discussion about pregnancy, mothering, fertility and uterus envy (Atwood 1990: 159-161). During her friend Clara's pregnancy, in particular in what is described as the "later, more vegetable stage", Marian "had tended to forget that Clara had a mind at all or any perceptive faculties above the merely sentient and sponge-like, since she had spent most of her time being absorbed in, or absorbed by, her tuberous abdomen" (*idem*: 130). Marian's resistance to fulfilling the roles expected of her is inextricably connected with her refusing to be restricted to being a wife and mother, or being profoundly reticent about it, in part associated with relinquishing the life of the mind and a more autonomous self. Tellingly, Marian is pleased to recognise the more mentally focused Clara after the latter gives birth.

Symptomatically, Marian comes to regard her colleagues as women ready to be "consumed", in effect as edible: "They were ripe, some rapidly becoming overripe, some already beginning to shrivel; she thought of them as attached by stems at the tops of their heads to an invisible vine, hanging there in various stages of growth and decay" (*idem*: 166-167). Meaningfully, Marian's parents were afraid she would not get married and that moss would grow out of her, that she would "undergo some shocking physical transformation" (*idem*: 174). A vegetable state in these scenes is associated with a passive stance, a lack of agency which to Marian appears undesirable. However, as the narrative unfolds, she will find it hard to be herself in a society which places great value on meat-eating and virility.

Significantly, as with Yeong-hye, whose vivid dream of a puddle of blood was a powerful catalyst for her rebellion against patriarchal structures, Marian also has a dream which can be interpreted as a warning. In Marian's dream she sees her feet starting to dissolve, a memory triggered by the fear of dissolution, while in the bath, of "coming apart layer by layer like a piece of cardboard in a gutter puddle", of a body that somehow was "no longer quite her own" (*idem*: 218), a powerful image of the discontinuity between her own (bodily) wishes and her subordinate position and loss of control in an androcentric society predicated on rigid gender conventions.

As in Kang (2015), Marian becomes acutely aware of all the animal killing that goes on almost surreptitiously, without the majority of people paying any attention to it or giving it much thought. Marian reasoned that her body had taken an ethical stand by refusing to "eat anything that had once been, or (like oysters on the half-shell) might still be living" (Atwood 1990: 178).

Also like the protagonist in *The Vegetarian*, Marian progressively comes to reject even vegetables and fruit, developing a sense of concern against eating vegetables which might be alive and have a type of plant consciousness. As she was peeling a carrot she became aware of it:

> It's a root, she thought, it grows in the ground and sends up leaves. Then they come along and dig it up, maybe it even makes a sound, a scream too low for us to hear, but it doesn't die right away, it keeps on living, right now it's still alive. (*idem*: 178)

Marder's fundamental text in critical plant studies states that "plant-thinking does not oppose the use of fruit, roots, and leaves for human nourishment" (2013: 184) and gives the advice that we "*eat like a plant!*" (*idem*: 185). As he explains, "Eating like a plant does not entail consuming only inorganic materials but welcoming the other, forming a rhizome with it, and turning oneself into the passage for the other without violating or dominating it, without endeavoring to swallow up its very otherness in one's corporeal and psychic interiority" (*idem*: 184-185), words that recall and critically engage with Deleuze/Guattari's rhizomatic, arborescent thinking and shed light on the plights of Kang's and Atwood's young women characters.

Stark (2015: 183) suggests that on a practical level Marder's concept of "eating like a plant", which advocates eating locally, sustainably and in a respectful way, involves being "wary of genetic modification and industrial food production, both of which are fundamentally inimical to the ethics of plant being". Marder (2013: 31) also urges the adoption of a "drastically different comportment toward the environment, which will no longer be perceived as a collection of natural resources and raw materials managed, more or less efficiently, by human beings".

Significantly, at the end of Atwood (1990), having finally ended her relationship with Peter, Marian is free to acknowledge her body and its physical urges. In a deeply satisfying act of assertive recognition of her newly regained self, Marian eats a cake she had baked in the shape of a woman, thus putting to rest the objectified state of her former self, controlled by patriarchal conventions, including her parents' and her fiancé's wishes.

What the protagonists of *The Vegetarian* and *The Edible Woman* are signalling is their refusal to be somebody's "meat". On the other hand, can't their actions of gradually retreating from social life and avoiding their husband and fiancé be interpreted as a surrender to the androcentric status quo, an admission of defeat, a relinquishing of their own autonomy and independence, a becoming passive?

In similar vein, Margaret Atwood's (2005) poem "She Considers Evading Him" also suggests a similar line of action, of potential evasion:

I can change my-
self more easily
than I can change you
I could grow bark and
become a shrub (*idem*: 4)

What is suggested here is that it seems easier for a woman to change, even if it means relinquishing her physical body and retreating into another, vegetal state, than for patriarchal society to allow her to be herself, without the imposition of unwanted advances from some of its members, a predicament illustrated in the mythological story of Daphne and Apollo.

Daphne: Woman into Tree

The trope of the metamorphosis of woman into tree, relatively common in classical mythology and later revisited by the women Surrealist artists, can be said to address, in literature and the visual arts, the politics of gender and of woman's subordinate position in relation to man, seen as the pursuer and potentially a rapist. This trope thus underpins an essentialist view of woman as nature, or as having to hide in nature to escape undesirable male attention. Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is full of episodes detailing transformations into trees and flowers.

The mythological story of Apollo and Daphne provides just such an example, where Apollo relentlessly pursues Daphne who, unable to sustain her flight forever, asks for her father's intervention and is turned into a laurel tree: "a heavy numbness seized her limbs, thin bark closed over her breast, her hair turned into leaves, her arms into branches, her feet so swift a moment ago stuck fast in slow-growing roots, her face was lost in the canopy. Only her shining beauty was left" (Ovid: 525-552). However, even in this vegetal guise Apollo finds her enticing: "placing his hand against the trunk, he felt her heart still quivering under the new bark. He clasped the branches as if they were parts of human arms, and kissed the wood. But even the wood shrank from his kisses, and the god said 'Since you cannot be my bride, you must be my tree!'" (*idem*: 553-567).

Daphne thus only partially manages to avoid the unwanted advances of Apollo, who still lays claim over her, by sacrificing her body and being returned to "nature", which suggests the greater strength of male, patriarchal power over women, who can only circumvent it by passive resistance, by becoming "other", and in Daphne's case becoming an evergreen laurel tree. Her escape is thus couched in terms of surrender, even though she is not subjected to his sexual assault. Apollo's chasing after Daphne can also be equated to an act of hunting for prey, where the equation between woman and animal is again operative.

The story of Daphne and Apollo can be said to articulate, in a rich metaphorical and allegorical vein, the dilemma in which the two protagonists of *The Vegetarian* and *The Edible Woman* find themselves. Indeed, in their effort to avoid their husband's and boyfriend's undesired attention, respectively, they gradually and increasingly retreat into types of behaviour that refuse any

complicity with the repressive society they represent, changing into representative examples of the metamorphic trope of becoming plant, becoming tree. As suggested before, this trope can be seen to underpin an essentialist, reductive view of woman as nature, of woman having to hide in nature to escape undesirable male attention. On the other hand, it is possible to read Daphne's story not only in terms of her own dissolution, the disappearance of her bodily being, but maybe also as suggesting her release from unwanted sexual advances. We could thus reconsider the sexual politics of the trope of woman turning into a tree, arguing that in spite of the feminine flight into nature and evasion of the pursuing male that characterises it, it may convey the possibility of a transgression of patriarchal codes and the creation of new ones where women can build a feminine space of their own.

In sum, both Yeong-hye in *The Vegetarian* and Marian in *The Edible Woman* reject the meanings of femininity imposed on them by society by refusing to eat, in particular meat, which has been traditionally associated with masculinity and virility. In tune with Yeong-hye and Marian, Jane Takagi-Little, the protagonist of Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats* (1998) also undergoes a profound change, driven by her gradual learning about the dominant practices of breeding cattle in the US in the last century and the impact that eating that meat can have on the population.

Ruth Ozeki, *My Year of Meats*

Han Kang's *The Vegetarian* can profitably be compared with Ruth Ozeki's *My Year of Meats*, a book that exposes the hidden secrets of the American meat industry and distribution, while contrasting the Japanese and American ways of life through a television show, called *My American Wife!*, produced in the US but targeting a Japanese audience, whose main objective is to sell American meat to Japanese housewives. The protagonist is a Japanese-American woman, Jane Takagi-Little, who is the coordinator of the show. As part of the production team that shot the 52 episodes, she had to travel all across America, identifying families and in particular wives who corresponded to the all-American ideal of wholesomeness and beauty, characteristics to be emulated by their Japanese counterparts, who also faithfully followed their meat recipes, thus imbibing the spirit of an idealised American lifestyle and the food that went with it, in this case a glorification of meat. The show was sponsored by the Beef Export and Trade Syndicate, determined to sell their meat to the Asian market.

As in *The Vegetarian,* in Ozeki (1998) one of the main characters is Asian, a Japanese woman named Akiko Ueno who feels she does not have a voice or identity, submerged under her husband's authority. Like Yeong-hye, Akiko resists being associated with meat by her husband, the Japanese producer of the show, even as she is fascinated by the American women's way of life as portrayed in *My American Wife!*

Indeed, the all-American wife who will be centrally featured in the show, together with the meat itself she will help to publicise and sell to a Japanese audience, is tellingly described as "Meat Made Manifest" (*idem*: 8) in the description to sell the programme written by Jane.

In both *The Vegetarian* and *My Year of Meats*, strictly misogynistic husbands control their submissive wives to such an extent, including the use of physical, domestic violence, that eventually they rebel and leave them and their overpowering ways, drastically changing their eating habits while embracing a radically new way of life. While in *The Vegetarian* the main character retreats into a tree-like stance, the Japanese wife in Ozeki's novel, exposed to a seemingly attractive American lifestyle, reaches out to Jane, the Japanese-American documentarian responsible for the programmes and asks for her help to start a brand-new life in the USA.

It can be argued that the consumption of meat, predicated upon the domination of animals, their hunting and killing, as well as keeping them in factory farms and slaughterhouses, can be metaphorically equated with the exploitation and subjugation of many women as objects to be used and abused, symbolically "eaten" or "consumed". This "carnophallogocentric" rhetoric, to borrow Jacques Derrida's term (1991: 113), has been complicit in the subordination of women regarded as meat in a continuum with other animals to be exploited for male consumption.

Carol J. Adams's (1990; new edition 2015) groundbreaking book powerfully shows how the objectification of women and the ways in which they are rendered akin to animals as meat to be consumed and devoured are closely interlinked in the popular imagination. Adams (2015: 19) also points out the intersections between feminism and vegetarianism, providing a synthesis that makes sense, as she remarks, "of two seemingly divergent impulses – justice for women and concern about animals", treating "vegetarianism seriously as a political act of resistance". Williams (2014: 247) emphasises the ecofeminist critical stance of the novel, with its "explicit connections between nonhuman animals' experiences and female-bodied human experiences within structures of power. Harrison (2017: 473), in turn, argues that Ozeki's novel shows the "rhetorical value of literature that combines the data-driven analysis of the sciences with the imaginative, affect-producing work of fiction for encouraging the critical awareness that enables political action and, in doing so, illustrates the need to reconsider how narratives 'document' the relationship between marginalized bodies and environmental degradation".[8]

For Derrida (1991: 113-114), the notion of carnophallogocentrism, of a "carnivorous virility" that places the "virile figure at the determinative center of the subject" constitutes a mainstay of the Western philosophical tradition. As he further asserts (*idem*: 114), the "virile strength of the adult male, the father, husband, or brother […] belongs to the schema that dominates the concept of subject. The subject does not want just to master and possess nature actively. In our cultures, he accepts sacrifice and eats flesh". In this context, eating meat contributes to strengthen patriarchal values, an aspect Adams repeatedly stresses. This association is also endlessly reinforced in Ozeki's *My Year of Meats*, where animals are described as ceaselessly exploited and sacrificed for human consumption, but women are often also victims of this carnophallogocentrism.

Despite the fact that Akiko, the wife of the Japanese producer of the show, ceases to eat animal flesh, she is nevertheless still symbolically inscribed in a type of society characterised as carnophallogocentric, predicated on a patriarchal logic that inevitably associates the dominant (by default) male rule with the ingestion of other animals, in a show of supremacy and authority, even if at times only symbolic. Jane herself, as she unveils the most gruesome details of the production of meat in the US, also feels to some extent complicit in this business scheme and finds it incumbent upon herself to denounce it by means of another documentary that she makes public.

As Baumeister (2017: 55) observes, the

> schema of carnophallogocentrism is fundamentally sacrificial, and reflects the legacy of animal sacrifice in Western mythology and religion. Carnivorous virility is therefore manifested not only in our eating practices, where one would expect it to be, but is also dispersed throughout the (human) cultural or civilizational field, inflecting morality, religion and politics.

This near-impossibility of totally evading the carnophallogocentric nature of society thus characterises not only Akiko's but also Marian's and Yeong-hye's dilemma: even when they stop eating they are still an integral part of society where at least symbolically they are regarded as "flesh" to be consumed.[9] In this scheme where carnophallogocentrism is predicated on sacrifice and violence exerted against animals the women also become sacrificial victims.

Conclusion

Placing these three novels in a critical dialogue fleshes out a series of topics that run through the books: women who rebel against patriarchal society and androcentric norms through their dietary styles, by giving up eating meat, and more radically in the case of Yeong-hye, by refusing to consume any type of food.

The three characters in the texts under investigation, Yeong-hye, Marian and Akiko, feel neutralised and objectified, mere pawns in a male-dominated, carnophallogocentric society, to borrow Derrida's useful term again. While these women manage to escape the social scripts written down for them, the outcomes of their actions are drastically different. While the main character in *The Vegetarian*, mimicking the mythological Daphne in her flight from Apollo, gradually wills herself to "become" a tree, eschewing any physical or social contact and refusing to feed herself, the protagonist of *The Edible Woman* eventually extricates herself from a stultifying relationship in which she felt subjugated and without a voice of her own. Akiko, for her part, feeling she does not have a voice or identity, submerged under her husband's authority, leaves her old life behind and moves to the USA, where with Jane's help she will start anew. In the three novels, the sexual objectification of women as meat to be devoured, an enduring, contentious trope, is thoroughly deconstructed.

As already suggested, the gradual retreat into becoming plant of the main character of *The Vegetarian* can be read as a sign of resistance against a strongly patriarchal society with extremely restrictive rules for women, where they are considered their father's and husband's property. While this strategy can be regarded as a surrendering to a passive state which perpetuates the long-standing association between women and nature, traditionally perceived as passive and pliable, it can also be seen as a defiant gesture of confrontation and survival, even though it

could be equated with the relinquishing of agency and the willing, if forced, acceptance of an apparently inert or inactive state of becoming plant.

These metamorphic negotiations thus go a long way towards suggesting a deep-seated malaise towards women's roles, on the one hand, and the sexual politics of meat, on the other, a dietary choice perceived as deeply imbricated in the exploitation of both women and animals, often caught in networks of violence and cruelty that women tend to find very difficult to disentangle themselves from, caught in the dominant logic and ideology of a still masculinist society. Within this persistent and deeply embedded carnophallogocentric logic, vegetarianism or veganism are not effective on their own, while resistance to these gendered politics of meat is at best difficult and often ineffective, since that schema will at least symbolically continue to be operative because it provides the cultural and philosophical foundations of Western civilisations. Aside from Kang's *The Vegetarian*, however, these novels end on a more optimistic note, suggesting that the women's struggle against androcentric norms, including dietary ones, is possible and valuable, not only for their sake but also to promote necessary changes in terms of the fraught gendered politics of food.

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Notes

1. Kang remarks that she reworked the image of a woman turning into a plant in *The Vegetarian* in a "darker and fiercer way" (Patrick 2016).
2. As Biscaia (2019: 105) observes, Yeong-hye "chooses not to eat in order to escape gendered systematic violence but also, quite simply, human violence".
3. Marchalik/Jurecic (2017: 147) read Yeong-hye's symptoms as anorexia nervosa and argue that her "abstinence from meat symbolises a desire to purge herself of the violence and cruelty that has defined her entire life". Although I do not have time to analyse this topic here, the three books under investigation also deal with the development of eating disorders in women as a result of the imposition of traditional gender norms of behaviour, as they intersect with gender politics and the vexed politics of meat eating. See Colebrook (1998).
4. Ruether's (1975: 204) contention that women "must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society, whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination" is as topical as when it was written. Her call for women to "unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this society" sounds as contemporary and pressing as it did then. These ecofeminist ideas were also echoed and reinforced later by Merchant (1996: 7) who analysed the "twin oppressions of the domination of woman and nature".
5. In sync with Yeong-hye's transformations, the protagonist in Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (2004) feels herself changing in tune with the natural world, becoming animal and plant in Deleuze/Guattari's rhizomatic sense: "My body also changes, the creature in me, plant-animal, sends out filaments in me; I ferry it secure between life and death, I multiply" (*idem*: 197).
6. As Kang (2016a) further remarks: "I also think my preoccupation extends to the violence that prevails in daily life. Eating meat, cooking meat, all these daily activities embody a violence that has been normalized".
7. Indeed, the fraught question of plant consciousness hinges in part on linguistics, on the terms used to define types of cooperation shown by plants, actions described drawing on human behaviour.
8. See also Cheng (2009).
9. As Baumeister (2017: 57) points out, it is the "broad framework of human civilization that is carnophallogocentric and that must be transformed in order for our eating practices to no longer play into the mechanism of carnophallogocentrism".

Diet, Consciousness and Ethics.

Convergent Praxis in the Animal Rights and Vegetarian Writings of Henry Salt and Agostinho da Silva

José Eduardo Reis & Chris Gerry

Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world.
Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov.*[1]

1. Introduction

In this article, based on our reading of some of the principal publications of Henry Stephens Salt (1851-1939) and Agostinho da Silva (1906-1994), we compare the political, philosophical and practical approaches employed by these two "food militants" to raise public awareness and promote attitude change regarding human diet and animal welfare.

Henry Salt, the English philosopher, social reformer, human and animal rights activist, and populariser of vegetarianism advocated a meatless regime not simply as a dietary option, but above all as part of a philosophy capable of transforming prevailing social values through education, conscientisation, behavioural transformation and policy reform. Simultaneously ethically based and pragmatic, his writings and political agitation aimed to respond to the political, economic and cultural issues raised by what he called the "great food questions" of the day.

Agostinho da Silva, the Portuguese philosopher, educator, essayist and Christian mystic, propelled the ethics of food into the public arena both in his own country and in Brazil. His visionary utopian perspective allowed him to raise important philosophical questions on a wide range of issues, including human nutrition and the ethical treatment of animals, and to propose remedial measures at both the individual and societal levels.

2. The Utopian Ethics of Henry Salt: From Animal Rights to Vegetarianism

2.1. A Biographical Overview

Henry Stephens Salt was a radical journalist, prolific essayist on ethical and political issues, a committed social reformer, literary critic and biographer, and an amateur naturalist. His journalism strongly reflected his socialist beliefs, and he wrote regularly on issues such as landlordism, land reform, poverty, workers' rights, and the prison system. His politics were socialist, his analytics materialist, his ethics embraced all species, and his strategy for social change employed propagandising and political lobbying in equal measure.

The social preoccupations that would occupy Salt for the rest of his long life began to coalesce after he graduated in classics from Cambridge University and became a teacher at Eton College, one of Britain's elite private schools, only for him to conclude that Eton was just a microcosm of wider Victorian society. Having endured the institution for almost ten years, appalled by the cruelty, gluttony, boorishness and snobbery that lay beneath the thin veneer of refined academicism, he resigned his post and moved with his wife Catherine to rural Surrey. There, he adopted the simple rural life recommended by Thoreau, devoting himself to writing on ethics, animal rights and vegetarianism, and to campaigning for greater public awareness and more appropriate government policies.

Salt first found himself attracted to the ideas of the fledgling Fellowship of the New Life, a small discussion and study group composed of ethical socialists, many of whom – influenced by the writings of Tolstoy, Thoreau and the Italian liberal catholic priest Antonio Rosmini – advocated pacifism, vegetarianism and a simple lifestyle. At their meetings, they discussed how best to morally regenerate society by perfecting the individual as a prelude to perfecting society as a whole. However, while content to learn more about pressing social issues and discuss potential solutions, he was eager to see social change materialise, and later gravitated towards the newly-formed Fabian Society[2] that had split away from the Fellowship, more eager to actively promote social change than to merely debate it in the abstract. By becoming a member of both organisations, Salt satisfied both his deep interest in humanitarian ideas and his eagerness to promote concrete social reforms.

In contrast to the Fellowship, the Fabians aimed to work towards the transformation of society through popular education, agitation and organisation (to paraphrase George Bernard Shaw's slogan) using, more specifically, public debate and political lobbying to achieve their aims. The Society initially tolerated a plurality of ideological positions among its members, and there were early disagreements between supporters of anarchist-inspired local collectivities and Marxists advocating state socialism. By the turn of the century, however, the Fabians had committed themselves to gradual social change and policy reform, to be achieved using "the existing institutions [and] party and parliamentary machinery", so that subsequently socialism could be legislated into existence, based on the nationalisation of key industries, improved wages, municipal ownership of urban utilities and free public education and training (Diniejko n.d.).

Driven by his all-embracing view of humanitarianism, his conviction that the gravest social problems of the day were all intimately interconnected, and his frustration over the myriad organisations involved in dietary reform and animal rights, Salt formed the Humanitarian League in 1891 and acted as its Honorary Secretary for almost thirty years.[3] He hoped to attract all the disparate struggles for social reform – by vegetarians, antivivisectionists, campaigners for animal rights and more humane prisons, anti-colonialists and anti-imperialists – under a single global aim and organisational banner, that of humanitarianism. The League's initiatives aimed to promote – through debate and the diffusion of information – a greater and more active awareness of the common kinship existing between all sentient creatures and, in particular, to lobby Parliament for the more rigorous application of existing legislation on animal welfare, the extension of such laws, a complete revision of criminal law and the prison system, and the establishment of an education system based on the duty of benevolence towards all our fellow beings.

Notwithstanding his intensive work with the League, Salt remained a Fabian until the turn of the century; however, believing that imperialism could provide the means to propagate internationally the model of governance to which the Society attributed such strategic importance for the attainment of socialism, during the Boer War, its members voted narrowly in favour of the British invasion of the Transvaal. In response, Salt – among many others, including suffragist Emmeline Pankhurst – resigned. Thereafter he concentrated all his energies on informing and educating the public about the ethical incoherence between human eating habits and the rights of animals, collaborating closely with many other supporters of radical social reform,[4] and pressuring government to enact legislation to eliminate or at least mitigate the contradictions involved.

2.2. The origins of Salt's animal rights advocacy and ethical vegetarianism

Henry Salt shared with the American polymath Thoreau and the English poet Shelley an intuitive belief that Nature is inherently harmonious, that all sentient beings are sacred, that resistance is only legitimate if non-violent, and that the individual (and ultimately humanity) is perfectible. His socialist world view was inseparable from the principles that underpinned his early espousal of Thoreauvian simplicity, his staunch support for animal rights, and commitment to vegetarianism (Clark & Foster 2000: 468).[5] In his view, for society to become as civilised as it was habitually claimed to be, the two main forms of human violence had to be abolished – that which we inflict on animals (by means of stock breeding, slaughter, blood sports and zoological gardens) and those which pit human against human, specifically socio-economic inequality, corporal punishment and war (Dardenne 2014: 13).

Salt differed from the majority of intellectuals of his day in that he did not regard late Victorian Britain as the epitome of civilisation. In his memoires, written in the aftermath of the First World War and the Great Depression, he warns the reader that:

> if present conditions [are thought to correspond to…] civilisation, we might well incline to despair; but if we are […] living (as I think) in a still primitive period of savagery and barbarism, hope in the far future need not wholly be abandoned (apud Dardenne 2011: 14).[6]

His concept of what constituted a civilised society was an extension of his ideas on humanity's ethical evolution rather than the conventional wisdom that civilisation could be measured in terms of material, technological or cultural advances. Accordingly, he defined a humanitarian attitude as "a protest against all tyranny and desecration, whether such wrong be done by the infliction of suffering on sentient beings, or by the vandalism which can ruthlessly destroy the natural grace of the earth" (apud Dardenne 2014: 47).

Salt's diagnosis of the social ills of his day led him to conclude that the wealth, power and hegemony enjoyed by the owners of capital was only made possible by their exploitation of the labouring classes and the impoverishment and hunger it caused. Moreover, he went much further than many of his radical contemporaries by confessing himself unable to distinguish between those "who live selfishly on the labour of others" and "those who pamper a depraved appetite at the expense of […] animal suffering", insisting that those who called themselves socialists would never fully realise their aim of creating a society that was truly humane unless and until they rejected animal cruelty and embraced vegetarianism.[7]

Salt's politics were socialist, his analytics materialist, his ethics embraced all species, and his strategy for social change employed publishing and political lobbying in equal measure. With remarkable utopian foresight, given the ideological conjuncture in which he was writing, he persistently raised serious issues in the public mind regarding the flagrant asymmetries in the rights "enjoyed" by different communities depending on their race, gender or species. Most prominent in Salt's legacy are the pioneering works in which he polemicised against the myriad forms of animal cruelty that custom and tradition had legitimised, actively advocating vegetarianism as both a viable strategy and an ethical choice for individuals and society at large. Throughout his long life, Salt took pains to systematically present the public and politicians with practical proposals that could, in his view, lead to the eventual reform of humanity's attitudes and behaviour and, in particular, restore harmony to our relationship with the animal kingdom and the natural world.

2.3. *A Plea for Vegetarianism:* ethics, awareness and social reform

The eponymous chapter in this collection of essays[8] is notable for its pioneering exposition of the rational arguments against a carnivorous diet. Salt argues that vegetarianism can be justified on four grounds – economic, nutritional, aesthetic and ethical. Not without humour, he proceeds to inventory the reasons why one might make such a choice, refuting one by one objections based either on so-called common sense or simple prejudice. Consistent with the social reforms he championed, Salt begins by highlighting the economic advantages of the vegetarian diet for the British population, the majority of whose breadwinners – whether they were factory and workshop employees or self-employed artisans and service-providers – earned too little at that time to afford an omnivorous diet based on animal protein. Elsewhere in this collection of essays (Salt 1886: 113), Salt answers the accusation that his advocation of vegetarianism served to legitimise low wages, perpetuate income inequality and generalise social deprivation; he points to the good health of those who adopt vegetarianism voluntarily as proof of the non-pecuniary advantages of a meat-free diet. He subsequently extends his advocacy of vegetarianism beyond the economic and social to encompass aesthetic and ethical justifications, enumerating the deleterious and degrading impact on the observer's aesthetic sensibilities when confronted by the sight of the carcasses of dead animals hanging in a butcher's shop, the plaintive sounds of livestock being delivered to the slaughterhouse, or the strong aromas of animal flesh being prepared for the table. Indeed, he goes as far as to claim that "the greatest and most unerring argument in favour of vegetarianism is […] the utter absence of 'good taste' in flesh-eating, which is revolting to all the higher instincts of the human mind" (*idem*: 12).

Salt scrutinizes and deconstructs the commonest argument made against vegetarians, namely that such an ostensibly eccentric diet is neither sufficiently nourishing for physical labour nor possesses the necessary nutrients for intellectual work.[9] He berates the detractors of vegetarianism for this double stigmatisation, doubly refuting it by reminding them that the peasantry in many countries ate little if any meat (albeit mainly due to their poverty) and – certainly with the English romantic generation in mind – that many notable writers and poets had willingly rejected meat-eating. In a style that could be defined as proselytising militancy, Salt reviews other common objections to vegetarianism, such as that made on physiological grounds by sceptics claiming that "comparative anatomy […] shows distinctly that the human teeth and intestines are constructed with a view to the digestion of flesh, and not of vegetables" (*idem*: 74) and thus that it would be flying in the face of Nature if "unnatural" vegetarianism were to become a universal practice.

These criticisms and their corresponding refutations are more fully and systematically developed in a later essay (Chapter VII of the collection) entitled "On certain fallacies", in which Salt seeks to demonstrate that the commonest objections to vegetarianism, rather than being based upon rationality, have their origins in the deeply-rooted prejudices of the "British mind" (*idem*: 73). He proceeds to identify and refute eleven of what he considers the most prevalent fallacies regarding vegetarianism, providing his own apposite and often caustic riposte in each case: (1) our teeth and digestive tract were designed for meat-eating; (2) we must eat meat, as our climate is too cold; (3) vegetarianism obliges us to over-intellectualise rather than simply enjoy our diet; (4) it is an unfounded belief; (5) it is selfish, inconveniencing and causing concern to our family and friends regarding our health and sanity; (6) no suitable materials exist to replace the skin, bone, fats and oils of animal origin used to manufacture everyday products of first necessity; (7) to abandon so many animals to conflict, starvation and death would amount to cruelty; (8) an animal's life devoted to providing food for humans is better than no life at all; (9) vegetarianism is against Nature; (10) vegetarians repudiate all taking of life, when sometimes it is unavoidable; and, finally, (11) vegetarianism rejects what the Scriptures allow.

Erudite and cultured, Salt frequently quotes literature to bolster his arguments discrediting the carnivorous diet and the customs and consciousness it represents. This strategy is elegantly deployed, for example, by quoting both Shakespeare's Prince Hamlet when demanding that the claims of vegetarianism be taken seriously and tested scientifically (*idem*: 19)[10] and his Sir Andrew Aguecheek in *Twelfth Night* to confirm the deleterious effects of meat consumption on mental processes (*idem*: 46-47).[11] He paraphrases lines from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* to warn the neophyte of the tribulations of adopting a vegetarian lifestyle (*idem*: 91),[12] refers to a passage from Keats's poem "The Eve of St. Agnes" to denounce the immorality of the flesh-eater's diet (*idem*: 23),[13] and recalls that in Thomas More's *Utopia* hunting for recreational purposes simply did not exist (*idem*: 95).

Throughout Salt's collection of essays, his critique of the carnivorous diet is relentless, and he even upbraids some of its detractors for not going far enough. For example, while critical of the St George's Society, founded by art critic John Ruskin, for its qualified repudiation of animal cruelty, he deployed Ruskin's aesthetic doctrine on morality and beauty (*idem*: 37)[14] as a key device in defence of the vegetarian diet. Indeed, in his essay "Good Taste in Diet", it provides Salt with a pretext to remind readers that "the beef was once an ox, the mutton was once a sheep, the veal was once a calf, and the pork was once a pig" (*idem*: 33).

In "Some results of food reform", Salt enumerates some of the beneficial consequences of the reformed vegetarian diet (*idem*: 40), namely the elevation and refinement of our aesthetic and moral sense, the exercise of a healthier lifestyle – including abstinence from alcoholic beverages and tobacco products. Indeed, the need for both the rich and the "lower orders" to practice moderation based upon education and a plentiful supply of nutritious non-meat foodstuffs, is a prerequisite – a necessary but not sufficient precondition – for the social reform to which his utopian humanism aspires.

At an economic and social conjuncture in which the population growth, rural-urban migration and widespread impoverishment stemming from the industrial revolution called for structural rather than legislative responses, in his short essay "Vegetarianism and Social Reform", Salt makes the vegetarian diet central to his call for social reform. He remained unconvinced as to the efficacy, and deeply preoccupied as to the ethics, of many of the proposals to relieve the pressure on food supplies, strongly influenced as they were by Malthusian principles and what were to become social Darwinist and eugenicist thinking – such as measures to encourage sexual abstinence, postpone childbirth, and promote emigration, along with technological solutions to enable perishable goods to be more widely traded, thanks to the "floating mortuaries […] by which the carcasses of sheep are preserved in the antipodes and brought to our shores" (*idem*: 112). Given the abundance, diversity and nutritional quality of vegetarian fare, and due to the ethical superiority inherent in frugal and simple eating habits, Salt believed that the only rational and sustainable way of meeting the world's growing food needs was to radically move human consumption away from meat products. However, this dietary revolution would need to be integrated into a wider set of complementary reforms also aimed at constructing a more just society.

Structural changes would be ineffective without a shift in mentality among both consumers and professionals, argues Salt. In "Medical Men & Food Reform", he affirms that it is essential to transform the attitudes of professionals, all of whom have been trained according to an epistemological paradigm neither given to openness nor tolerant of criticism by lay people. The need to change the attitudes of the mass of the population with regard to animals is dealt with in the essay "Sport", in which Salt rehearses a thesis that was to be more fully developed in his 1894 book *Animal Rights*. He invokes the principle of humanitarian sympathy for the entire animal kingdom as a means of deconstructing the arguments of those who condone leisure pursuits that cause pain and/or death to animals in the name of entertainment. In Salt's view, the fact that hunting and fishing for pleasure endows humans with a range of impressive skills cannot justify these "brutal and degrading" practices (*idem*: 96). He finds nonsensical the claim that blood sports provide opportunities for people to enjoy the majesty of Nature, and asks why the same benefits cannot be enjoyed without sacrificing animals: "The dynamiters[15] who cross the Atlantic to blow up an English town might on this [same] principle justify the object of their journey by the assertion that the sea voyage brought them in contact with the exalting and ennobling influences of the Atlantic" (*idem*: 98).

Towards the end of his reflections on the bloodiness of sport, Salt praises the insights to be found in the essay "Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts", in which Thomas de Quincey "humorously treats of murder – much as the sportsman affects to regard sport – as an honourable profession, giving scope to the highest art and dexterity of handiwork, and ennobling the character of those who practise it" (*idem*: 99). Adopting again his trademark ironic hyperbole to expose the hypocrisy of those who simultaneously romanticise and brutalise the animal world, in his essay "The Philosophy of Cannibalism", written in response to the press scandal provoked by two cases of deceased humans being eaten so that others might survive (*idem*: 102), Salt feigns incomprehension at the "squeamish and sentimental" scruples displayed by meat-eaters, since "cannibalism is not only a branch of that great flesh-eating system of diet of which [carnivorous humans] are upholders, but it is beyond doubt the most logical and fully developed realisation of the principles on which that system is based" (*ibidem*). By presenting cannibalism as a special case of humanity's generalised zoophagy, Salt employs black humour to stress the serious point he is making.

Salt also charms the reader by drawing on mythology, anthropological accounts and literary quotations from Classical Antiquity[16] to justify his categorising of cannibalism as one of humanity's "time-honoured institution[s]" (*idem*: 102). He almost outdoes de Quincey by hypothesising that cannibal tribes might seek to justify their own "dietetic peculiarities" (*idem*: 104) by arguing along lines similar to those habitually used by defenders of meat-eating when they assert the impracticability of a vegetarian world, such as:

> "It has always been so"; "It is the […] rule of our society"; "Our medical men approve of it"; "We are strong and healthy on this diet"; "It is […] the law of Nature"; "It is much kinder […] than to leave them to die of a lingering old age"; "The world would be over-run with old and sick people if we did not eat them"; "It is […] necessary at times to take life"; and "We must […] not give way to humanitarian sentiment" (*idem*: 104-105).

Salt even compares the alleged sale of human flesh in the markets of primitive New Britain with the exhibition of animal carcasses in the commercial establishments of the supposedly civilized "old Britain", and urges his readers to meditate on the paradox of our deploring, on the one hand, the "dog-like perversity of appetite which prompts men to glut themselves with food at once disgusting and degrading, while they neglect or despise the pure and simple gifts scattered everywhere by the bountiful hand of Nature" (*idem*: 110).

Taken together, Salt's essays provide a detailed justification of a dietary regime that, in addition to claiming to be healthier than one based on animal protein, forms a key component of the multi-faceted humanitarian strategy adopted by Victorian utopians for the complete reform of British – and perhaps even world – society.

3. The Utopian Metaphysics of Agostinho da Silva – From Expanding Consciousness to Embracing Vegetarianism

3.1. A biographical overview

Between the ages of 16 and 18, da Silva worked as a journalist for the *Comércio do Porto* newspaper, writing articles in which he often conducted a classical dialogue on key issues of the day, juxtaposing his own views with those of imaginary characters of his own invention. Da Silva graduated in Classics at Porto University and was awarded his doctorate only a year later. He was already collaborating with the literary magazine *Seara Nova*, of which he was soon to become a mainstay. In 1935, having found work as a secondary school teacher, he was dismissed after four years for refusing to provide a sworn declaration – as required of every Portuguese public servant by the Salazar government's "Cabral Law" – that he did not belong to any unapproved organisation. As a matter of conscience, he refused and, aged 29, was prevented from pursuing his career in the public education system. Subsisting on his meagre earnings as a writer and private tutor, he co-founded in 1939 a civic and cultural association and dedicated the war years to writing and publishing educational material for the general public, targeting in particular the poorer, less well-educated members of Portuguese society.

Following his arrest – allegedly for expressing anti-Catholic religious views that Salazar's secret police interpreted as indicative of communist or anarchist involvement, his brief detention in Lisbon's Aljube prison, and a period of internal exile in the Algarve, he finally opted for self-exile in Brazil. There he taught at various universities and worked to promote popular awareness of the ethical issues raised by the increasing pace of the country's modernisation. In 1969, when Salazar was replaced as head of the Portuguese government, da Silva returned home, devoting himself first of all to cooperativism, a passion he had inherited during his work with António Sérgio at the Antero de Quental Pedagogical Centre, and subsequently, after the 1974 Revolution, in the agrarian reform process that had been set in motion when farmworkers in the Alentejo Region occupied uncultivated or underutilised estates to form collective farms (*Unidades de Produção*

Colectivas), a movement that, from 1977, Portugal's increasingly conservative governments took pains to stifle. Until his death in 1994, da Silva continued to deliver his libertarian message, remaining highly critical of the Church, the education and welfare system, and what he considered Portugal's premature adoption of mainstream Western governance and party politics.[17] Today da Silva is remembered as one of the key dissident philosophical voices in twentieth-century Portugal – respected by some for his unsettling and outspoken utopian spirituality, reviled by others for the danger his "heresies" presented both to the Catholic hierarchy of his day and to his more subservient co-religionists.

3.2. The crisis of philosophy and the pursuit of consciousness

In Agostinho da Silva's "Tomada de Consciência" ["Gaining Awareness"], the penultimate of the fifteen essays that make his up his collection *Só Ajustamentos* [Only Adjustments], it is not the origin, purpose or even the unity of life and consciousness – seen as a long, complex cosmic process precisely regulated by physical laws – that he attempts to problematise. Rather, his purpose is to diagnose what he sees as an existential crisis that, from the standpoint of his Joachimite[18] thinking, presages an era in which the expansion of humanity's consciousness would allow active religious aspirations to prevail over abstract philosophical representations of the world. Thus, in the essay, his main intention was to focus on the specific cognitive and existential crisis of individual and collective consciousness characterising a given stage in the evolution of humanity.

In contrast to mainstream approaches, da Silva plays down the extent and relevance of the principal symptoms of cultural crisis in the scientific, ontological and moral spheres, basing his explanation on three arguments. The first, along Platonic lines, is that science (in the broadest sense of the term) continuously pursues its vocation of refining our objective knowledge of the world of phenomena and, in doing so, reveals to us the laws of nature "as they eternally and non-spatially manifest themselves in time and space" (da Silva 1962: 86). His second argument, rooted more in Stoicism, contests the thesis that a traumatic wartime conjuncture capable of "undermining the mildest of wills" (*idem*: 87), far from exposing the bankruptcy of the human character, demonstrates the strength and capacity for resistance of people "as ordinary as any of us [who today …] suffer uncomplainingly and stand ready to continue doing so"(*ibidem*). In his third argument da Silva deploys a twofold perspective: on the one hand, he reasons that the apparent superiority of collective moral life in the past – not only in Ancient Greece and Rome but also in the Christian Middle Ages – derived from people's instinct for survival in a hostile and often precarious world, triggering the emergence of forms of state willing and able to impose discipline by regulating individual and collective behaviour and by devising and applying the corresponding sanctions; on the other hand, da Silva concludes that historically, whenever people have had the freedom to be creative, humanity's moral standards have indeed progressed – albeit only marginally (*ibidem*).

While da Silva provides a detailed refutation of the idea that there is a generalised crisis afflicting the spheres of science, ontology and morality, he does this principally with a view to directing our attention to the emergence of another recurrent crisis – that of philosophy itself. This crisis, he assures us, is not due to its inadequacies as the main foundation and driving force in our understanding of thinking, being and doing, where its performance has shown no real signs of structural weakness or collapse, mainly because its aims and procedures have remained fairly coherent. Rather, philosophy is in crisis because it has proven powerless (as an intellectual vocation) and/or ill-equipped (as a discipline) to deliver answers to the three great unanswered questions posed, respectively, by epistemology (how is new knowledge discovered?), ontology (why does our suffering persist?) and ethics (why do the lives we live diverge so much from our moral aspirations?) (*idem*: 88). Thus the "awareness" in the title of da Silva's essay refers not only to an acknowledgement that there is a crisis – perhaps even a terminal one – in philosophy as practised in both academic and lay contexts, but more importantly to the recognition that what we have long taken to be "purely religious aspirations" could actually be achieved (*idem*: 89).

Drawing also on texts on which da Silva was working at the time he was writing *Só Ajustamentos*,[19] and at the risk of simplifying the exegesis of what is a complex topic, we will first try to identify the existential implications of more and more people pursuing and encountering the spiritual meaning of life, which he saw both as an outcome of the crisis of philosophy and as essential to developing the awareness of which he spoke. Da Silva's desideratum that humanity might develop a greater sense of spirituality has, at its core, the need to cultivate unconditional love for *all* life, as inspired by Christ's example and, as its teleological horizon, the "intimate and ultimate truth that permeates everything and makes the coexistence of […] order and fraternal love possible" (*idem*: 51). Moreover, a future society characterised by greater spirituality resonated both with da Silva's firmest article of faith – the ontological perfectibility of *all* life – and with his mystical-utopian conviction that Portugal's history and the maritime vocation of its people would play key symbolic roles in bringing this about.

It is possible to identify three inter-related and interacting teachings that reflect and summarise not only da Silva's vision of an ideal world, but also, we believe, the main vectors of the personal code of conduct to which he tried to adhere throughout his life. The first vector warns us that in our pursuit of awareness we should guard against the insidious spread of routine and the growth of the unconscious acts and attitudes that, if constantly repeated, sterilise the spirit and prevent new "experiences being available to all in a future organization [of society]" (*idem*: 29). These experiences are not necessarily associated with the alterations in our state of mind caused by sensory stimulation, but with the level of consciousness with which each of us deals with the tasks at hand.

> People who, when getting dressed, do not even think about what they are doing [...] even in such a small act are submitting to habit and, as a result, will delay the advent of heaven. There you have it: it is not habit that gets us into heaven; heaven is attained because every day we treat every act as if it required, at every moment, all our intelligence, all our attention, all our will (*idem*: 94-95).

The second vector in the pursuit of awareness requires us to overcome the duality of contemplation and action in our conduct. This would only be possible, concluded da Silva, once a common order had been established on a universal scale, based upon the experience of voluntary "pilot communities"[20] designed to promote the conscious combination of these two aspects of our conduct. His conception of such communities draws less on contemporary Catholic congregations such as those envisaged by Foucault, and rather more on the materialisation of his own unfailing hope that technology could contribute to liberating us from our status of "simple animals of labour " (*idem*: 17), equipping us to occupy the resulting leisure time creatively, giving us "the kind of life that people in their natural state had once enjoyed [...] thereby permitting an astonishing fusion of the two Greeces, classical and romantic [...] in which lie the origins of our religious communities [...] the only example of true communism" (*idem*: 65). Da Silva sees this fusion as providing an environment in which beings may not only act contemplatively but also contemplate actively (*idem*: 45). In order to avoid accusations of inconsequential daydreaming, or unfounded wishful thinking, da Silva exemplifies this dialectic by referring to two apparently banal everyday occurrences:

> It is inconceivable that there is no-one who, at some point in history, or at some point in their life, has not looked at the sky and the sea and felt engulfed in love; likewise, there can be no-one […] who has never embarked, their mind fully-focused, upon some task that, with clarity and intelligence, they deemed essential. For this is [what it means] to act; everything else is just reflexes or simply work – and work, whatever the extent of our freedom may be – is always slavery (*ibidem*).

The third vector enunciated by da Silva – oft-repeated in the text of *Só Ajustamentos* and elsewhere in his wide-ranging writings – is that, once routine has been dissipated, alienating habits abandoned, the tedium of performing our everyday tasks removed, enlightenment gained through our boundless gratitude for the gift of life and for our deeper understanding of its mystery, then saintliness must be the guiding principal if the "life of each of us in its entirety is to be sanctified" (*idem*: 57). Taking the life and teachings of Christ as the transformational path from the *homo civilis* of the Greco-Roman city of the past to the *homo fraternus* of the future City of God, da Silva arrives at the notion – which, admittedly, may appear somewhat eccentric – that *everyone* has the potential to become a saint. While he admits that "today, few Christians would take sainthood as their primary objective", he exhorts his readers to actively pursue saintliness in their lives, rather than dismissing it as a remote hypothesis relevant only to a few.

3.3. The personal ethics of vegetarianism: examples from myth and anthropology

The roots of da Silva's freely-taken decision to adopt a vegetarian diet himself and, through his politico-social interactions and pedagogical initiatives, to discreetly advocate vegetarianism to a wider audience, lie in the enlightened, resolute, unselfish, mystic and utopian nature mission to which he had devoted his life, that of promoting among others an expanded and more active awareness of humanity's place in Nature and the cosmos.[21] He exhorts us to live our lives guided by an alert, de-routinised consciousness such that our every contemplative act consecrates and sanctifies Nature – including the animal world – in all its complex interdependence. However, da Silva adds, humanity must first gain this awareness if some future Golden Age (in the classical tradition) or earthly paradise (in Jewish-Christian thought) is to be established, where harmony would again prevail between all beings in Nature. We may infer the durability of this happy equilibrium, he says, from what we know of the way of life of indigenous peoples (e.g. the Amerindian tribes of Brazil)[22] before they encountered Europeans.

Drawing on his knowledge of the Greco-Roman literature and myths, da Silva presents his own interpretation of how it was that human communities lost their original state of sacred and primordial harmony and became societies in which dissent and disorder prevailed and had to be subject to civil regulation. On several occasions in his writings, he suggests that the loss of humanity's pristine state corresponds to the abandonment of frugivorous food and the introduction of animal sacrifice. His explanation of this ontological fall,[23] i.e. the shift from a unique cultural paradigm and the attendant decline in intra- and inter-species solidarity and the resultant rise in violence – socially sanctioned or otherwise – points to a key biological factor, that of hunger.

> At some point, as the fruits of the forest became scarcer, humanity would have turned to animals for food […]. Instead of the perfect and pacific contact with nature that is only possible with a fruit-based diet, by [adopting] hunting and fishing, humanity had declared war on nature (*idem*: 178).

According to da Silva, having committed this abomination of killing what hitherto had been inviolable, human beings felt compelled – perhaps by their fear of losing the protection afforded them by certain totemic animals or by the gods the community worshipped – to devise a way of assuaging individual and collective guilt and atoning for the brutal violation of the sacred meaning of life. Drawing, apparently, on the theories of his former university teacher Teixeira Rego,[24] da Silva surmises that ritualised animal sacrifice would require a deity or deities to share in the responsibility for the act.

> Having struck down the first [animal], they felt the horror of their crime, for they had killed a companion, a friend, and their first instinct would have been to flee. The gods were forced to take part in the feast, so that the perpetrators could be forgiven (*idem*: 165).

In order to suggest how the slaying of animals may have developed a religious form, da Silva refers to the primordial Greek propitiatory rites in honour of Zeus, in which their death was re-enacted: the striker of the fatal blow takes ritual flight, ritual accusations are levelled at the celebrants (to whom the meat is distributed), and even the bloody utensils are ritually condemned (da Silva 2005: 165). Regardless of the validity of his explanation – in which the principle of human solidarity with all living creatures is supplanted by a lethal antagonism to them, and human compassion falls prey to the cunning of governance – it illustrates the extent to which da Silva, even at a tender age, was beginning to develop a spiritual consciousness that recognised and respected the sacred quality of all forms of life. The fact that one of his numerous popular educational texts[25] specifically addressed the ethics and economics of human nutrition and implicitly advocates a vegetarian diet, also supports the idea that vegetarianism was an integral part of the holistic ethical stance he had gradually developed over the years.

From species-based exceptionalism to non-species-based inclusion: onwards to a new Golden Age?

Evidence of da Silva's profound concern for the animal world is not restricted to the content of some of his educational booklets, the entomological research he conducted in Brazil, or his well-known affection for cats, but can also be found in the series of children's radio broadcasts he made in 1939, which included lectures on wasps, the fox and prehistoric animals.[26] Judging from a passage in his July 12 broadcast, in preparing himself to talk about Gandhi's philosophy of non-violence as applied to all living beings, da Silva had learned that early in his life the founder of the Indian state had also adopted on ethical rather than cultural or religious grounds a diet that did not depend on sacrificing the lives of any animal.[27]

However, what is at issue is not so much the moment of da Silva's epiphany – the moment he realised that the preservation of human life does not require the systematic liquidation of animal life – but rather the intuitive process, supported by philosophical, theological, mystical, aesthetic and political arguments, by which da Silva came to understand the sacred unity binding all forms of existence together and began to speculate that it might be possible for life to be celebrated again in this way if the harmony characterising the Golden Age could be restored. Furthermore, he came to believe in the possibility that, by means of our voluntarily increasing and expanding our awareness, a selfless order could be re-established in which non-human animals would no longer be incarcerated for the purposes of becoming human food.

In 1947, during his self-imposed exile in Brazil, da Silva wrote and distributed the seven-page quasi-manifesto *Alcorão* [The Koran], summarising in 30 points the relationship between God, the universe, life and humanity (Santos 2014: 50-52). From these "bullet points", da Silva deduces the principles that might underpin the restoration of Golden Age harmony, and stresses a key prerequisite for such a fully-redeemed and seemingly property-less society: "For the fortunate, united in God, there is but a single regime of non-property, whether it be material goods, animals,

women or children" (Silva/Pedro 2007: 72).[28]

In his varied efforts to convince others to choose, on ethical grounds, a frugivorous diet, da Silva never proselytised, either in print or in practice. Moreover, his opposition to totalitarian solutions was absolute, for he recognised that because dietary regimes are culturally determined and generate deeply embedded habits and psychophysical dependencies, they are very resistant to restructuring or reform by edict. In fact, in his 1942 educational booklet *Nutrição Humana* [Human Nutrition], he proposes measures, including a rationally-balanced omnivorous diet, conducive to a food regime that was more humane and could promote the eradication of hunger. Pragmatically, in his argument he takes anthropocentricity for granted or, as expressed in the terms used today in the animal rights debate, he adopts a "speciesist" position.[29] At the time da Silva was writing *Nutrição Humana*, and despite his conscious personal decision to opt for a vegetarian diet, he clearly understood that, given the stage of material and spiritual development humanity had reached, the more practical way forward was to advocate the very best in food production, distribution, education and information, so that basic healthy nutrition could be achieved on a global scale. Once that goal had been achieved, in line with his utopian-millenarian thinking, he saw humanity evolving towards a higher stage of awareness of the sanctity of *all* life, in which it would be feasible to totally eliminate the senseless animal suffering entailed in satisfying part of humanity's food needs.

In his capacity as a "thinker of worlds yet to be" – to use the felicitous expression coined by Paulo Borges[30] – on at least two occasions, tensions obtrude both between da Silva's idealist and pragmatic vision, and his speciesist and non-speciesist thinking. In his essay "Serve, Create, Pray" in *Só Ajustamentos*, he notes that, while the sea is considered an inexhaustible source of food, our exploitation of it is a prime example of our misuse of material and human resources that could be used elsewhere to improve human welfare, raise awareness to and sanctify our unconditional love of all life. Yet he complains that fishing remains technically primitive, and that "scientists are only just beginning to understand the nutritional value of plankton",[31] seemingly suggesting that the sacrifice of lower orders of life could be deemed an acceptable temporary compromise (*idem*: 32).

However, this duality in da Silva's thinking also reflects the fact that different degrees of consciousness and distinct levels of empathy for sentient life may coexist, at both the individual and collective levels. His understanding of this nuance is patent in *Proposição* [Proposition], another of his more rhetorical texts (da Silva 1989). Published in 1974 – and like his *Alcorão* manifesto, albeit more programmatic in structure and political in tone – the document discusses in practical terms the principles on which a just and prosperous society could be founded. In it, da Silva observes that, when discussing the raising of animals,

> we ought to choose the protein source that is the cheapest and the most appropriate for each people. I must stress, however, that an equivalent vegetable protein is always available. Animals exist in the world to be our companions, not our slaves and victims (*idem*: 623).

Generally speaking, we can see that da Silva's approach to the vegetarian diet has two distinct aspects: one regarding consciousness, the other relating to time. Concerning the former, da Silva recognizes the need for a conscious renewal of the way we represent the world, which challenges routine and habit both spiritually (by sanctifying all life) and axiologically (by way of a revolution in our customs). With respect to the latter, da Silva regards the universal adoption of a vegetarian diet as legitimate because he believes it to have been the basis of our original state of plenitude, when humans lived in harmony with each other and with all animals. In his view, re-adopting the vegetarian diet constitutes a redemptive act with respect to the ontological fall that occurred in some remote and undefinable *illo tempore*, due either to cataclysmic shortages of the vegetation that had hitherto been humanity's sole source of sustenance or to the transition from a nomadic lifestyle based on the gathering of wild fruits, vegetables, honey, mushrooms and similar items, to one dependent on settled agriculture in which the raising of livestock and/or the cultivation of crops predominate.

Again, in line with his utopian-millenarian logic, and by way of the idealist Joachimite concept of the "messianic nation" that he often applied to Portugal, da Silva recognises the material and cultural constraints that may delay our achievement of a social order displaying a level of ethical consciousness that ensures the rights of all animals are respected. Today, that same idealism can be interpreted in some of the innovative eco-ethical concepts that have emerged in the transdisciplinary discipline of food studies, in which the natural, human and social sciences explore in partnership the relationships between food and the human condition. Indeed, one of the main avenues currently being pursued by scholars in food studies concerns the nexus between the evolution of humanity's relationship with food and the development of an all-encompassing ethical consciousness.

It is conceivable that the type of consciousness that da Silva contemplated – relational rather than regulated by an anthropocentric and individualistic conception of the world – could contribute to challenging humanity's prevailing hegemony over the natural world. In the context of today's globalised and increasingly post-industrial society, this expanded awareness would oblige us not only to extend the ethical sphere of action to other species in nature and to the natural world as a whole, but also to transcend the spatiotemporal horizons that often limit our thinking to our immediate locality and to the next few generations. As Julia Abramson asserts (2012: 374), any consideration of the duality between "food and ethics in the broadest sense must encompass as its object or objects, kindness, right action and the good life relative to all spheres, phases, aspects and circumstances of food, its production and its consumption".

4. By Way of a Conclusion. Salt & da Silva – An Intersecting Praxis?

Our aim in this article has been to trace the evolution of the praxis of two early protagonists in the vegetarian and animal rights movements, even though they represent different generations and their work was conducted in geographically distant corners of Western Europe. A number of striking similarities and a few significant disparities emerge from our comparative reading of works by Henry Salt and Agostinho da Silva on questions of vegetarianism and animal rights (explicitly in the former's case, implicitly in the latter's), especially when seen against the backdrop of their particular biographies, the distinct cultures they inhabited and the specific conjunctures in which they waged their campaigns. This comparison is also revealing with regard to the practical impact that their ideas and examples had during their lifetimes, and the extent to which their concerns still resonate in contemporary debates on food ethics, animal welfare, environmental conservation and the "mindfulness" that can be gained from cognitive training.

If it is true that the revolutions in technology and the consolidation of capitalism were instrumental in bringing about the industrialisation of food production and the massification of its consumption, it is equally true – though less frequently recognised – that these key events of the nineteenth century also gave enormous impetus to the exploration of philosophical and practical alternatives to the unequal, divided, alienating and philistine society that had emerged in Western Europe. As Émilie Dardenne notes for Britain, "laicism, trade unionism, socialism, feminism and the return to nature all developed in response to the strict social organisation of Victorian liberalism" (Dardenne 2011: 15).[32] Even as the nineteenth century gave way to the twentieth, the uneven geographical distribution of industrialisation, trade, technology and imperial power was there for all to see. Britain and the USA and, to a lesser degree, France and Germany, were advanced, industrialised and vying for supremacy at the very centre of international capitalism, while Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece remained relatively backward, largely agrarian and semi-peripheral. Such differences did not prevent these countries' respective elites from presumptuously considering themselves civilised.

In Portugal's case, in the urban centres at least, dissenting voices similar to those identified by Dardenne could be heard, despite – or perhaps in part as a result of – Portugal's decline from dynamic world maritime power to passive semi-peripheral bystander. By the time the Republic finally replaced the monarchy in 1910, the cities of Lisbon and Porto had become significant centres of libertarian socialism and anarcho-syndicalism, anti-clerical sentiment was rife, feminists and suffragists of all persuasions were pioneering civic initiatives in health and education, and increasing numbers of people adhered to the causes of pacifism, environmentalism and vegetarianism. By the mid-1920s, a regime that was even more conservative and authoritarian than the monarchy had been installed, forcing heterodoxy and dissent back into the shadows. Spring had come late, and ended quickly, just as it would after the Carnation Revolution 50 years later.

If we look at our two philosopher-activists from the perspective of the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century, with humanity facing so many new challenges – both existential and, inevitably, ethical – and with so much remaining to be achieved on the issues that had preoccupied both Salt and da Silva decades before, it is tempting to conclude that their writings and initiatives produced few tangible effects.

In Britain, the pressure exerted by Salt's Humanitarian League, both alone and in partnership with like-minded organisations, undoubtedly helped to achieve a small number of legislative advances – corporal punishment made exceptional in prisons (1898) and the Royal Navy (1906), legal due process improved (1912) and the use of feathers for fashion purposes outlawed (1921) – few were related to dietary ethics or animal welfare. Salt's holistic humanitarian approach and the actions of the League were no match for the power of the pro-war discourse emanating from parliament (including the neophyte Labour Party) and from the capitalist press, which blunted any impact Salt's ideas might otherwise have had on the level of consciousness among the population at large. Ultimately, notwithstanding the massive loss of human life occasioned by the 1914-1918 war, the Humanitarian League – in its own way as wedded to gradualism, reformism and parliamentary democracy as the Fabians who had so disappointed Henry Salt – proved incapable of redirecting popular aspirations. Parliament, having reneged on its promise to build a post-war Britain fit for heroes, seemed hardly likely to contemplate a better future for non-human animals.

In Portugal, prior to his exile, da Silva's writings on human nutrition and food ethics as well as his protagonism after his return from Brazil, appear to have left even fewer traces. Three years before da Silva was beginning to write his encyclopaedic series of booklets aimed at promoting popular education, the *Sociedade Vegetariana de Portugal*, according to the initial findings of the *Alimentopia* research project,[33] had ceased to espouse the radical ideas on which it had been founded and was increasingly associated with the authoritarian state. Moreover, communitarian lifestyles were difficult to sustain when all cooperative activities were state-regulated, alternative spiritual paths – whether rooted in Christianity or not – were frequently denounced and demonised by the all-powerful Catholic church and, in a country still profoundly rural in character and culture, the introduction of legislation to protect domestic animals, livestock and other creatures in captivity was either looked upon unfavourably or as a low priority.

There are numerous intersections between Salt and da Silva with respect to the values they held dearest, the paths their careers took and the praxis they developed. Both were utopians and millenarianists[34] *sensu lato*, humanitarians in the non-speciesist sense of the term, and dedicated supporters of non-violent social change. Moreover, both were classical scholars who had become teachers unwilling to conform, initially pursuing careers in journalism, adhering early to Thoreauvian ideals of simplicity and frugality, revering all the living beings in Nature, deploying similar propagandist and pedagogical methods to popularise their views, and seeing attitude change as the crucial factor in banishing cruelty and violence forever.

It is from the political-philosophical standpoint that the greatest divergence appears to be visible, at least on the surface. In his self-penned funeral oration, Salt described himself ideologically as "a rationalist [… and] socialist" (apud Clark/Foster 2000: 472, citing Hendrick, 1977: 1-2), while da Silva's praxis is perhaps best characterised as idealist, libertarian and millenarianist. However, it is problematic to accept such labels at face value without putting them in their religious context.

Regarding the spiritual dimension of their praxis, again a marked degree of divergence initially seems to be the case. Salt claimed to be an atheist, and an ethical rather than a Christian socialist, who followed Epicurus and Lucretius in reasoning that:

> the universe is ruled by wholly natural laws, and that mankind is free to work out its own destiny, undisturbed by any supernal guidance. [… The] soul dies with the body, and […] the after-life […] is but a fable and a dream" (apud Clark/Foster 2000: 470, citing Salt 1912: 10).

He was not, however, without a mystical side. He believed in an all-encompassing force binding all living things together in Nature – a force that would underpin a truly humanitarian society if, individually and collectively, we would only recognise and respect it. As he explained:

> I wholly disbelieve in the present established religion; but I have a very firm religious faith of my own — a Creed of Kinship, I call it — a belief that in years yet to come there will be a recognition of the brotherhood between man and man, nation and nation, human and sub-human,[35] which will transform a state of semi-savagery [… we have today] into one of civilization, when there will be no such barbarity as warfare, or the robbery of the poor by the rich, or the ill-usage of the lower animals by mankind (apud Clark/Foster 2000: 472, citing Hendrick, 1977, 1-2).

For his part, da Silva's religious beliefs were also heterodox, to say the least: his diagnosis of society's ills and his millenarianist vision of the future were grounded in a Joachimite eschatology that was simultaneously mystical and practical. Da Silva had no compunction, it seems, in expressing his heterodoxy not only through his educational booklets, where the polemical *O Cristianismo* [Christianity] (1942) appeared alongside much less contentious writings on more mundane areas of knowledge, but also through other literature that he often distributed during speaking engagements, such as the brief but provocative *Doutrina Cristã* [Christian Doctrine] (1943). From the latter text, Pereira (2017) selects three "heretical" aphorisms that he believes would have particularly antagonised the Church hierarchy and may ultimately have contributed to da Silva's "excommunication":

> "(1) It is not blasphemy – instead of speaking of God – to speak only of the Universe in which Spirit and Matter form an indissoluble whole". "(2) The highest vision we can have of God, we who form only a part of the Universe, is of Intelligence and Love; the fundamental sin we commit is to limit our Intelligence or our Love"; "(3) God does not demand we worship Him: we pay homage to God, we enter into full contact with the Universe, when we develop our Intelligence and our Love: a laboratory, a library, a school, a workshop – these are all temples of God; we too are temples of God – the most beautiful of all. We can all be priests, because we all have the capacity for intelligence and love" (Cf. Pereira 2017).

Finally, both convergent and divergent elements can be detected in the views of Salt and da Silva regarding the practicalities of promoting greater individual and collective dietary awareness. Their respective philosophies and interventions place both of them – uncomfortably perhaps – between the proselytising pamphleteer and the imperturbable reformist. Salt was a lapsed Fabian, but his commitment to the non-violent struggle for social change, his belief in the efficacy of education and patient persuasion, his confidence that the Humanitarian League could become a natural home and "united front" for myriad "single-issue" organisations, and his faith in the good intentions of legislators, left him marooned between reform and revolution. Da Silva shared many of the same values, yet his direct experience of authoritarianism both at home and in his adopted Brazil obliged him to be more sceptical of all institutions of power and more radical – even revolutionary – in both his thinking and in his proposals for reform, particularly in the sphere of education. These and his other libertarian traits did not prevent da Silva from being appointed to important public office both in Brazil and Portugal, arguably leaving him better placed to influence the reform "from the inside".

In the new belief system that Salt designated a "Creed of Kinship", there would be "compassion, love [and] justice for every living creature [… constituting] a true civilization, a society in which all harmless and healthy life shall be free to develop itself unrestricted and uninjured" (apud Dardenne 2014: 52, citing Salt 1893: 26) and, as a result, there would be "no such barbarity as warfare, or the robbery of the poor by the rich, or the ill-usage of the lower animals by mankind" (apud Clark/Foster 2000: 472, citing Hendrick, 1977: 1-2). In da Silva's vision, in order for humanity to scale these heights, we must transform ourselves into beings "whose duty, destiny and purpose are that of full freedom; full for each one of us, full for all others, full for animals, full for plant-life, full perhaps even for the pebble and the mountain" (da Silva 1999: 262-263).

The elements of idealism and pragmatism – and the suggestion of a contradiction – evident in the praxis of both Salt and da Silva can also be found in their respective ideations of humanity's progress towards the Golden Age. Both recognised that to liberate humanity from want and violence required the gradual evolution of human consciousness and behaviour towards a deeper sense of community, a stronger defence of justice and greater recourse to cooperation. Yet both also acknowledged that our most pressing material needs must be satisfied if any significant expansion of human consciousness and empathy towards other living creatures is to be achieved. In their reflections on and commendations for private conduct and public policy, neither Salt nor da Silva managed to completely square this circle, nor were they able to clearly identify the precise steps that are required, both individually and collectively, if the Golden Age is to be brought to fruition.

Both concluded, albeit implicitly, that while we may only "find our way by walking it", each of us nevertheless requires guidance that comes not only from within, but also from our efforts to devise forms of education, association and organisation that are fit for purpose, fashioned to liberate humanity rather than enslave it, designed to revere animal life rather than exploit it, crafted to protect nature rather than destroy it. It is in this respect that the convergences between Salt's militant and proselytising views on vegetarianism and animal rights and da Silva's

perhaps more idiosyncratic perspectives should be understood. They are the outcome of the historical-cultural agency reflected both in their respective decisions to consciously enquire into the primary needs of human nutrition from an ethical and scientific perspective, and in their concretely utopian mode of conceiving and of practising these values. Each, in their own not so dissimilar way, aspired to hastening the time when, the fruit of our all-embracing compassion, humans and non-humans could live sustainably, in a world without suffering.

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Notes

1. The quote is from Chapter 3, of Dostoevsky's novel, "Conversations and Exhortations of Father Zossima", section (g) "Of Prayer, of Love, and of Contact with other Worlds".
2. By the turn of the century the Fabian Society had become a key element in the formation of the Labour Representation Committee and, ultimately, the constitution of the Labour Party.
3. See Brett Clark & John Bellamy Foster (2000) and Émilie Dardenne (2011; 2014), on whose publications the authors gratefully drew for some of the details of Salt's biography and philosophy.
4. Among his circle of comrades could be counted the artist and designer William Morris; Eleanor Marx, writer, activist and disseminator of her father's work; the writer and dramatist George Bernard Shaw and the "Anarchist Prince", Peter Kropotkin, among others.
5. The text of this short play was originally published in *The Vegetarian Review* of February 1895, 52-63.
6. The English translations of all quotations from Dardenne's studies and from da Silva's own writings (from the original French and Portuguese, respectively), are ours.
7. The article appeared as early as 1886 in the periodical *To-day*. Cited in Hendrick, G. (1977: 52) and referenced in Clark & Foster (2000: 469).
8. The collection *A plea for vegetarianism and other essays* was originally published in 1886 by The Vegetarian Society, based in Manchester, England. In its preface, Salt makes it clear that two of the essays (appearing as chapters I and VI, respectively entitled "A Plea for Vegetarianism" and "Sir Henry Thompson on Diet") had been previously published in the periodical *Time* (the former in February 1883 and the latter in January 1886) and that the remaining eight essays had appeared at different times in the *Food Reform Magazine*, *Dietetic Reformer* and in The Vegetarian Society's own annual publication.
9. There is a popular Portuguese adage deprecating any dish not containing meat: "peixe não puxa carroça" (i.e. you can't pull a cart on a diet of fish).
10. Salt says: "When charged with fanaticism […], the Vegetarian may well retort, in the words of Hamlet 'It is not madness that I have uttered: bring me to the test'." (William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act 3, scene 4).
11. "I am a great eater of beef, and I believe that [it] does harm to my wit" (William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, act 1, scene 3).
12. "The early career of a Vegetarian is indeed often a veritable 'Pilgrim's Progress'. He meets […] such characters as Mistrust, Timorous, and Ignorance [and] Mr. Worldly Wiseman, the representative of Society, is always at hand with his plausible remonstrances. Even the dreadful [demon] Apollyon himself, in the form of the family physician, occasionally bestrides the path of the bold adventurer, with his awful and solemn warning – 'Prepare thyself to die'."
13. Salt asks if "the fruits and cereals of a vegetarian meal might well find mention in the purest and most delicate poem, could the same be said of the repast of a flesh-eater? What are the dainties which Porphyro, in Keats's poem 'Eve of St. Agnes', 'heaps with glowing hand' for his love […]? They are 'candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd, manna and dates', and other 'delicates' which would rejoice the soul of a Vegetarian. What would have been the effect on the poem, if […] he had heaped beef-steaks and mutton-chops" onto his lover's plate?
14. Salt considers Ruskin's aestheticism to be the only "true worship of the beautiful [because it …] does not regard only the perceptions of the senses, but admits the consideration of the moral and the humane".
15. The dynamiters referred to here are the Irish Fenian "skirmishers", who were often based in the United States, and whose bombing campaigns literally took the Irish struggle for independence to the British mainland.
16. Salt points to Homer's account of Polyphemus, the giant who ate the companions of Ulysses, and to the passage in Book III of the *Histories* in which Herodotus describes Central Asian tribes (such as the Issidones) that ate human flesh, though it is unclear whether this practice consisted of hunting members of other communities for food or the ritualised, reverential consumption of their own relatives.
17. Our biographical sketch of da Silva draws heavily on Franco (2015a) and Franco (2015b).
18. According to this view, first developed by the medieval philosopher Joachim of Fiore, human consciousness necessarily undergoes an ontological-spiritual transformation as part of its predetermined historical progress towards a state of terrestrial grace.
19. The title of his 1962 collection of essays reflects da Silva's conviction that there was no compelling reason for him to alter his agreement with the philosophical formulations he had encountered in Joachim de Fiore's work some 20 years before. To underline their relevance to him and to meeting the challenges society faced, only a few additional minor comments were required, but these were "only adjustments", nothing more.
20. In the terminology of contemporary utopian studies, these would be called "intentional communities".
21. For one of the most eloquent testimonies of da Silva's decision to adopt a vegetarian diet, see A. Ruben (1969: 86-87).
22. Da Silva refers to reports from nineteenth and early twentieth century ethnographers and travellers who reported having discovered "small populations in Africa, Oceania, America, and Asia, living an existence [...] that corresponded in all respects to how the Ancient Greeks described the earliest humans" ("The Latin Comedy", 1946/47, in his *Dispersos*, 178-179). Regarding the mission of Brazil's newly-established Protection Service, he writes: "A new era has begun for the Brazilian Indian, a time to no longer see them as savages, but as one of the creatures that best exemplifies universal love – love for animals that are not made slaves, that are made companions through and through, helping them when in need, but not domesticating them with food and shelter, nor depriving them of their true nature. The Brazilian Indian knows that birds are meant to fly, to depart and to return freely, and he knows it because he loves Nature – the plants, mountains, rivers and stars that he enshrines in myths – as does any human being, any woman if free of oppression, and any child if free of mistreatment" (in da Silva 2001: 104).
23. Both in his essay on the religious function of the theatre in Ancient Greece ("A Religião Grega", first published in 1930) and in the preface to his translations of Terence and Plautus (1946/47), da Silva views the adoption of a carnivorous diet as the expression of this ontological fall.
24. Teixeira Rego taught at the University of Porto's Faculty of Letters. The ideas contained in his *Nova Teoria do Sacrifício* [A New Theory of Sacrifice] were developed over a number of articles he published

between 1912-1915 in the journal Águia, which were later published together in book format by "Portuguese Renaissance". It was in this collection of essays that he challenged Catholic attempts to reconcile Darwin's evolutionary theory and the Book of Genesis and, in doing so, linked the decline of humanity with the advent of the ritual sacrifice of animals. (cf. Carvalho 2015: 125-137).

25. *Nutrição Humana* [Human Nutrition] was just one of the 96 educational booklets that together formed da Silva's multidisciplinary collection *Iniciação - Cadernos de Informação Cultural* [*Initiation — A Beginner's Guide to Culture*], entirely conceived, produced and marketed by him between 1940 and 1944 (These texts can be consulted on www. agostinho da silva. pt). Six of his booklets are devoted to the morphology and the behaviour of bees, flies, spiders, eels, beavers and sharks, suggesting that his feelings of fellowship with the animal kingdom extended well beyond those creatures that were, at the time, considered to be endowed with the highest levels of neurosensory complexity. Moreover, during da Silva's self-imposed exile in Brazil, he undertook applied entomological research at the Instituto Oswaldo Cruz in Rio de Janeiro, co-publishing between 1952 and 1954, two studies on insect life. On this phase of da Silva's life, see the chapter entitled "O Instituto Oswaldo Cruz, Niterói e Itamarati" in Franco (2015a: 395-403).
26. The original intention had been to produce radio lectures devoted to a wider range of creatures, including the beaver, lion, tiger, elephant, hippopotamus, seal, whale, chameleon, ant and bee (Franco 2015a: 253-266). The educational purpose of these lectures was subsequently enshrined in the formal aims of the Antero de Quental Pedagogical Centre, a civic and cultural association of which da Silva was a founding member. The group, formed in 1939, met regularly at the home of the social philosopher, cooperativist and politician António Sérgio and, in addition to da Silva, included the writer, archaeologist and ethnographer José Castelo Branco Chaves, the journalist and literary critic Álvaro Salema de Araújo, and the businessman, art collector and philanthropist Fernando Rau, among others.
27. Cf. Franco (2015a: 291). According to Gandhi himself, he embraced vegetarianism "by choice", rather than as a passively absorbed cultural practice, only after reading Henry Salt's *A Plea for Vegetarianism* (Dardenne 2014 *idem*: 52). From a political rather than ethical perspective, Gandhi had previously looked forward to the day when all Indians could enjoy sufficient national autonomy, cultural freedom and material prosperity to become meat-eaters, should they so wish.
28. That is, no-one may exercise property rights over goods, animals or persons. Predictably, perhaps, in his listing of various subcategories of the "un-ownable", animals take precedence over women and minors here; however, ranking goods before living beings seems inappropriate for the type of spiritual communitarianism da Silva was proposing.
29. We use "speciesist" in the sense originally given to this term by the psychologist Richard Ryder (in his contribution on the use of animals in scientific experiments in Godlovitch *et al* (1974) and subsequently developed by the philosopher Peter Singer (1975: 7), as denoting "a prejudice or bias in favour of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species". In essence, Singer considers that "just as it is not ethically permissible for a higher degree of intelligence to confer on some human beings the right to use other human beings for their own benefit, so there is no valid moral ground for humans to use animals for their own ends".
30. Cf. Epifânio 2007: 7-9.
31. There is, however, a misunderstanding on da Silva's part here. The drifting organisms we refer to as plankton had long been identified, by the German scientist Victor Hensen, as microscopic *animals* (zooplankton) and plants (phytoplankton). While interested in science, this detail must have escaped da Silva who, had he known, would certainly have accorded plankton the same respect and protection as any other living being, and not have suggested they be exploited for the exclusive benefit of humans.
32. Indeed, the turn of the century provided such fertile ground for protest movements of all kinds, that it was not unusual to find activists who embraced a number of causes, making it possible, for example, for them to be simultaneously ethical socialists, atheists with an interest in mysticism, antivivisectionists who ate meat, and scientists with a tendency towards spiritualism (apud Dardenne 2011: 17).
33. *Alimentopia* is the acronym of the ongoing project *Utopia, Food and the Future: Utopian thinking and the construction of inclusive societies – a contribution from the Humanities*, funded by the FCT, the Portuguese public agency supporting science, technology and innovation.
34. Unconventionally, Salt's eschatology associates the ultimate Golden Age with the advent of authentic "civilisation" which appears more like a state of the spirit than of the material world, since it does not require the demise of the nation (apud Clark/Foster 2000: 472). Da Silva's millenarian vision draws heavily on the medieval Joachimite notion of an ultimate Age of the Holy Spirit and on the seventeenth-century writings of Father António Vieira. It is worth stressing that Vieira, Fernando Pessoa and Agostinho da Silva all identified the Portuguese nation as having been given the mission, in a sense, to lead the rest of humanity in that direction.
35. Here, the term "sub-human" presumably refers to non-human sentient life.

The True Story of Planet Mars: A Portuguese Utopia about Food and Public Health

Maria Luísa Malato[1] & Manuel Loff [2]

Everyone has to be fed, and every utopia must have arrangements in place so that food is available as needed, and in utopias such arrangements are closely related to the entire economic, political, and social structures of the society.
Lyman Tower Sargent, "Everyday life in utopia: food", 2015

The True Story of Planet Mars – entitled *História Autêntica do Planeta Marte,* in the Portuguese original – is a peculiar and rare piece of literature. It is a fragile edition (the cover was made of thin paper) dated from 1921. At the top of the cover, just a name, with capital letters: Henri Montgolfier. After the title, a brief indication: "Translated by José Nunes da Matta". From the content, it looks like an edition of an old scientific book about what was known about Mars in the eighteenth century. The book has a flat map of the planet with its canals marked and, in the inner pages, some mathematical considerations about the coordinates of the planet, the duration of its days, months, and years, as well as a comparison with what happens on Earth and some observations about Mars's geography.

After all, who was Henri Montgolfier, the "author"? This name can make one think that he could be vaguely related to the Montgolfier brothers, who had carried out the first flights on hot air balloons in France, during the eighteenth century. But the two brothers were named Joseph-Michel (1740-1810) and Jacques-Étienne (1745-1799). The name of the "author" arouses some suspicions: Henri Montgolfier was surely a pseudonym… And the same happens with the scientific content; the flat map includes also the planet's railway lines, as well as detailed information on the fauna, flora, agriculture, and economy of Mars, as well as on the Martians' type of diet…

In fact, the reading of the text confirms the presence of a Portuguese utopia, written by José Nunes da Matta in 1921, under a French name, Henri Montgolfier. This "author" is described as a French revolutionary who left planet Earth using a hermetic vehicle to get to Mars, shortly after Napoleon came into power. He expressly claims that he is not related to the famous Montgolfier brothers, despite the fact of sharing with them, but only by chance, French nationality, the

surname, and the passion for hot air balloons. Disappointed by the French Revolution, Henri Montgolfier knew a better society on Mars, where the principles of the French Revolution were achieved. He wrote a book about Martian society and he explains that he had launched around 50 copies of the book from Mars to Earth, of which 47 had been returned to, and located on, Mars. His remaining hope was that the three missing copies had reached their destination: the planet Earth. He asked whoever found one of them to deliver it to the Louvre Museum, where it should be kept for the use and benefit of Humankind, to whom Montgolfier dedicates the book, since a higher good belongs to all Earth (*idem*: 3 and III-IV). According also to this fiction, the Portuguese José Nunes da Matta is the name of the translator and editor of Montgolfier's document, after finding one of the copies by accident on a Guernsey beach, on 31 January 1885 (Matta 1921: I).

The invention of hot air balloons and Montgolfier's experiences were already common in utopian and non-utopian narratives from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (see Lynn 2010), and during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries they were progressively replaced by complex rockets (see Malato 2014, *passim*). Also, the use of different planets to locate eccentric ways of living is an ancient strategy, at least since *True Stories*, written by Lucian of Samosata during the second century A.D. (and Matta's title choice, *The True Story of Planet Mars*, is no doubt reminiscent of Samosata's title). Voyages to the Moon or other planets can be found in the bibliography of Kepler, John Wilkins, Cyrano de Bergerac, Fontenelle, Voltaire, Edgar A. Poe or Jules Verne (see, e.g., the research of Hatzenberger and Horowitz). Between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, Mars becomes a famous planet thanks to the stories by Gustavus W. Pope (*Journey to Mars the Wonderful World*, 1894) and Edgar Rice Burroughs (with 11 stories of the Barsoom Series, beginning with *A Princess of Mars*, in 1912), or *The War of the Worlds*, by H. G. Wells (1897-1898), dramatised in 1938, by Orson Welles. Another example is *Aelita or The Decline of Mars,* a novel about a socialist utopia located on Mars by Alexei Tolstoy (1923), which became a film in 1924, directed by Yakov Protazanov. Mars was not only the god of war, the god of rupture, but also an agricultural guardian, the god of the sickle, the father of Romulus and Remus with Rhea Silvia. He was celebrated by the Romans in March and October, at the end and at the beginning of the military season, and at the beginning and at the end of the farming season. In *The True Story of Planet Mars*, War and Agriculture are also incompatible and complementary: they cannot exist at the same time, but war is seen as a good opportunity to improve farming techniques; and agriculture as a good pretext to justify the war. We certainly must not forget that this utopia was written after the Great War (1914-1918) and prefigured the development of the agricultural industry in Europe.

In Portugal, where utopia seems invisible (see Vieira, 2016), utopian texts are often mixed with other texts. In *The True Story of Planet Mars*, life and literature go once again side by side. If we research a little into the life of José Nunes da Matta, we find that he was well known during his life. He was, after all, a public figure, although not very well known nowadays. He was born in Portugal, near Castelo Branco, on 2 January 1849, and died on 19 January 1945, in Parede (Cascais), near Lisbon. He was a distinguished member of the Portuguese Navy, the author of several studies about the international hour, a mathematician concerned with the safety of navigation,

and even the author of several dramas (see Lima 2010). A school was once named after him. We can also find a few pages on the internet about him. Some texts say that he was a passionate Republican and a great philanthropist. He is featured on the Portuguese Freemasonry Dictionary (*Dicionário da Maçonaria Portuguesa*), under the name of Júlio Graco, perhaps simultaneously evoking Julius Caesar and the Gracchus brothers, reformers of Rome's agrarian laws in favour of the less powerful. In fact, Matta also wrote about agrarian laws in Portugal, especially after 1910. He was a friend of Bernardino Machado, President of the First Portuguese Republic. He served in the Portuguese Navy where he eventually held the rank of Vice-Admiral. He taught at the Portuguese Naval School. He published several scientific papers (in particular about astronomy and various marine and aeronautical navigation problems). For pragmatic reasons related to global navigation, his commitment to making Portugal adopt Greenwich Mean Time (presently known as Coordinated Universal Time) was crucial, especially for political reasons. He was also an author who became especially interested in writing philosophical poems and plays: a comedy written by him won an award from the Lisbon Conservatory of Theatre (the probable cause of the inclusion of his name in a well-known diatribe by Almada Negreiros, the *Manifesto Anti-Dantas*). He also wrote many essays about the rural economy and its economic value. In fact, the footnotes that José Nunes da Matta included in *The True Story of Planet Mars* make a direct reference to some of his own works on these issues.

The utopia, in general, seems to be legitimised by a political disappointment and a political commitment (see Mannheim 1960, passim). A comparison between the biographical data on both José Nunes da Matta and Henri Montgolfier helps us to establish many connections between the quality of life on the two planets, Earth and Mars, as well as between the future that is proposed for Earth and the utopian civilisation on Mars. Matta, as Montgolfier, lives between discontent and hope. Matta describes Montgolfier as a man disenchanted with the French revolution, first because of the Jacobin *Terreur* and the Thermidorian reaction which made him "become horrified with revolution", but especially after Napoleon took power on 18 Brumaire 1799, "bringing down the Republic that had been cemented with so much blood and tears". The historical analogy is, nevertheless, a confusing one. By describing Bonaparte's coup of 18 Brumaire as having taken place on 5 October 1799 instead of 9 November of the same year, Matta, a disenchanted Portuguese Republican, clearly implies that the 5 October 1910 Portuguese revolution was historically similar to Napoleon's 1799 anti-Republican coup. In fact, October 1910 was an enthusiastic time for progressive liberals and, however disappointing the post-1915 Portuguese political process may have been for a fairly conservative Republican such as Matta appears to have become, the 18 Brumaire was quite the opposite, shutting down any hope for a new French Republic and opening the way for the Empire, an authoritarian warmongering regime. *The True Story of Planet Mars* is an auto-fiction (latu sensu, as defined by Jacques Lecarme or Vincent Colonna), where the fiction of Montgolfier disguises the autobiography of Matta. Instead of mentioning the "Revolution", i.e. the French one, Matta's alter ego mentions, as any Portuguese Republican would do, that "the Republic I hoped for was not producing the miracle I aspired to" (Matta 1921: 6). In this sense, Matta's narrative, posing as Montgolfier, is undoubtedly

a reflection of that post-World War One political and cultural pervasive sense of disappointment, described by Freud as "The Uneasiness in Civilisation".[3] But instead of engaging in the general tone of *brutalisation* of politics and social relations (see Mosse 1990 and Traverso 2016), what is interesting about Matta's somewhat naïf utopia is its hybridised political project, somewhere between a liberal romantic approach to social happiness and a rationalistic technology-focused regenerating programme for human society.

This utopia seems also to expose a tension between two kinds of violence: the violence of changing and the violence of not changing. Both Montgolfier and Matta are politically moderate. The fratricidal cruelty of the revolutionaries brings disappointment to them both: J. Nunes da Matta and the political evolution at the beginning of the twentieth century; Montgolfier and the Reign of Terror at the end of the eighteenth century. They also loathe the dictatorial tics, and the quirks of the so-called "saviours" of the people. J. Nunes da Matta finds Montgolfier's text abroad, in Guernsey, an island of expatriates, mythically present in Victor Hugo's readers. And Henri Montgolfier leaves France and reaches Mars just after the political ascension of Napoleon.

Such parallels are important in the text, since the critical distance is a false spatial distance, and a false temporal distance. In Montgolfier/Matta's utopia, Mars is a planet deliberately similar to Earth, not only in terms of its climate, its fauna, its flora, its economy (Matta 1921: 57-63), but also of its human geography and history (*idem*: 68-72). As often happens with political programmes conveyed through this kind of political fiction, the analogy is clearly intended to be intelligible in *earthly* terms. Mars is like Earth especially because they have a similar kind of inhabitants.

As with many political fictions, *The True Story of Planet Mars* is interested in food. The abundance of food sustains most utopias. Economic or social systems are designed to guarantee the survival and happiness of individuals in community. Martians are taller than the Earthling – particularly because they eat better, and the regularity of the planet's climate, as well as selective reproduction, helped in the prevalence of some physical traits. Martians were also subjected to evolution, as described by Darwin – even though Darwin's *Origin of Species* is suspected of being an attack on the divine origin of Martians, Martians believe that more important than knowing if God created Martians is to act in a divine manner, thereby dignifying His creation (*idem:* 28 and 63). Martians are also submitted to global migratory flows – but the migratory flows on Mars must also be read in conjunction with the search for food and the globalisation of eating habits on Mars (see *idem*: 58, 60; max. 61-63). In fact, the search for food on Mars was not caused by the lack of food, but by different rhythms of production. In this, *The True Story of Planet Mars* is no different from other utopias:

> No hunger was central to most, together with no work or at least no hard work, no fear of wild animals, no death or no easy death, […]. Everyone has to be fed, and every utopia must have arrangements in place so that food is available as needed, and in utopias such arrangements are closely related to the entire economic, political, and social structures of the society. (Sargent 2015: 14-32; see also Sargent 2016: 25)

The importance of food grows when social happiness in Mars is compared with misery on Earth and the importance of utopian thought is emphasised. If "today" (in 1921) Martians are happy citizens (with no diseases, no wars, no problems about their food), they were not like that a few centuries earlier. In fact, back then, they were like Earth inhabitants "today" (in 1921): unhappy people under- or poorly nourished. What sets the inhabitants of Mars and the inhabitants of Earth apart does not have much to do with race and its traits, even though they are addressed, it is mainly related to some political decisions that were made only on Mars (not on Earth) after a Great War, a global war. On Mars the war had led to a debate and to a new way of doing politics. Like the War of 1914-18 on Earth, the Great War on Mars had produced an enormous number of military and civilian causalities, as a result of the industrialisation of the war, the use of aircraft, submarines, chemical weapons, and infected trenches. To explain how the Great War on Mars had started, Montgolfier/Matta describes a kind of *Clash of Civilizations* on that far-away planet: "two very powerful neighbouring nations, one of the white race, the other of the yellow race, using some sort of futile unimportant pretext, went into war with all their considerable might" (Matta 1921: 69).[4] Matta's choice for establishing a deep motivation for the war is a typical social-Darwinist one, although his new world order project should not be essentially seen as such. According to Montgolfier's narrative, war was a result of "racial hatred" that had apparently been disguised prior to the conflict, but which surfaced in all its "brutality", and gradually every white-race nation joined the belligerent nation of their race, while the yellow-race nations did the same (*idem*: 70). War on Mars was nevertheless described as being longer (seven years) and clearly more devastating than the 1914-18 one on Earth: "more than half of the combatants were killed or left crippled in the very first clashes" and the "more audacious and robust young men had been swallowed by the war", which meant that "the number of women became a lot higher than of men", pushing the former, "taken by a high sense of patriotism", to "march into war" as well (*idem*: 70-71).

What was depicted as an "unimportant pretext" caused a great number of major consequences on the planet; facing a shortage of food, its citizens acted blindly, driven by the famine and a powerful survival impulse. In both cases, too, starvation, along with a lack of hygiene, helped to spread the plague and many other diseases after the armistice was signed. To explain how the war inevitably had to end, Matta depicts "the Plague [as the] third and final Stage of the War", thanks to which, "in less than one hundred days, over 130 million Martians died" (*idem*: 71-72). The analogy with the 1918 Spanish flu pandemic is all too obvious. The way the Martian Great War ended is quite revealing of Matta's worldview: while the *Plague* was still devastating the planet, "the yellow-race armies, in spite of having secured some advantage over the enemy", exactly like the German Army on the Western Front a few months before the 1918 Armistice, "called for a cease-fire, immediately accepted" (*idem*: 72). Although the peace process as described by Montgolfier/Matta was significantly different from the one held in Versailles in 1919, paving the way for a "Grand Congress and Social Revolution on Mars", Matta did not refrain from representing the victors as the *white* Martians, "a more majestic race", responsible for "every remarkable scientific achievement" (*idem*: 82).

Like the Earth's inhabitants, the Martians had also been tempted to think that their global problems could be resolved through nationalist solutions. They had also made rhetorical speeches about peace, goodwill and solidarity, evoking pro domo the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity. Knowing that the food shortage was the war's main driving force, and that education and science could be used for the benefit of minorities (*idem*: 86-9), the Martians, for a while, wanted to return to the historical routine: the power games (between men and women, employers and workers, white people and people of colour, educated people and the ones who were marginalised, in any case, masters and slaves), ending up by forgetting their common humanity. The "translator", José Nunes da Matta, comments in a footnote that the Martians were then replicating the false ideals that promoted the Washington Naval Conference on Earth, putting together the major naval powers that had been engaged in the war (except for Russia and Germany): they promoted, again and again, the idea of a free market, with no taxes, no frontiers, no legal constraints, or customs control (*idem*: 98n). They denied, again and again, the emergence of "unexpected and outdated" ideas, which, for that reason alone, are said to be "absurd" (see *idem*: 83 and 100-1). And they ignored, again and again, what leads people to war: famine, a survival impulse, ignorance, and lack of communication. In *The True Story of Planet Mars* (ending with a "Final Explanation" signed 1 October 1921), the reference to the Washington Naval Conference (held from 12 November 1921 to 6 February 1922, formally announced by President Harding on 11 August 1921) clearly shows the importance of the political context to the readers at the time. In a footnote, the "translator" José Nunes da Matta explicitly regrets the inefficiency of "the present Congress of Washington" (*idem*: 98n).

Also shattered by a Global War, the Martians had learned to focus on what mattered: the survival of their humanity. To discuss that question, an "imponent Congress of Nations", with delegates from the "Senates" of the "main municipalities" (a sort of pre-modern reincarnation of the medieval Portuguese *Cortes*), meets at the "capital of the most important yellow-race Empire". The idea was to reconstitute Mars's social fabric and to ensure "a stable peace for the future and maximum possible happiness". Montgolfier/Matta significantly conceive the process following the end of the Great War as a "Social Revolution" (*idem*: 72). Thus, nothing could be more archetypal of the post-World War One historical cycle: Revolution, peace, a new form of happiness.

Under the influence of a philosopher (Constantinio), Martians adopted four fundamental principles: universal language, international government, interracial marriages, and population control.

Language was not important anymore. Following a first proposal by Constantinio, the Martians had a standardised language of communication since then (none of the existing languages, but some kind of Esperanto).

National power was not important anymore. Martians adopted a common policy regarding its economic and energy resources (like soil, water, electric energy). And they also established general access to education, beyond nationality, class, race, or gender. That meant that fighting for coal, for oil, for food, or for education had become pointless (*idem*: 59).

Races, moreover, became undetectable. Mars downplayed the issues of race and nation, having for many generations engaged in interracial marriage; they all knew themselves as hybrids. Their natural needs were compatible with industrial production.

On Mars, the size of the population is controlled by avoiding the formation of megacities (see *idem*: 27, 94, 101) and procreation in unhealthy conditions is prevented by promoting the sterilisation of the ovaries.

But, aware of the early 1920s confrontational perception of *revolution*, Matta, in this case explicitly writing as the translator of Montgolfier's text, takes a very hard anti-Bolshevik stance, tainted with a ferocious elitist and prejudicial perspective. In his last remarks, Matta stresses that all those who might think that "Montgolfier's interesting work is an indirect justification of the cruel and savage Bolshevik Socialist experiment in oppressed, hungry and unhappy Russia" would be wrong. Quite the opposite, "between the two social states", Russian Bolshevism and Martian "human and rational Socialism", "there is a deep abyss separating them": Bolshevism is "an anti-social State, corrupt, vicious and horrifying, supported by terror, moved by ignoble, vile and odious feelings, dancing over social misery and ignorance", while the Martian "social State", according to Matta, was "honest, sublime, and even divine, based on intelligence, illustration and noble, generous affectionate and altruistic feelings". Along the same lines, Martians were "physically, psychologically and morally equal, or almost, living in the most affectionate and quiet fraternity", while in Russia "thousands of human-faced wolves […], martyr and devour a hundred million lambs, human-faced as well"; on Mars, "everyone knows how to read, to write, and to count, to work, to think, to play every instrument, and to sing", and Martians are "healthy, robust and have perfect figures", while in Russia "most people are stupid and ignorant, and thus illiterate, they barely know how to work and are only used to suffer, to submit to, to moan" (*idem*: 120-121).

The essence of Matta's text is a whole new social order, one based on a social engineering process, characteristic of the same atmosphere that produced – in a different sense – dystopias, like *Metropolis* (Thea von Harbou's 1925 novel, adapted for the screen by Fritz Lang in 1927). Matta, a military officer when the Great War ended, shared some core moral and political values with those in the West who, since the late nineteenth century, according to John Jordan, trusted "technology, through a particular set of symbolic renderings, [to realign] politics [as it did] in the early and mid-twentieth century" (Jordan 1994: 1). His utopian Mars in fact reflects some of that "postwar liberalism [that] blended a preexisting belief in social perfectibility with a growing confidence in sophisticated methods of analysis and coordination" (*idem*: 100). It is nevertheless important to understand that the need for a new social order emerges in Matta's text not only because of the devastation caused by the war, but also because of a sense of *decadence* that Matta/Montgolfier detects in the Martians' "general demoralisation and ineptitude, in deep contrast with remarkable scientific achievements" (Matta 1921: 69). These were not a result of the war but were already present before it. Matta should therefore be taken as one of those *degeneration*-focused Western pessimists in line with Max Nordau's 1892 influential essay *Entartung* ("Degeneration")[5] who, a few years after the war, would subscribe to most of Oswald Spengler's ideas in *The Decline of the West*.[6]

However, the inspiration of several philosophers from the eighteenth century is also clear in José Nunes da Matta's utopia – Leibnitz and his dream of a universal language, Condorcet and the ideal of intellectual "perfectibility", Laplace and the possibility of predictions based on knowledge. But one of the most important is *An Essay on the Principle of Population*, which is

about the equation between population and subsistence. Written by Thomas Robert Malthus in 1798, *An Essay on the Principle of Population* is no doubt a reference to Nunes da Matta, who is also concerned with the relationship between population and its subsistence:

> I said that population, when unchecked, increased in a geometrical ratio, and subsistence for man in an arithmetical ratio. […] We will suppose the means of subsistence in any country just equal to the easy support of its inhabitants. The constant effort towards population, which is found to act even in the most vicious societies, increases the number of people before the means of subsistence are increased. The food therefore which before supported seven millions must now be divided among seven millions and a half or eight millions. The poor consequently must live much worse, and many of them be reduced to severe distress. The number of labourers also being above the proportion of the work in the market, the price of labour must tend toward a decrease, while the price of provisions would at the same time tend to rise. The labourer therefore must work harder to earn the same as he did before. (Malthus 1798: 18, 29-30)

However, Montgolfier is not reading Malthus in the eighteenth century. Unlike Malthus, he rejects sexual abstinence or monastic chastity, which he considers violent and ineffective, as they promote prostitution, masturbation, and syphilis. He is also already pointing out the benefits of the so-called "Green Revolution", the industrialisation of agriculture (see Matta 1921: 26-7, 83, 90-2, 105, 119). Some measures are certainly controversial, now and then. Montgolfier, like Matta, defends the sterilisation of couples with mental or economic problems, with the help of science (but before the invention of the birth control pill), and is a long way from considering any plan of genocide or mass extermination. Even though Matta is very critical of Hitler's legislation as early as 1935, he defends sterilisation to prevent the reproduction of mental disorders or physical handicaps:

> It's not through forced labour, o mighty Hitler, that you will raise the great nation that you are leading to the superiority of well-being, power and glory, but through the sterilisation that, *in partibus*, you have already adopted. This measure, normally applied to boys and girls before puberty, if their bodies are deficient and their spirit is ill, this measure will only lead the German nation to the sublimity of perfection and well-being. […] The forced labour, under threat, will always have the mark and meaning of slavery; and even happiness, o untiring and frightening Hitler, even happiness, when imposed by force, has the bitter taste of slavery. (Matta 1935: 11)[7]

He really believes (in 1921, as in 1935) that a eugenic program of sterilisation could start to transform humanity, both by preventing some situations of famine, disease, and poverty, which, according to this school of thought, are mathematical consequences of an unequal distribution of food, knowledge, and properties, and by improving the "well-endowed":

> Call me crazy, whatever you want. But nobody has yet proven me, with straight and loyal arguments, that it's not a crime against humanity to give birth to children, knowing for sure (or having the duty of this knowledge) that over them will fall a life fated to sufferings, inherited from their parents, almost always accompanied by misery, famine, griminess, and at last a painful death, the poor couples being the ones who have more children. (*idem*: 3-4)[8]

For those who see in these words the seeds of the *Lebensborn* programme, we must remind them that those ideas are in some arguments for practising abortion or giving a child up for adoption. As Harry Bruinius showed in 2006, eugenics experiments were better for all the world. In 1921, the year of the Second International Eugenics Conference in New York, the eugenics project was present in several Western countries, from America to Europe, in universities, and newspapers. And it is clear that Matta has a strong commitment with the *Polis* (his books testify it easily).

But, as well as a sociological essay about the future of the Earth, Matta's utopia is about Earth's present. Utopia is a mirror of the future that wants to reflect what the present is not: the space between utopia and dystopia is narrow (see Neusüss 1971). The tension between a splendorous future and a chaotic present is explicit in Matta's literature. This can be seen in a political document like *Chaos or the Human Disorder and a way to avoid it* [orig. *Caos ou O Pandemónio humano e meio de o evitar*] (1931) where José Nunes da Matta developed some scientific ideas already presented in his utopia *The True Story of Planet Mars* (1921). Also, in several footnotes in his fiction, José Nunes da Matta exposes Portugal's contrary example, where venereal and mental diseases are a common thing (Matta 1921: 100). Quoting several books of his own, José Nunes da Matta, the false translator, proves that everything that is good on Mars is already known on Earth, in 1921, which is confirmed by science or common sense. From the beginning of the book, its conclusion is implicitly expressed: the "joyful Eden" that Mars is today, as a reasonable consequence of "revolutionary, and yet wise ideas", an "upbeat spirit", a "natural sincerity", a genuine belief in the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity may not be betrayed by selfishness or by hypocrisy, like those principles usually are (see *idem*: 5-6, and also 22). Matta describes a society where men and women have the same education and the same capacity to work (even if women are often described as *companions*), where men share domestic work with women, where divorce is not a religious or social problem, where children and animals are well cared for, where jealousy is a false sense of property and not a kind of love (even if the polygamy is occasionally reasonable, although, on the contrary, polyandry is not), where mental diseases are cured with respect for the individual, music and hygiene, and where food is the main medicine.

On Mars, a new social behaviour can be pictured, inter alia, by the continuous references to new eating rituals followed by the Martians, and afterwards by the new inhabitant of Mars, Henri Montgolfier. The possibility of the utopian world is described by an nutritional metaphor: the social body, as well as the physical body, by inducing a bilious disease, has the possibility of "transforming nectar into bile", bile being associated with envy and greed (see *idem*: I).

There is no doubt that Henri Montgolfier is an Earthling who is disappointed with the behaviour of his fellow Earthlings. The way he chooses to leave Earth raises the question of

whether he leaves for exile or to commit suicide. However, the only food that Henri Montgolfier chooses to take with him into outer space is a curious choice: in his spacecraft, this Frenchman from the eighteenth century would only take Port wine, mixed with water and honey.

As we will find out when he arrives on Mars, the wine, the water, and the honey are part of the Martians' typical diet (very similar to the Mediterranean diet!). Nevertheless, the body of Henri Montgolfier on Mars suffers a preliminary process of purification. When he arrives on Mars, he is in a situation of lethargy, between life and death. The Martian doctors revive him with radium and electricity but focus mainly on long massages to his stomach and his intestines (see *ibidem*). Then, he goes through ten days of music therapy, with music and singing that massage his ears and brain with vibrations, followed by further sessions of long massages focused, once again, on expelling "everything there was inside his stomach and intestines". The formation of a new life and identity is accomplished by a diet of a progressive complexity. For three days, he is fed as if he were an unborn child, through a tube with a nutritious liquid that contains the chemical elements of his body fluids, as saliva, gastric juice, and bile (*idem*: 12). After that, when he opens his eyes, he starts to ingest liquid food. Only after thirty days is the new being introduced to solid food, always easy to digest. When he starts having four meals a day, the meals are always complemented with music: seeing the dances and hearing the music produce certain states of mind essential to mental health (see *idem*: 13-14). The process of socialisation becomes more complex when the main character (re)starts walking. Like a child, he is now more distracted by the art of painting and by looking out over a landscape. During his recovery, he learns how to eat "as a Martian"; he always eats a proper meal, with a vegetarian base that includes all kinds of fruits and vegetables, leguminous plants and cereals. We are near, perhaps, to the vegetarian utopias of the early twentieth century (see Reis 2004). But the references in Matta's utopia seem only to proclaim the benefits of sobriety in an omnivore's diet: from time to time, Montgolfier eats fish, and, even more rarely, on ritual occasions, he eats meat. As a sweetener, he uses honey. Every day he sits at public tables where everyone lives together in the utmost fraternal way, sharing each piece of food, produced in different ways and at different times by every member of the community. He takes care of bodily hygiene before and after the meal. He chews his food slowly, mixing it well with saliva, savouring it without gluttony (Matta 1921: 102 and 111-115). Like every Martian, he always pays attention to the environmental consequences of agriculture and industry: he treats and recycles the organic waste in agriculture, creating clean forms of energy and reducing the physical effort and the contact with less salubrious substances. In general, the Martian eats as he makes love: carefully but without passion, with no sense of possession, ignorant of what gluttony and jealousy are (see *idem*: 105).

Henri Montgolfier is a new man after that. From the window of his bedroom, Montgolfier delights himself with the variety of agricultural landscapes on Mars. Gardens, farms, and forests are equally beautiful; those three spaces seem to correspond (as in the medieval concept of Virgil's wheel) to three different kinds of an aesthetic behaviour: lyrical, didactical and epic poetry. But the landscape and the maps naturally reflect three different levels of diets and the quality and variety of life that the Martians seek. Farms feed the body, but gardens and forests feed the soul with different states of mind. The gardens and the forests have a social value; the secular specimens of trees inspire the inhabitant of Mars with their beauty and strength. But they also have a material value. The Martian values the tree, even the one that only bears flowers, because he is aware of its economic and scientific value; trees protect the soil from erosion, provide oxygen and shade and add taste to life (see *idem*: 47 or 60). According to Henri Montgolfier, on planet Earth similar trees would be cut down right away (see *idem*: 15, 16, 17, 18, 47). According to his translator, José Nunes da Matta, in Portugal, "The cult of the tree is just an act". This could be proven by law no. 4,700, passed during the "dictatorship of Sidónio Pais" (on 26 June 1918), and not revoked by the "incompetents", as Matta calls them, who succeeded him (see *idem*: 47n).

Honey and the economic value ascribed by the Martians to apiculture is the main icon of that diet (*idem*: 60). Here again, the "translator" José Nunes da Matta comments on the great differences between politicians on Mars and politicians in Portugal. On Mars, the law values the work of bees; in Portugal, legislation ruins apiculture. Government in Portugal does not see the link between Nature and Economy. It is also blind to the relationship between Body and Spirit. In Portugal, government overcharges musical instruments with taxes and neglects even the value of musical therapy in mental hospitals (*idem*: 68n, 100). Martians have a solid musical education (they all sing or play at least one instrument), because Government takes care of the welfare of its citizens (e.g. *idem*: 68n, 116). In Portugal, economic status goes along with greed and disrespect: distinguished people can eat too fast or disregard other people's rights (*idem*: 102n, 109n, 110n). But Martians do not use gold, precious stones, or arrogant words; they appreciate healthy hair like gold, bright eyes like diamonds, and kind words as the only kind of superiority (*idem*: 116, 109-110).

Food, Health and Beauty are parts of the same structure. To eat is part of Henri Montgolfier's physical and spiritual recovery; when he feels more tired, he is given aromatic goat milk to drink, and some delightful cakes with honey, served in a bowl of pure crystal (*idem*: 19). Banquets are simple but always accompanied by music. Everything with the utmost simplicity (*idem*: 116-7). *Mens sana in corpore sano*, the Martians often say this, yet in other words, because they do not know Latin (*idem*: 108). The beauty of the citizens of Mars (male and female) is an indication of how healthy they are, and their health is based on a genuine, healthy, and natural diet, according to Lavater's principles of Physiognomy (1817). On Mars, perfumes (like jewellery) are useless, as the best perfume and greatest beauty come from hygiene and a good diet. These principles were already written by Ernst Baron Von Feuchtersleben (1806-1849). He was an Austrian physician (and also a philosopher and a poet), very well known in Portugal thanks to Ramalho Ortigão's translation of one of his books about food, beauty, and knowledge, *Hygiene da alma/ Hygiene of the Soul* (1873), published in 1921, too, like Matta's utopia.

The only drawback in this perfect world on Mars would be monotony (*idem*: 105). Greed, adultery, and gluttony are pointless. Desire is not moving Martians anymore. Why would one want to be wealthier, have more love partners and more food if, everywhere, everything and everyone are equally good? This is the main problem with utopia, if we believe that utopia is an unaccomplished world and not a provocation, like it should be, according to Morus: something that we must speak about.

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Notes

1. This article was prepared within the Strategic Program Alimentopia / Utopian Foodways (PTDC/CPC-ELT/5676/2014 | POCI-01-0145-FEDER-016680). Translations of this Portuguese utopia, *The True Story of Planet Mars*, were by Paulo Galante. Co-author: M. Luísa Malato, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Portuguese and Romance Languages, University of Porto, Portugal. Main research fields: Utopian Studies, Comparative Literature, Rhetorical Studies, Eighteenth Century Studies. Email: mlmalato@gmail.com.
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3. Published in Austria in 1930 as *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur*, Vienna, Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag. See Freud 2002.
4. See original: "duas nações vizinhas muito poderosas, uma de raça branca e outra de raça amarela, dando como pretexto uma qualquer futilidade sem importância, entraram em guerra com todo o seu respeitável poder".
5. See Mosse 1968.
6. See Spengler 1991 [originally: *Der Untergang des Abendlandes. Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*, 2 vols.: 1. *Gestalt und Wirklichkeit*, Vienna, Braumüller, 1918; 2. *Welthistorische Perspektiven*, Munich, C. H. Beck, 1922].
7. See original: "Não é com trabalhos forçados, poderoso Hitler, que levantarás a grande nação, de que és o mentor, ao apogeu do bem estar, poder e glória, mas sim com a esterilização que, *in partibus*, já adoptaste. Esta, ao ser empregada a valer em rapazes e raparigas antes de atingirem a idade da puberdade, no caso dos seus organismos serem imperfeitos e possuírem taras doentias, esta sim, esta poderá levar a nação alemã à sublimidade da perfeição e bem estar. […] O trabalho obrigatório, à força, terá sempre o cunho e a designação de escravatura; e a própria felicidade, incansável e tremebundo Hitler, quando imposta à força, essa mesma, também tem o sabor amargo da escravatura".
8. See original: "Chamem-nos doido e tudo o que quiserem. Mas o que ninguém nos provará, com argumentos perceptíveis e leais, é que não é um crime de lesa-humanidade o deitar filhos ao Mundo, tendo-se de antemão ou devendo-se ter a certeza que, ao verem a luz da vida, sobre estes pobres desgraçados deve impender a nefanda condenação a torturantes sofrimentos, herdados dos pais, quasi sempre acompanhados de miséria, fome, imundície e por fim morte dolorosa e horrível, visto serem os casais pobres e miseráveis que mais abundante procriação fazem".

Foods from the Other World

Antoine Brandelet & Anne Staquet

Considering the States and Empires of the Moon and the Sun as a utopia cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, many of the scenes and societies visited by Dyrcona on the Moon and the Sun look like dystopias at first sight. In any case, the adventure regularly turns out badly for the hero, who is forced to escape or go elsewhere to see if other places might be more favourable to him. In addition, one can often get the impression that expeditions serve more to criticise Cyrano de Bergerac's society than to describe an ideal society. Moreover, the role played by the science of his time and the author's fanciful inventions could suggest, rather, that we are perhaps looking at one of the first science fiction novels. So, the first question is to ask ourselves what kind of novel this strange unfinished novel is, which shares with other novelistic genres the description of different societies. To this end, it is necessary, first of all, to clarify these concepts.

Let us leave aside the common sense of the "utopian" adjective, to focus on the genre inaugurated by More. Usually, utopias are defined by their characteristics: communism or community life, prevalence of equality over freedom, rejection of money, time spent on leisure and education, obligation to work for all, simplicity of lifestyles, etc. This way of defining, in addition to being tautological (utopia is defined by the characteristics of a few utopias that we know a priori to be utopias) has the disadvantage of limiting utopia to the ideal of an era or, more precisely, to the critiques of an era. This is one of the reasons why it has been possible to claim that utopias were totalitarian; the other reason being the literal reading that transforms a novel into a treatise on the best form of government, leaving aside the ironic aspects. However, if utopias are based on criticism of the author's society to propose a society in which, through a particular organisation of social relations, these defects are absent, the ideal of life found there is not an absolute ideal, but is relative to the author's society. It is therefore necessary to define utopia by its functions: the criticism of society and the description of a society whose organization makes it possible to avoid these criticized failings.

As for counter-utopias, anti-utopias or dystopias - novels that share with the utopian genre the description of different societies - they differ from them because it quickly appears that the organisation described is not enviable. Their function is to warn against possible excesses of

society. And they do so by caricaturing certain aspects of their societies and projecting them into a future society, called utopian or ideal, but similar to a nightmare. They therefore mainly play on the fears of the abuses of certain characteristics of our societies. To make the constraining and nightmarish character clear, one or more heroes refuse this way of life and try to escape it, which leads to major repressive measures against them and increases, for the readers, the bad sides of this imagined society.

Science fiction works can be optimistic or pessimistic, although the latter probably predominate. However, they cannot be confused with utopias or anti-utopias. The main difference with utopias is the social organization. As we see it, in utopias, if society is happy, or at least if we no longer find the targeted defects in ours, it is exclusively due to a diverse social organisation. All changes are based on this organisation. This is why science and technology are often reduced to it, so that one cannot imagine that they would be the basis for the transformation of Utopians and their society. Likewise, if people are happy and live in harmony, it can never be because these beings would initially be different: either morally or in their intellectual or physical capacities. However, these two important limits of utopias are happily crossed in science fiction novels: not only are science and technology highly developed, but also the beings of these other worlds are themselves often of a profoundly different nature. This last element distinguishes them from anti-utopias, where they are generally men with whom we are dealing; in fact, the characters must resemble us sufficiently for us to understand that it could be us and one of the futures of our societies. These characters can certainly be transformed by science, but it is then to denounce the dangers of technology on human nature.

And it is of course the form that distinguishes utopias from treaties on ideal governments. Utopias are not limited to the theoretical point of view, but embody societies. Movement is the opposite of treaties, where principles are started and the type of society it would give is sometimes - rarely - described, but never by embodying them in characters. Moreover, the fictional nature of utopias means that the comments are not necessarily those of the author such as More, who can distance himself and who can have society described by a "professor of nonsense" and end his text by affirming: "… I cannot perfectly agree to everything he has related. However, there are many things in the commonwealth of Utopia that I rather wish, than hope, to see followed in our governments."[1] The fictional aspects of utopias are therefore an essential element.

Once these criteria have been established, let us now look at how The Other World can be characterised and classified. Above all, it should be noted that, unlike most novels, whether utopian, dystopic or science fiction - not to mention political treatises - we are dealing here with several different societies. There is not only one society on the Moon or the Sun, but many, inhabited by very different beings whose social organisations, if they are described, have nothing to do with each other. In this sense too Cyrano's text is special.

Dyrcona's first trip did not take him to the Moon but to New France. It is almost immediately an opportunity to criticise the mentality of the time and not only or mainly that of Canada. The author explains his arrival in the New World by the fact that he only moved horizontally both during his ascent and descent and that he did not fall back near Paris, but far from it: "[...] the Earth had to have turned during my elevation" (p. 49).[2] However, this adherence to Copernican theory is no more accepted in Canada than it is on the old continent:

> Mais vous ne savez pas, ajouta-t-il [M. de Montmagny, vice-roi], la plaisante querelle que je viens d'avoir pour vous avec nos pères jésuites? Ils veulent absolument que vous soyez magiciens; et la plus grande grâce que vous puissiez obtenir d'eux, c'est de ne passer que pour imposteur. (49-50)[3]

The idea that the Moon was just another world, equivalent to the Earth, had made his friends laugh. On the other hand, the idea of the Earth movement immediately provokes a threat from the religious. And even though the viceroy seems to be convinced by the arguments put forward by Dyrcona, he is not in a position to oppose the religious. Dyrcona's travels therefore look good from the outset as an opportunity to criticise, not a future society, but that of the author. From this point of view at least, we are in a utopia and not really in a dystopia. This same idea will not be accepted on the Moon either, where the hero will be attacked by the great local pontiff:

> Les prêtres, cependant, furent avertis que j'avais osé dire que la Lune était un monde dont je venais, et que leur monde n'était qu'une lune. Ils crurent que cela leur fournissait un prétexte assez juste pour me faire condamner à l'eau (c'était la façon d'exterminer les athées). Ils vont en corps à cette fin faire leur plainte au roi qui leur promet justice; on ordonne que je serais remis sur la sellette. (109)[4]

Dogmas are powerful wherever we are, and claiming something against them is not without its danger. This time, Dyrcona will only be condemned to withdraw publicly. Any reference to a scientist who has existed is obviously not fortuitous.

And the situation is not always more enviable on the Sun where, after a trial rich in teaching, Dyrcona is condemned by the bird court to supreme torture, the sad death, just because he is a man and because of everything that men do to animals:

> Je pense, messieurs, qu'on n'a jamais révoqué en doute que toutes les créatures sont produites par notre mère pour vivre en société. Or, si je prouve que l'homme semble n'être né que pour la rompre, ne prouverai-je pas qu'allant contre la fin de sa création, il mérite que la Nature se repente de son ouvrage? (244-245)[5]

However, he will escape the sentence, following the testimony of his cousin's parrot, because he had given him freedom and had affirmed that he was endowed with reason, since in this world, unlike what we know on Earth, "a good deed is never lost" (p. 253). Wherever it is, it is therefore the author's company that is targeted. This is also confirmed by the fact that when he returns to Earth after his journey on the Moon, Dyrcona is imprisoned as a wizard. The lack of tolerance is constantly highlighted in the hero's various adventures. The critical function found

in both utopias and dystopias or in some science fiction novels or even in political treatises is therefore undeniably present.

However, Dyrcona begins his lunar journey to "Paradise Terrestrial", which could be reminiscent of utopias. Indeed, utopia could at first sight be confused with paradise, since its inhabitants live happily there. But this would neglect an essential element of utopias: in them, happiness is achieved by the organisation of society, not an external benefit. It is therefore people who build a beautiful life for themselves, not an idyllic and prosperous nature or a god who gives it to them. The prosperity of the Utopians comes from their wisdom, the fruit of their education, their good organisation and their work: it is the work of reason, not a gift from heaven. This could therefore be seen as an essential difference with utopias. But such a conclusion would probably be hasty. Indeed, Dyrcona's arrival in this place is not accomplished by the grace of God, but by the machine he invented combined with the fact that he coated his body with marrow. The same applies to other people who have succeeded in doing so. Thus, the ascension of Elijah, which in the Bible is of a miraculous nature, is explained in Cyrano's novel by the laws of nature and by the ingenuity of the characters. Since the fumes of sacrifices rise to God, he had filled two large vases with them and tied them under his armpits. On the Moon, he discovered by chance the fruit of knowledge, which enabled him to know where Paradise was, so that he could easily get there. The same is true of Elijah's chariot: it becomes an iron chariot attracted by a magnet thrown towards the Moon. It is therefore by their industry that men reach paradise, and the ascension itself is due to man's cunning and in no way to a divine will. In this sense, Cyrano's text is also utopian or, and perhaps even more so, science fiction. Indeed, whereas science has a very important place in utopias, techniques are generally undervalued; but it is through techniques that were rather elaborate for the time that the characters in Cyrano's novel reach the Moon and the Sun. However, whereas in science fiction books techniques are a pure instrument, without it being important to describe the laws which they obey, Cyrano's constant concern is to explain how these machines work: they are systematically ingenious applications of the laws of nature.

Nevertheless, it would be wrong to claim that all the techniques present are explained. The author refers to talking books, which provide an opportunity to learn by talking to great men (pp. 142-143) and to a hunting technique that lets the larks fall all plucked, roasted and seasoned. But this is probably less a real technique than a literary fantasy or a play on words. But even in the latter case, the author must give an explanation: "That, I imagined at once, is what is said in our world about a country where larks all fall roasted! Probably someone had come back from here." (p. 89) And once again the expression is of a material nature.

On the other hand, it is not uncommon for the beings encountered not to be truly human: animals, spirits or beings with other meanings. This element would tend to classify the work in the area of science fiction novels. However, this remark must be qualified. Most of the animals encountered have purely and simply human capacities, including overturned prejudices. There is therefore no reason to show that good organisation is due to capacities that people would not understand, but rather to criticise the conceptions of the time by transposing them into animals or different societies. However, there is one notable exception: on the Moon, while he is obliged to go to fairs to entertain onlookers, he meets a resident of the Sun, who explains to him that he has other senses and that these are the source of his knowledge:

> Il y a trop peu de rapport, dit-il, entre vos sens et l'explication de ces mystères. Vous vous imaginez, vous autres, que ce que vous ne sauriez comprendre est spirituel, ou qu'il n'est point; la conséquence est très fausse, mais c'est un témoignage qu'il y a dans l'Univers un million peut-être de choses qui, pour être connues, demanderaient en nous un million d'organes tous différents. Moi, par exemple, je conçois par mes sens la cause de la sympathie de l'aimant avec le pôle, celle du reflux de la mer, ce que l'animal devient après la mort ; vous autres ne sauriez donner jusqu'à ces hautes conceptions à cause que les proportions à ces miracles vous manquent, non plus qu'un aveugle-né ne saurait s'imaginer ce que c'est que la beauté d'un paysage, le coloris d'un tableau, les nuances de l'iris ; ou bien il se les figurera tantôt comme quelque chose de palpable, tantôt comme un manger, tantôt comme un son, tantôt comme une odeur. Tout de même, si je voulais vous expliquer ce que je perçois par les sens qui vous manquent, vous vous le représenteriez comme quelque chose qui peut être ouï, touché, fleuré, ou savouré ; et ce n'est rien cependant de tout cela. (82)[6]

We are dealing here (without context) with a being who is profoundly different from men and this difference in nature allows him to access much more knowledge than men. However, it is not possible to know if these superior abilities allow them to live happily and in a wisely organised society, since, during his journey on the Sun, Dyrcona does not discover the social organisation of this people. It would therefore seem that the purpose of this long tirade on the senses and their capacities is above all an opportunity to present Cyrano's materialism, and not the visit to a truly happy and well-ordered society: it is the senses that allow access to knowledge and everything that is considered miraculous is in fact explained by purely natural laws.

Elsewhere on the Moon, he is mistaken for an animal, because in this society people walk on all fours and animals on two. He is shown as a fairy beast, just as men do with animals: "But know that you are only treated the same way, and that if someone from this earth had gone up into yours with the boldness to call himself a man, your doctors would have him suffocated like a monster or like a monkey possessed by the devil." (p. 77) Even for him it is the opportunity to meet the demon of Socrates, the adventure is not pleasant. But it is clear that this is not a question of criticising a future or different society, but rather the mores of his time. This process is repeated several times. This will again be the case on the Sun, where the birds mock the fact that he thinks he is superior: "Hey, what, they whispered to each other, he has no beak, no feathers, no claws, and his soul would be spiritual! O gods! How impertinent!" (p. 235) Even when the adventures of history bring Dyrcona into painful situations, it is never only the morals of his time that are targeted. The discovery of other societies is therefore not so much to actually propose new ways of living as to show the ridiculousness of human conceptions, which is immediately apparent as soon as the same ideas and ways come from the mouths of other beings or animals, and this is then no longer claimed for the supremacy of men but for that of other species. It is therefore the

critical function that dominates, whether it is that of utopia or works of science fiction, but not that of anti-utopia. And from this point of view there is no real difference between the worlds of the Moon, the Sun or the Earth.

Even if, as in utopias, there is no complete description of a new organisation of society, it would be abusive to conclude that no different organisation is proposed and that Cyrano's text is limited to the purely critical function. Indeed, here and there, there is a description of other organisations. This is particularly the case with regard to how to wage war on the Moon. It is equality that reigns on the Moon, in this domain where superiority would strongly benefit one side. There, equality is required both for the time available for the arming phase and for the number of combatants and their capabilities (an able-bodied soldier will fight against another able-bodied soldier, a cripple against a cripple, a strong person against a strong person, a weak person against a weak person, someone sick against someone sick, etc.). But even a victory by these equitable means is not enough to win the war, because other battles between scientists and men of spirit are planned and the victory between them is worth three of the others. At the end, the winning people will choose their king, their own or that of their opponents. Other reversals of morals on Earth are also proposed, such as honouring and obeying young people not old people and their parents, or that virginity is a crime and that, consequently, men and women can complain in court about another person who refused their advances.[7] This idea, which can be found in *Philosophy in the bedroom* by Sade, is undoubtedly surprising for the time and is undoubtedly more a result of a desire to take morals against the grain than of a genuine proposal. This is confirmed by the fact that the author does not hesitate to contradict himself by using the pleasure they had in making their children against the parents:

> Comment ! parce que votre père fut si paillard qu'il ne put résister aux beaux yeux de je ne sais quelle créature, qu'il en fit le marché pour assouvir sa passion et que de leurs patrouillis vous fûtes le maçonnage, vous révérerez ce voluptueux comme un des sept sages de Grèce ! (116)[8]

We can clearly see here the fictional distance and the deliberately unrealistic and ironic character that we have found in More's utopia. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to see it as nothing more than an irrelevant fantasy. The libertine mores of this Moon society perhaps serve, above all, to criticise the prudishness of the time:

> Mais ce sont des visions trop ridicules. Par votre foi, y a-t-il quelque place sur votre corps plus sacrée ou plus maudite l'une que l'autre? Pourquoi commets-je un péché quand je me touche par la pièce du milieu et non pas quand je touche mon oreille ou mon talon? Et-ce à cause qu'il y a du chatouillement? Je ne dois donc pas me purger du bassin, car cela ne se fait point sans quelque sorte de volupté; ni les dévots ne doivent pas non plus s'élever à la contemplation de Dieu, car ils y goûtent un grand plaisir d'imagination. (129)[9]

However, the criticism does not prevent the proposal of another way of doing things, which could be of real interest. On the Sun, the bird people elect their king for a limited period of six months. Moreover, he is chosen not from the strongest and most powerful beings, but, on the contrary, from the weakest, most gentle and most pacific, so that, if he harms anyone during his reign he is always able to take revenge. In addition, it is enough for three birds to be dissatisfied with his government for him to lose his title and new elections to be held immediately. The criticism of the power of the time is obvious. However, we cannot reduce the idea to this element, because we do find another way of working which could be interesting and, on average, some developments could be applied on Earth. Just the idea of electing the Head of State for a limited idea will obviously be widely taken up later on.

The Other World, therefore, does not belong unequivocally to a particular genre. However, at the end of this investigation, it can be concluded that it is not covered by the treatise on the best form of government or by dystopias. Regarding the first point, it can be argued that the proposals do not focus on the political question and that they are a minority and very concrete, too, in the form of the work, which is of a romantic and often fanciful nature. The second distinction, meanwhile, is essentially based on the fact that the criticisms are not aimed at a possible deployment of the author's society, but at his world as he knows it; in other words, it is not a question of warning against a possible evolution of his society, but of showing the failings of the one in which he lives through distorting sets of mirrors.

On the other hand, it is as much utopian as it is science fiction. If criticism is central and almost systematic, which perhaps pulls it more towards the side of utopias, the presentation of the organisation of different societies is more partial and not systematic because this fact would make us think more of works of anticipation. The importance of science and technology also refers to this genre, but the way they are very often explained and the role of explanation through natural laws is more reminiscent of utopias. In addition, there are beings here and there of a different nature from men, which also brings the work closer to science fiction. So, we're in a mixture of these two genres. The States and Empires of the Moon and the Sun can thus be read either from one angle only, or maybe as a strange mixture of the two.

Travels to the Moon and the Sun are also an opportunity for Cyrano de Bergerac to conceive a parody of different episodes of the Bible, whether by telling them in a truncated way, seeking rational explanations for them, or by isolating certain aspects to immerse them in a completely different context. In this section, we will show how food is often the trigger for these distorted rewritings and how this leads to a more sensory and organic reading of the Bible, given that the emphasis is placed on gustatory or olfactory perceptions, which were in fact considered as inferior senses.

The whole story is based on a truncated symmetry: the inhabitants of the Moon consider our Earth as their Moon, while we on Earth consider their Earth as our Moon. This world that is not Dyrcona's is therefore a copy of ours, but one in which Cyrano allows himself to introduce new elements, distortions, which in reality question the foundations of our earthly habits and customs.

This game of distorting mirrors in which Cyrano becomes engaged is set up as soon as his narrator lands on the Moon, at the very beginning of the story. The narrator crashes to the

ground, at the foot of a tree, and finds himself covered by the juice of a burst fruit against his face. He then confides his amazement at not having been killed by the fall and, not knowing yet where he is, imagines that it was the fruit that saved him:

> […] et j'ai conclu de mon aventure qu'il en avait menti, ou bien qu'il fallait que le jus énergique de ce fruit qui m'avait coulé dans la bouche eût rappelé mon âme, qui n'était pas loin, dans mon cadavre encore tout tiède et encore disposé aux fonctions de la vie. (59)[10]

This fruit is that of the Tree of Life and Dyrcona will learn later in his journey, even if he leaves the reader in no doubt by announcing it from the beginning, that he is in the Earthly Paradise. This explains the effect the apple had on him. It can already be noted that the process described by the narrator is by no means metaphorical: it is indeed the juice of an apple that flows into his mouth, and we will see in what follows that food is always considered from the perspective of its assimilation by the body and that it is the organic aspect that is always put forward.

In this scene we find the usual symmetry between the worlds: the Earthly Paradise is on the Moon; yet, as the inhabitants of this other world see their world as being earthly and ours lunar, we may wonder to what extent this Paradise is destined for us. If the term Earthly Paradise is used to describe a place on the Moon, it is because it had to be invented by an inhabitant of the Moon to describe his own world. Through this simple set of symmetrical mirrors, we see that Cyrano is moving the biblical purpose to the other world, and somehow dispossessing the earthlings of their own mythology: the Earthly Paradise is not for us, and only a handful of people have been able to access it.

The distortion of the biblical account continues with the appearance of Elijah, the first character Dyrcona met on the Moon, who is described as a young teenager and who tells him that only six people, now including Dyrcona, have entered this Paradise. But unlike Adam, whose original sin is parodied in the rest of the text, his thirst for knowledge and curiosity to explore the worlds were not the cause of his fall from Paradise, it was, rather, his accession. There is therefore a double reversal of the usual history: first, eating the apple is not a source of rejection of Paradise, and second, knowledge is not regarded as a sin — quite the contrary, since it leads to Paradise.

The second biblical character Dyrcona hears about is Enoch, who rose to heaven because of the smell of the sacrifices (63) that God liked. But this elevation to God is not metaphorical in the story, it is indeed physical. Enoch rises by using the volatility of the fragrances, of the "steam that exhaled" (63) trapped in vases, a system similar to the one that Dyrcona will use with dew drops. These are properties of matter that are used and put forward by Cyrano, who therefore proposes not only a reversal of religious elements (decentralization of the Earth through the existence of other worlds, parody, etc.), but also a materialistic reading of the biblical content; Paradise is a geographical place reachable by the curious philosopher with physical and mechanical means.

It is also through purely mechanical means that Eve, it is said in Dyrcona, left Paradise after Adam, dragged behind him by a kind of magnetic effect:

> […] mais parce qu'il y avait très peu qu'elle avait été tirée du corps de son mari, la sympathie dont cette moitié était encore liée à son tout, la porta vers lui à mesure qu'il montait, comme l'ambre se fait suivre par la paille, comme l'aimant se tourne au septentrion d'où il a été arraché. (63)[11]

Later in his story, the narrator is again confronted with the effects of eating an apple, this time from the Tree of Science. Indeed, it is said that Enoch "knew where the Earthly Paradise was" (66) after eating an apple from the Tree of Science that he had recovered from his fishing nets. Elijah himself confesses that he has found the way to Paradise by a similar process; by eating the fruit of this Tree, his "soul would be enlightened by all the truths of which a creature is capable" (67).

Once again, the consumption of apples is not metaphorical, as the following text clearly shows: knowledge is truly acquired through food, in the same way that eternal life is gained by eating an apple from the Tree of Life.

But although the parallel between food and eternal life or knowledge is very clearly established, the digestion process is perceived as something negative. In fact, it is even because of it that eternal life is impossible, and later in the text we find a description of what happens when the fruit of the Tree of Life is eaten: "He soon consumed and exhaled the serpent in smoke" (69). This snake is the intestines, which devour all the food we eat every day. His venom is bile, and he's the one who eats our corpse in the grave and makes it disappear. By consuming apples, we get rid of what devours us from within and nothing stands in the way of eternal life.

Here again, we see how Cyrano shifts the discourse about life and death on the organic terrain. What acts as salvation is not our soul saved from eternal torment, it is the body freed from decay by the consumption of sacred fruit, whose taste resembles that of the "spirit of wine" (70). The digestion of food and the subsequent decomposition of the corpse find their only alternative in the fruit of the Tree of Life; there is therefore no promise of redemption after death and no mention is made of a soul that would survive the body. The inhabitants of Paradise are therefore many living beings, possessing a body capable of feeding itself (we will see how, below), although free from digestion and death, and this is what we call eternal life.

The fruit of the Tree of Science, on the other hand, makes it possible to attain knowledge, but it is surrounded by a bark of ignorance capable of making anyone who tastes it forget any trace of Paradise: "I had barely tasted it when a thick night fell on my soul" (75).

Knowledge of universal philosophy is therefore something that requires caution. It is not enough to immediately crunch the fruit, it is necessary to peel it, to go to the heart. Whoever has not taken this trouble "will descend below man" (72) rather than "ascend as high as the angel" (72). The elevation of the prudent philosopher to the rank of angel is achieved through the consumption of an apple, to be precise, at the exact moment his teeth or saliva make contact with the fruit. It therefore seems that it is necessary to have a body and appetite to reach the level of angels. Moreover, even in paradise knowledge is not simply given, it is necessary to peel the fruit, in other words, to work and strip things of their appearance to achieve it.

In addition to the obviously humorous character of this distortion of biblical history, there are many materialistic aspects of Cyrano de Bergerac's thought. The body, human or vegetable (we will see it later on with the example of the cabbage), is at the centre of sensations; it is essential for the realisation of all these experiences which finally lead to eternal life and Paradise. Knowledge is acquired by a very organic process and the term "intellectual foods" is to be understood here in a strict sense: there is no barrier between bodily and spiritual sensations, they all contribute to the same goal. Moreover, it is no coincidence that one is the currency of the other. In the Moon, in fact, it is through verses that we pay for our food. The benefit of this practice is made explicit: "In this way, when someone dies of hunger, it is never more than a buffalo, and people of spirit are always very expensive" (90). Beyond social criticism, this process once again makes it possible to combine terrestrial (or more precisely here, lunar) and spiritual foods; they are in no way opposed but constitute a continuum.

So, it might seem surprising to see the disjunction between food and digestion. The rejection of this inner serpent gives access to eternal life, but we do not stop feeding on the fruit of the Tree of Science, as if the search for universal philosophy required a more constant and complex work, requiring time, prudence and reflection. And apart from the sacred fruits, the inhabitants of the Moon continue to eat other foods, but the way of doing so in the Other World is different from that found on Earth. Indeed, the narrator, expecting to receive a solid meal, is told that in this World, "we only live by smoke" (86), so food only passes through the respiratory tract, as if the smell of food contained everything that was necessary to satisfy hunger: "Unless you have already lived in this way, you will never believe that the nose, without teeth and without gullet, makes the office of its mouth to feed the man" (87). Food is therefore not superfluous, nor is eating, it is digestion, an obstacle to eternal life, that is. This is confirmed in the following paragraph: "because food produces almost no excrement, which is the cause of almost all diseases" (87). Later in the story, during the journey on the Sun, we learn that digestion is also a cause of fatigue: "[...] sleep is only produced by the gentle exhalation of meat that evaporates from the stomach to the brain" (210).

We can therefore draw a parallel between the consumption of the fruits of sacred trees, which bring universal philosophy or eternal life, and that of meat, whose smoke satisfies while avoiding the problems associated with digestion, but which nevertheless really nourishes, making those who abuse it fatter, and can cause indigestion. Whether you consume the apple or the smoke, there is an acquisition of something - knowledge, eternal life, stopping the feeling of hunger. However, the consumption of apples is completely optional and reserved for the philosopher who has been cautious in his approach. The acquisition of knowledge is presented as something more concrete, which requires a greater investment: as much as the inhalation of smoke can be done passively, so much as the consumption of apples requires action so that assimilation can take place, a direct contact between the body and the fruit.

Despite the apparent simplicity of this way of eating, the inhabitants of the Moon do not renounce the meal ceremony: they meet to smell the aroma of meat together, just as we do on Earth. If eating is not essential in their world, the meal, as a convivial opportunity to meet each other, is preserved. But in addition to breathing in the pleasant smell of meat, those who participate in meals have made it a habit to undress in order to facilitate the absorption of smoke:

> Vous avez possible été surpris lorsque avant le repas on vous a déshabillé, parce que cette coutume n'est pas usitée en votre pays ; mais c'est la mode de celui-ci et l'on s'en sert afin que l'animal soit plus transpirable à la fumée. (87)[12]

It is not only the nose that is involved in the diet, it is the whole body that is permeable to fumes once released from the clothes that surround it. If the body is "transpirable", it is because the contact between the smoke and the skin allows the nourishing substance to be assimilated, once again thanks to a purely organic process. Let us note in passing Cyrano's fierce irony: while on Earth we dress to eat, it appears Paradise as a place where people gather naked to share an abundant meal.

Paradise is not without solid food, but it seems to be reserved for animals. When, not quite satisfied by the smoke, Dyrcona asks for a more consistent meal, he is offered cooked larks because that is what monkeys eat (throughout his journey, outside the kingdom of birds where he is forced to pose as a monkey to save his life, Dyrcona is not considered a man). The larks hunted with a rifle fell at his feet, already cooked and ready to be eaten. Getting food - solid or not - is therefore not a problem. In addition to digestion and the diseases - and then death - that follow, the difficulty of obtaining enough to survive disappears completely: Paradise is a place where food is only considered in order to obtain pleasure. It is also in this sense that we can understand payment through poetry, a source of pleasure as much as a good meal can be.

We have seen so far how it is always the organic and bodily aspects that are put forward, both for food and nourishment and for salvation, in the biblical sense of the term. The idea of considering the transmission of a beneficial substance to the body in an a priori spiritual context (as is the case when it comes to enjoying eternal life on Paradise) is pushed to its climax in the second part of the story, during Dyrcona's journey on the Sun.

During a discussion about the resurrection, he is exposed to the following reasoning: if a Christian were to eat a Mohammedan, he would then assimilate his body into his own, in a mixture of two foreign materials homogenized by a process of digestion and they would even be transmitted by his semen to his descendants. Should God therefore dedicate this hybrid body to bliss or damnation? It seems that this leads to a paradox that even God cannot solve. Everything happens as if faith could be transmitted in this way through these mechanisms of feeding, digestion, assimilation of the characteristics of foreign bodies, as if it were the body alone, and not something immaterial, that could be worthy of gaining Paradise or being damned. If a Christian eats a Muslim, their bodily substances mix so well that they seem to be one in the eyes of God. The difference between the Muslim and the Christian therefore lies more in a different disposition of the body (bodies that remain compatible, however, from the point of view of the possibility of assimilation) than in a difference of the soul. This is so much so that it is possible, by this purely organic and ingestion-related process, to fool God or put him in an impossible situation: "What would still be very ridiculous is that this body would have deserved Hell and Paradise all together" (156).

However, if the human bodies are indistinguishable, one can ask oneself about the limits of this compatibility, in other words, is it reserved for men? Indeed, from a materialistic perspective, nothing fundamentally distinguishes the Muslim from the Christian or the atheist, but can

a difference be introduced between the human being and a living being? Cyrano de Bergerac clearly proposes a negative answer to this question in two passages of the text. In the one where it is said that if eaten by flies, which will be eaten by a bird, it will "pass in their substance" (250) as was the case for the substance of the Mohammedan eaten by the Christian and in the one where a cabbage is presented as a creature of God on the same basis as any animal or human: "[...] is not this cabbage of which you speak as much of God as you?" Worse still, it would be more serious to kill a cabbage than a man, because if man is promised a resurrection, this is not the case with cabbage: killing it therefore amounts to taking his life forever and without hope of salvation. The life of the cabbage is therefore more precious than that of a human and it is its privileged status that gives man more responsibility towards other creatures of God. But this reversal of the food chain, where the predator finds himself responsible for the misfortune of the food, goes so far as to erase the supposed privileged status of man in creation:

> Dira-t-on que nous sommes faits à l'image du Souverain Être, et non pas les choux? […] Si donc notre âme n'est plus son portrait, nous ne lui ressemblons pas davantage par les mains, par les pieds, par la bouche, par le front et par les oreilles, que le chou par ses feuilles, par ses fleurs, par sa tige, par son trognon, et par sa tête. (122-123)[13]

The blurring of the distinction between human and cabbage, or any other being of creation, finds a perfect place in Cyrano's materialistic system, whose discourse on food was only one illustration of many; a man eating a cabbage and assimilating it makes it indistinguishable in the eyes of God, as it was with the Muslim. There is therefore no longer any reason to maintain a clear difference between these entities.

It therefore appears that the theme of food is first of all used by Cyrano to construct a reading of the biblical episode of genesis based on the body and organic matter. All the usual concepts - salvation, eternal life, faith, soul - are interpreted from bodily mechanisms such as the ingestion of products, their assimilation and digestion. Philosophy and knowledge are also considered as very concrete things that need to be assimilated, again according to procedures similar to food and digestion. The body substance replaces the mind or soul entirely, to such an extent that the human loses its central place and is put on an equal footing, indistinguishable from any other animal (bird) or even from a plant (cabbage).

Many aspects of Cyrano's philosophy are found in the Other World. The structure of the novel, the various journeys and societies discovered, as well as the many characters, often philosophers, who instruct Dyrcona, facilitate the presentation of a philosophy that is not systematic. However, we must be careful not to attribute all the philosophical speeches to Sieur de Bergerac. We are without context in a novel, which is also burlesque in tendency, and the contradictions themselves would not be free if all the ideas were gathered together. Nevertheless, some ideas are recurrent. Our aim here is not to present a synthesis of Cyrano's philosophy, but to highlight the elements of his thinking in which food plays a role. Three aspects of his philosophy give particular importance to food: equality or continuity between living beings, materialism and naturalism.

In these novels, man loses his dominant place. He is only one of many beings left. First, he is composed of the same elements as other living beings: "In this way, in a man, there is everything you need to compose a tree; in this way, there is everything you need to compose a man" (100). The wording at this stage is still ambiguous. In Aristotle's work, too, the universe is composed of the same elements, including living beings. It is therefore the different souls - vegetative, sensitive and intellective - that distinguish living beings: man possessing the three souls, animals the first two and plants only the first.[14] The difference in nature disappears entirely in Cyrano and it is the process of feeding that makes it possible to explain it. Since beings are what they eat, the difference is at most degrees and the passages between beings are very common:

> Vous savez, ô mon fils, que de la terre, il se fait un arbre, d'un arbre un pourceau, d'un pourceau un homme. Ne pouvons-nous donc pas croire, puisque tous les êtres en la Nature tendent au plus parfait, qu'ils aspirent à devenir hommes, cette essence étant l'achèvement du plus beau mixte, et le mieux imaginé qu'il soit au monde, étant le seul qui fasse le lien de la vie brutale avec l'angélique? Que ces métamorphoses arrivent, il faut être pédant pour le nier. Ne voyons-nous pas qu'un pommier, par la chaleur de son germe, comme par sa bouche, suce et digère le gazon qui l'environne; qu'un pourceau dévore ce fruit et le fait devenir une partie de soi-même; et qu'un homme, mangeant le pourceau, réchauffe cette chair morte, la joint à soi, et fait enfin revivre cet animal sous une plus noble espèce? (150)[15]

Certainly, the story here evokes only the evolution towards man. But man is no more than being at the top of the food chain. In addition, you don't have to think very hard to see that the process is two-way, since excreta and putrefaction also feed the plants. This is the secret that a bird will tell Dyrcona on the Sun, to console him for his punishment of being eaten by flies.

Cyrano pushes this process to its extreme consequences. While most corpses are burned, the same cannot be said of philosophers, who are invited to a philosophical banquet of a completely different kind. When a philosopher "feels his mind softening" (144), he brings together his friends who have previously fasted. He then stabs himself a dagger and, one after the other, each of his friends "swallows his blood and always sucks until he can't drink more" (145). They will then devote themselves to the pleasures of love with fertile young girls, "so that if anything can be born from these embraces, they can be assured that it is their friend who lives again" (145). Since we are what we eat and there is no discontinuity between species, it is indeed logical that cannibalism is not taboo, but a transformation process like any other.

Under these conditions, it is difficult to imagine an immortal soul characterising man, to the detriment of beasts... Moreover, Dyrcona, who here, as in many passages, takes up the prejudices of his time, is immediately challenged:

> Quoi! Me répliqua-t-il en s'éclatant de rire, vous estimez votre âme immortelle privativement à celle des bêtes? Sans mentir, mon grand ami, votre orgueil est bien insolent! Et d'où argumentez-vous, je vous prie, cette immortalité au préjudice de celle des bêtes? En

> premier lieu, je vous le nie, et je vous prouverai, quand il vous plaira, qu'elles raisonnent comme nous. (148)[16]

The instructor's argument is made here by means of ad hominem theological reasoning: If God is just, the fact that he has given reason to single men would imply that it is to other beings that he grants immortality. There is no longer any distinction of nature to distinguish the living.

Continuity between species is closely correlated to a radical form of materialism: everything we are of the order of matter. This leads to a process in which the thoughts themselves are linked to the arrangement of the organs and are no longer anything other than a particular disposition of matter:

> Sachez donc qu'afin de connaître votre intérieur, j'arrangeai toutes les parties de mon corps dans un ordre semblable au vôtre ; car étant de toute part situé comme vous, j'excite en moi par cette disposition de matière, la même pensée que produit en vous cette même disposition de matière. (274)[17] [18]

In this conception where everything is material, it is logical that all phenomena can be explained by natural laws. We can thus speak of a profound naturalism in Cyrano.

We have already noted how all religious myths find another explanation in the States and Empires of the Moon and the Sun. This is particularly the case with the prophet Elijah's chariot of fire, which becomes a sparkling iron chariot and, through the ingenuity of the character and the properties of iron and magnet, it helps to explain the character's ascent to the Moon and Paradise. As for the property of the magnet, it is not explained then. It will be necessary to wait for Dyrcona's visit to the Sun to find an explanation, but this time, it is an explanation of a mythical nature that will be given: the friendship of Pylades and Orestes. However, it would be wrong to conclude that, for Cyrano, the natural or mythological explanations are of the same order, because this will give him the opportunity to explain the legend by bringing it back to physical phenomena. Watching his friend and cousin die, Orestes expires quickly in turn. The embracing bodies of the lovers will feed two young shoots - the diet once again plays a decisive role - which will become trees, producing fruit. The passion of the lovers was so intense that the one who ate the fruit of one will be irresistibly attracted to the one who ate the fruit of the other, either by an unfailing friendship, when it comes to people of the same sex, or by an eternal love when the victims are male and female.

Unfortunately, the principle poses some problems, which Cyrano enjoys exposing in their length and breadth: thus, when a father and a daughter eat both fruits; or a goddess and a bull; or when the juice of the two fruits is so sublimated that the two lovers cannot detach themselves from each other and end up forming a hermaphrodite; without counting the case of Narcissus who ate two fruits in abundance. As we can see, not only do many myths have different explanations, but they are always based on natural principles. No matter how fanciful the explanation is, the important thing is that the explanations are physical: the putrefaction of the bodies that will serve as soil for young plants and the ingestion of fruits. These will even explain the properties of the iron and magnet. Parents desperate to see their children fall in love with an irrepressible passion for their friends or lovers will burn all these plants. The ashes containing only the principles will scatter over the whole earth and form the iron and magnet.

Cyrano's naturalism does not require the explanations to be purely scientific or necessarily in accordance with the scientific knowledge of the time. What characterises his thinking is to give all phenomena - human as well as physical - an explanation through the principles of nature. Of these principles, the principle of food has a privileged place, because it is at the origin of transformation and equality between beings.

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More, Thomas (1516), *Utopia*, trans. Literature Project, <http://literatureproject.com/ utopia/index.htm> (last accessed at 21/10/2019)

Notes

1. We cite the English translation of More's Utopia from Literature Project, which can be found here: <http://literatureproject.com/utopia/Utopia_9.htm>
2. The numbering refers to the French editon of Voyages to the moon and the sun edited by Jacques Prévot: *Les États et Empires de la Lune et Les États et Empires du Soleil,* collection Folio, 2004. We translated all the in-text citations.
3. "But you know not, added he, what a pleasant Quarrel I have just now had with our Fathers, upon your account? They'll have you absolutely to be a Magician; and the greatest favour you can expect from them, is to be reckoned only an Impostor". We cite the English translation by A. Lovell that can be found online: <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A35530.0001.001?view=toc>
4. "But some more passionate Doctors, being informed, that I had the boldness to affirm, That the Moon, from whence I came, was a World; and that their World was no more but a Moon, thought it might give them a very just pretext, to have me condemned to the Water; for that's their way of rooting out Hereticks. For that end, they went in a Body, and complained to the King, who promised them Justice; and order'd me once more to be brought to the Bar."
5. "I think, Gentlemen, it never was yet doubted, but that all Creatures are produced by our common Mother, to live together in Society. Now if I prove, that Man seems to be Born only to break it; shall I not make it out, that he going contrary to the end of his Creation, deserves that Nature should repent her self of her work?"
6. "Your senses, replied he, bear but too little proportion to the Explication of these Mysteries: Ye Gentlemen imagine, that whatsoever you cannot comprehend is spiritual, or that it is not at all; but that

Consequence is absurd, and it is an argument, that there are a Million of things, perhaps, in the Universe, that would require a Million of different Organs in you, to understand them. For instance, I by my Senses know the cause of the Sympathy, that is betwixt the Loadstone and the Pole, of the ebbing and flowing of the Sea, and what becomes of the Animal after Death; you cannot reach these high Conceptions but by Faith, because they are Secrets above the power of your Intellects; no more than a Blind-man can judge of the beauties of a Land-skip, the Colours of a Picture, or the streaks of a Rain-bow; or at best he will fancy them to be somewhat palpable, to be like Eating, a Sound, or a pleasant Smell: Even so, should I attempt to explain to you, what I perceive by the Senses which you want, you would represent it to your self, as somewhat that may be Heard, Seen, Felt, Smelt or Tasted, and yet it is no such thing."

7. Moreover, the mark of the gentlemen is not the sword, symbol of death and artifice of the executioner, but a medal with a manly limb, symbol of life. (pp. 143-144)
8. This part is absent from Lovell's translation. Our translation: "How! because your father was so bawdy thahe could not resist the beautiful eyes of some creature, that he made a deal to satisfy his passion and that of their intercourse you were the fruit, you reverence this voluptuous as one of the seven sages of Greece!
9. Again, this part is absent from Lovell's translation. Our translation: "But these are too ridiculous visions. By your faith, is there any place on your body more sacred or cursed than the other? Why do I commit a sin when I touch myself by the middle part and not when I touch my ear or my heel? Is it because there's tickle? I must not purge myself, for this cannot be done without some kind of voluptuousness; nor must the devotees elevate themselves to the contemplation of God, for they enjoy a great pleasure of imagination."
10. "[…] and from my adventure I conclude it to be false, or else that the efficacious Juyce of that Fruit, which squirted into my mouth, must needs have recalled my Soul, that was not far from my Carcass, which was still hot, and in a disposition of exerting the Functions of Life."
11. "The Sympathy which still united that half to its whole, drew her towards him as he mounted up, as the Amber attracts the Straw; the Load-stone turns towards the North, from whence it hath been taken".
12. "You were, perhaps, surprised, that before supper you were stript, since it is a Custom not practised in your Country; but it is the fashion of this, and for this end used, that the Animal may be the more transpirable to the Fumes."
13. "If it be said, that we are made after the Image of the Supreme Being, and so is not the Cabbage; grant that to be true; yet by polluting our Soul, wherein we resembled Him, we have effaced that Likeness, seeing nothing is more contrary to God than Sin. If then our Soul be no longer his Image, we resemble him no more in our Feet, Hands, Mouth, Forehead and Ears, than a Cabbage in its Leaves, Flowers, Stalk, Pith, and Head".
14. It should be noted that it is possible for a soul to be joined or lost, but these are exceptional cases and they do not allow us to consider that there is a true continuity in the living.
15. "You must know, that the Earth, converting it self into a Tree, from a Tree into a Hog, and from a Hog into a Man, is an Argument, that all things in Nature, aspire to be Men; since that is the most perfect Being, as being a Quintessence, and the best devised Mixture in the World; which alone unites the Animal and Rational Life into one. None but a Pedant will deny me this, when we see that a Plumb-Tree, by the Heat of its Germ, as by a Mouth, sucks in and digests the Earth that's about it; that a Hog devours the Fruit of this Tree, and converts it into the Substance of it self; and that a Man feeding on that Hog, reconcocts that dead Flesh, unites it to himself, and makes that Animal to revive under a more Noble Species."
16. Once again, this part is absent from Lovell's translation. Our translation: "What! He replied, bursting out laughing, You consider your soul immortal, unlike that of the beasts? Without a lie, my great friend, your pride is very insolent! And from where do you argue, please, this immortality to the detriment of that of the animals? First of all, I deny it to you, and I will prove to you, when it pleases you, that they reason as we do."
17. "Know then, that to the end I might know your inside, I disposed all the parts of my Body, into the same Order I saw yours in; for being in all parts scituated like you, by that disposition of matter, I excite in my self the same thought, that the same disposition of matter raises in you."
18. This is the same teaching that Socrates' demon gave to Campanella : "[…] ce fut moi qui l'avisai, pendant qu'il était à l'Inquisition à Rome, de styler son visage et son corps aux grimaces et aux postures ordinaires de ceux dont il avait besoin de connaître l'intérieur afin d'exciter chez soi par une même assiette les pensées que cette même situation avait appelées dans ses adversaires" (p. 78) ["it was I that advised him, whilst he was in the Inquisition at Rome, to put his Face and Body into the usual Postures of those, whose inside he needed to know, that by the same frame of Body, he might excite in himself, the thoughts which the same scituation had raised in his Adversaries"].

Juana de la Cruz's Heavenly Banquet: A Utopian Way of Thinking about Food

Rebeca Sanmartín Bastida

Introduction

In this work I propose to discuss ecstatic and utopian visions of the heavenly banquet, focusing on the figure of Juana de la Cruz. This visionary Spanish woman, who was born in 1481 and died in 1534 in Toledo, was a Franciscan tertiary (and later nun) in the *beaterio* of Cubas de la Sagra. She had the fame of being a "living saint," a term coined by Gabriella Zarri (1990 & 1996) to refer to certain Italian women whose influence at the Court helped delineate a model of feminine holiness between the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the sixteenth century. Sor Juana's contemporaries (including King Fernando II and the Great Captain Gonzalo Fernández de Córdoba, who came to visit her) and later generations considered her holy; in fact, she received the title of Venerable.[1]

Although today figures like Juana de la Cruz are quite unknown outside the scope of the Church and Women's History, in their time visionary *beatas* (or tertiaries) were recognised as people of great spiritual authority. Juana composed a book of visionary sermons, *Libro del conorte* (ca. 1509), transcribed by her fellow nun María Evangelista with some help from other Franciscans, who contributed as well to compile the book of Juana's life (Vida y fin de la bienabenturada virgen sancta Juana de la Cruz, first half of the sixteenth century).[2] Also surviving is a work written by nuns from her convent, the *Libro de la casa y monasterio de Nuestra Señora de la Cruz* (second half of the sixteenth century). But it is especially in her book of revelations, *Libro del conorte*, where Juana speaks extensively of the heavenly banquet. Indeed, in her visionary sermons she describes a paradise filled with celestial *agape* meals, dances, and musician angels playing trumpets. Thus, I would like to consider here how utopian heavenly banquets are depicted in this formidable text, and ultimately to contrast them with the demands that extreme fasting made on visionary women's bodies.

Heavenly banquets, visionary women and fasting

Strengthen me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am faint with love.
Song of Solomon 2:5

Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare.
Isaiah 55:2

The imagery of the heavenly or Messianic feast comes from the Holy Scriptures and is an influential concept in Christian theology. Banquets were described both in the Old Testament, such as the famous episode of the quails and manna that rained from heaven (Exodus 16: 1-36) and others that involved sharing food with God (Genesis 18:1-8), and in the New Testament, where we find scenes of common meals like the wedding at Cana, the Last Supper and the meal that preceded the Ascension. As stated by Aragüés Aldaz (2010: 47), these feasts legitimated and sacralised the idea of a festive celebration around the table.[3] Elsewhere, Jesus mentions eating and drinking in the heavenly kingdom (Matthew 8:11, 22:4, 26:29; Luke 13:29, 14:15, 22:28-30, 24:41-43), and we can find allusions also in other texts from the New Testament (1 Corinthians 10:3-4, cf. Romans 14:17; Revelation 2:7, 2:177, 19:9, 22:1-2).[4]

Frequently depicted in early Christian art but nowadays used sparingly except when explaining the Eucharist, the heavenly banquet refers to a place in heaven where the faithful go after death, in particular the martyrs. Correlated with times of deprivation and fasting, the liturgical calendar and the Spanish versions of the Golden Legend, the *Flos Sanctorum*, fixed the existence of various moments for joy and feast to savour what the saints of the *Flos* already were enjoying (Aragués Aldaz 2010: 48). If in this mortal life Christmas and the period between Easter and the Pentecost feast allowed moderate and regulated meals, in heaven eating was not to be limited.

Nevertheless, these scenes of feasting did not depict that food excess which accompanied some common meals outside the convent, described with carnivalesque humour by shepherds in Juan del Encina's plays.[5] In heaven they were bound to be not untidy but orderly pleasures, and the celebration of the Eucharistic meal was a heavenly treat expected to be enjoyed as a harmonic eternal banquet, a sacred feast ritualised in the company of singing angels. Through communion, there was the pleasure of eating together because, as highlighted by Barthes (2003: 163), the rites of communion seek a shared symbolic ingestion of food. Communion is transformed, thus, into a rite of inclusion, integration and imitation. The motifs of the heavenly meal and the Eucharist then take over a lexicon of conviviality permanently exiled from its worldly frame. These two feasts share some anagogic and allegorical elements, without subtracting the real and corporeal character that, under transubstantiation, holds the blood and body of Christ in the sacrament (Aragüez Aldaz 2010: 48).

As said by Enrique Sarabia (2004), there is no idea of paradise that does not include an abundance of food, and this imagery is so powerful that when imagining heaven many Christians almost forget that gluttony is a sin. Notwithstanding, the truth is that the heavenly treat would above all get the attention of those who go hungry, as is well observed by Camporesi (1988: 223):

> In those very years, filled with the cries of famine, with climactic upheavals, with nature's calamities, unending rains, raging poverty, atrocities committed on wayfarers and children, cannibalistic excesses, there grew apace, across a web of forbidden dreams, descriptions of a sweet and beatifically serene life, ecstatic images of havens so scented as to stun the brain; of aromatic baths in celestial spiceries, of countries in which there is no need to eat, where "sweet and celestial food" trickles in a dew down gummy, resinous, honeyed and sweating trees, bestowing comfort and ineffable delight upon the privileged occupants of the sacred precinct.[6]

The living proof of this are female visionary texts. It is certainly striking to realise how some visionary women combined this imaginary with the extreme fasting that usually characterised their spiritual path. For medieval women's spirituality, fasting is a central element which, together with devotion to the Eucharist, frequently leads to mystical ecstasy. Ascetic exercises are omnipresent in hagiographies and revelations, and deprivation of food becomes in women's discourses a powerful symbol of their spirituality.

In hagiographies the effects of fasting certainly contribute to the visibility of these women, helping to read them as holy: in short, fasting allows the possibility of spiritual leadership. Traces of fasting on the female body, as traces of self-imposed penance, are signs of the divine presence, forms of externalising the intense and privileged experience of God, so that through their feeding practices women externalise the interior marked by the divine (Biddick 1993: 414). And so the new saints show interest in medieval hagiographies of Mary Magdalene and (later on) Catherine of Siena's (1347-1380) example of lengthy abstinence: visionary women thus agree in not seeing ordinary food as necessary (Sanmartín Bastida 2015: 95-96 & 103). Indeed, they become self-starving women who follow the example of their predecessors. For example, Rudolph Bell has called the habits of Catherine of Siena "holy anorexia," because the Italian Dominican learned to live practically without eating to achieve an ideal of fasting that ultimately challenged the Church's authority.[7]

Because of this ideal, for many of these women a delicious and hearty meal is imagined in heaven with serenity and without guilt: good taste would not then wake any sinful temptations, as for example happened to Margaret of Cortona (1247-1297), an extreme faster tortured by the devil with sensitive odours that came from foods she had never seen before (Bynum 1987: 142). Far from the heavenly meal is the culinary vision of hell of Mechthild of Magdeburg (1207-1282), who imagined those who engage in binge eating and binge drinking as thus condemned, among other punishments, to ingest bitter things instead of sweet (2004: 310). Instead, the heaven envisioned by these women is full of sugary foods, a place where eating and drinking are not measured, and they do not constitute a sin when excessive (as raised by Ecclesiasticus 37:29-31, or the fifteenth-century treatises *Castigos y doctrinas que un sabio dava a sus hijas*, Hernando de Talavera's *Tratado provechoso de vestir y calzar*, and *Enseñamiento de los religiosos*, which criticise any delight of the senses induced by delicacies).[8]

Contemplating the imagery of a heaven full of sweet and fragrant food in abundance (Camporesi 1988: 240 & 244-45) was then allowed and encouraged, and we should not wonder

that this food paradise caught the attention of fasting nuns in general and visionary women who exercised extreme abstinence in particular. The heavenly feast was no longer just about extolling the pleasures of the Eucharist but expanded the field of culinary enjoyment and recognised the good taste of other foods, not only spiritual but material.[9]

Juana de la Cruz's heavenly banquet

The most interesting example of this food figuration, the heavenly banquet, belongs to a Spanish visionary woman and extreme faster, Juana de la Cruz. This Castilian woman, as stated earlier, is not a saint recognised by the Church: in the year 1610 the process of her beatification began in Rome, but it was thwarted by the censors of both Juana's work, the *Libro del conorte*, and of the biography written by Father Daza.[10]

The *Libro del conorte*, written around 1509, responds to Cardinal Cisneros's command of getting Juana's visionary sermons copied, sermons that we are told were delivered over thirteen years. It seems that these speeches were collected at her cell by fellow tertiaries and, especially, by María Evangelista, who was also probably the main author of her manuscript hagiography (*Vida y fin de la bienabenturada virgen sancta Juana de la Cruz*). Juana's preachings usually lasted three or four hours during which she described and interpreted aloud the allegories of their imaginary visions, assuming the voice of each celestial character in a very dramatic way (Cortés Timoner 2004: 26; 2005: 612). Whoever attended the public disclosures of Juana (the audience of the trances was formed in part by important personages of the Court) would see the visionary *beata* interacting with scenes from sacred history in a time and space that reached toward transcendence.

Having said this, I must underline that a key element of Juana de la Cruz's holy performance was her ascetic behaviour. Juana had carried out extreme fasting since childhood that went back to no less than the stage of lactation (Daza 1613: 68). To help her, she placed in her mouth "ajenjos amargos" [bitter wormwood] to remember "el amargor de la yel e vinagre que dieron a nuestro Señor Jesuchristo" [the bitterness of gall and vinegar which was given to our Lord Jesus Christ]; she also sometimes held in her mouth "una piedra algo grande que le dava dolor" [a somewhat large stone that gave her pain] and another time "un candelero mediano" [a medium candlestick], holding it "por la parte donde se pone la candela hasta que le dolían las quijadas" [by the part where one puts the candle until her jaws were aching] (*Vida...* fols. 13v-14r).[11] Her hagiographer María Evangelista also informs us that her early fasts were accompanied by a lack of sleep (an insomnia found in other visionary women):

> Heran sus ayunos muy perfectos, e mucho assí espiritual como corporalmente, que no sólo usava dende su niñez ayunar ordinariamente comiendo una vez al día, mas aún estar tres días con sus noches sin tomar ningún mantenimiento corporal; y no solamente ayunava de comer, mas aún de dormir hazía penitençia e ayunava. (*Vida...* fol. 14r)

> [Her fasts were very perfect, as spiritual as they were bodily, since she not only used to fast since her childhood, eating just once a day in the ordinary manner, but would even spend three days and nights without taking any bodily sustenance; and not only did she fast, but even did penitence and fasted instead of sleeping.]

However, this does not prevent Juana from describing the heavenly banquet with a remarkable enthusiasm. Perhaps because she was able to establish a strong connection between food and God, we are told that she eats thinking of God and claims meals as a way to reach the divinity.

> Dezía muchas veçes esta bienabenturada que, quando comía o vevía, tomava gusto en aquel manjar corporal pues savía ella Dios hera todas las cosas y en todas las cosas le podía hallar y con este pensamiento y contemplaçión que siempre tenía puesto en Dios en cada bocado que comía o trago que vevía hallava dulçedumbres y gustos divinales, tanto que estando muchas vezes comiendo corporalmente se arrovaba en spíritu hasta ver los secretos çelestiales y la visión de Dios e los spíritus angélicos. (*Vida...* fol. 21v)
>
> [This blessed woman often used to say that while eating or drinking she enjoyed the taste of material delicacies since she knew that God was all things and in all things she could find him. And with this thought and contemplation which she had always focused on God, in every bite she ate or drank she used to find sweetness and divine tastes, so intensely that frequently while she was eating she entered into a trance and got to see the heavenly secrets and the vision of God and the angelic spirits.]

The correspondence between the quality of the soul and tasting is thus very present in her work:

> Porque, así como la persona que está enferma y maldispuesta tiene el gusto de la boca muy amargo, y todo cuanto come, por dulce y bien guisado que sea, le amarga y le sabe mal, que así, por semejante, cualquier persona que tuviere el ánima enferma de pecados y el gusto amargo de incredulidad y dureza y malicia y envidia y otros pecados semejantes, no le sabrá bien esta santa escritura, porque cuanto ella es más excelente tanto menos la sabrán gustar los malos. (Juana de la Cruz 1999: II, 1472)
>
> [For, as the person who is sick and bad tempered has a very bitter taste in the mouth, and all he eats, even when sweet and well-stewed, tastes bitter and bad, so any such person, having their soul sick with sins and the bitter taste of unbelief and hardness and malice and envy and other similar sins, will not taste this holy scripture as good, because the more excellent it is the less the bad ones will know how to savour it.]

For Juana to taste depends directly on the soul. Certainly this sensitivity towards food, shown in the central comparison between her work and a delicacy that can only be savoured by those who are close to God (II, 1472-73), could be due to her work as an assistant cook at her convent

(see García de Andrés 1999: 64), though it is of note that this role is shared (in a lesser degree) by other visionary women (Mazzoni 2005).[12] It is no wonder that her revelations, not always sought through meditation, could befall her at any quotidian moment, even while dedicated to kitchen chores. Juana took advantage of this, and in her sermons her practical wisdom about the process of preparing food turned the Lord into an expert in the kitchen. He, through her – because she insists on being the instrument through which the divine voice flows (Surtz 1990: 131-67) -, used cooking terms easily understood by Juana's fellow tertiaries, as this was a more familiar vocabulary than the usual one heard in sermons.

> Que entonces fueron todos los santos y santas frutas cuajadas y sazonadas para comer, cuando con sus ejemplos y doctrinas hicieron tan gran fruto que todas la Santa Fe Católica dejaron harta y abastada de buenas vidas y obras, para que todos podamos aprovechar a nos y a otros con ella. Porque, aunque las flores son cosa que dan buen olor y buen parecer, no son cosas que puedan comer ni dar hartura a nadie como hace la fruta, cuando está cuajada y sazonada, que cualquiera la puede comer y cumplir su necesidad. (Juana de la Cruz 1999: I, 405)
> [Then all the saints became mature fruits seasoned for eating, when with their examples and doctrines they made such a great fruit that all the holy Catholic faith was full and heavy with good lives and works, so that it can be helpful to us and others. Because although flowers are something that gives good smell and good looks, they are not things that you can eat or that fill you like fruit when it is mature and seasoned, which anyone can eat and so meet his needs.]
>
> Y dijo el Señor: Que, así como con la harina se encubre el agua para que la pueda masar y con la levadura la sazonan para que la puedan comer, así, bien masada la preciosa Humanidad tuvo por bien de se nos dar a conocer, porque le podamos gustar y entender. El cual gusto y entendimiento hace el Espíritu Santo, porque procede del Padre y del Hijo, como la levadura del agua y de la harina.
> Y dijo el Señor, después de ser masada la masa, hace muchos panes y van todas tres cosas en un solo pan. Y dijo, que en esto podíamos entender ser tres en uno, encarnándose. (II, 834)
> [And the Lord said that, as water is covered with flour so it could be mashed and is prepared with yeast so it could be eaten, in this way the precious Humanity thought it would be convenient to show us himself as well-mashed so that we can taste and understand him. The Holy Spirit causes this taste and understanding, because it proceeds from the Father and the Son as yeast does from water and flour.
> And the Lord said, after the dough is kneaded, it makes many breads and all three things go in one bread. And he said that in this we could understand there to be three in one yet incarnated.]

This ability to convert food into spiritual reason, so that every day becomes a daily feast, is also seen in Juana's life:

> Como hera esta sancta virgen tan cuydadosa de aprovechar en el spíritu, quando travajava corporalmente endereçava con su pensamiento e limpia intención todos aquellos serviçios e travajos que hazía por la sancta obediençia a la persona realíssima e divina del poderoso Dios, e contemplando […] los platos que fregava […] pensava que heran de oro e de piedras preçiosas para en que comiese su Alta Magestad. […] Y, quando guisava de comer, contemplava heran muy preçiosos y delicados manjares para que comiese su divina Magestad. (*Vida…* fols. 14r-v)
> [As this holy virgin was so careful to benefit her spirit, when she was working she used to, by means of her thoughts and pure intentions, lift up to the most royal and divine person of the powerful God all those services and chores that she did out of obedience. And while contemplating the dishes she was washing she used to think they were made of gold and precious jewels so that his High Majesty could eat on them. And, when she was stewing the meal, she contemplated it as a very precious and delicate food to be eaten by his divine Majesty.]

Nevertheless, what calls our attention is the fact that Juana demonstrates on several occasions (not always related to the Eucharist) a great ability to relate parts of the human body with food. As she says in one of her revelations:

> Y dijo el Señor, que no solamente quiere él los pensamientos, mas aun quiere comer y cebarse de corazones muy bien guisados, es a saber, de deseos muy fervientes y amor muy entrañable del corazón muy bien ordenado y ocupado y aparejado para recibir a sólo él y no a otro ninguno. Y las especias con que ha de ser guisado el corazón para que él le coma, es a saber, para que él le posea, han de ser muchedumbre de virtudes y buenas obras y mucho buen ejemplo, el cual es figurado por el olor de la canela. Porque así como cuando guisan alguna cosa para comer, cuando le echan especias le da buen sabor, empero cuando le echan canela no solamente le da buen sabor, mas aun le da buen olor, que así por semejante hace la persona cuando da buen ejemplo, que no solamente sirve ella y place a Dios, más aún place a los otros y los provoca a que también le amen y sirvan. (Juana de la Cruz 1999: I, 328)
> [And the Lord said that he not only wants thoughts, but also wants to eat and be fattened with hearts that are very well-cooked, namely, with very fervent wishes and very fond love from a heart that is very well organised and busy and equipped to receive him only and no other. And the spices – which are for stewing the heart so that he will eat it, that is, so that he possesses it – should be a multitude of virtues and good works and many good examples, which are symbolised by the smell of cinnamon. For as when one cooks something to eat, and by throwing spices in they give good flavour, when one throws cinnamon in it not only gives good flavour but also gives a good smell. So similarly does a person when he provides a good example, who not only serves and pleases God, but also pleases others and makes them love and serve God.]

If during her speeches Juana offered a dramatisation of evangelical episodes and a narrative description of the joyous and musical celebrations held in heaven, this festive atmosphere becomes

constantly rewritten in her work during the extensive space devoted to heavenly celebrations. All her sermons represent the positive side of food, which plays a key role in many of them in explaining doctrine and making it available to the laity. Thus there are frequent episodes in which the celestial beings, after a game, a performance, or a procession, sit at a table with the blessed and are offered various filling foods that they consume happily, a meal both sweet and sacred if the food offered happens to be eucharistic.

The overflowing tables of platters establish a direct identification between food and heaven, and it is God / Christ himself who, probably thinking of their past fasting, gives license to eat all they want to compensate for their hardships in life.

> Y a deshora les puso tan grande hambre, que todos empezaron a comer con muy grande sabor. Y parecíales, según la dulcedumbre y deleite sentían en el pan y en el vino y en los manjares, nunca verse hartos ni abastados. (I, 342; cf. II, 946)
> [And at that moment he gave them such a great hunger that all began to eat with great enjoyment. And it seemed to them, according to the sweetness and delight they tasted in the bread and wine and platters, they never got full or tired of eating.]

> - Pues yo, mis amigos, que di y doy la gana de comer a los que viven en el mundo, y se la quito cuando es mi voluntad, quiero ahora y me place que, pues es escrito y lo dejé yo en memoria en aquel evangelio de las beatitudes, que eran bienaventurados los que tienen hambre y sed de la justicia porque ellos serán hartos y abastados en el reino de los cielos, y, por tanto, yo quiero que, pues vosotros tuvisteis hambre y sed y estáis ya en el reino de los cielos, que comáis y os hartéis y embriaguéis y abastéis de todos estos manjares que aquí están. Y que así como él hubo acabado de decir estas palabras, a deshora, les puso tanta gana de comer que comieron todos los manjares y panes y frutas y dulcedumbres que allí en las preciosas mesas estaban. (II, 974)
> [- Well, my friends, I, who gave and give the desire to eat to those living in the world, and who remove it when it is my will, I want now and I am pleased that, since it is written and I left it to be remembered in that gospel about the beatitudes, those who have hunger and thirst for righteousness are blessed for they shall be filled and full in the kingdom of heaven, and, therefore, because you were hungry and thirsty and are already in the kingdom of heaven, I wish that you would eat and get drunk and surfeited with all these delicacies that are here. And just as he had finished speaking these words, at that moment, he gave them a such a desire to eat that they ate all the dishes and breads and fruits and sweets that were on the precious tables.]

If, as we have seen, the body could also serve as a food metaphor, starting with the long Christian tradition which sees the body as food from the Eucharistic mystery, Juana de la Cruz masterly draws an allegorical reflection of this in the heavenly banquet. Her conception of divinity as food is presented through scenes of a great feast, and this brings us again to the image of the sacred banquet, a central idea in Juana's text. In the festive atmosphere of her sermons in which the inhabitants of heaven are dedicated to eating various delicacies as a form of celebration, Christ presents himself as food enjoyed by all the blessed invited to the party. From the imaginary of the Last Supper, in which Christ offers bread and wine to the apostles as symbols of his flesh and blood, Juana insists on the metaphorical image of Christ alleviating hunger and thirst for souls in heaven, because other food, although plentiful, does not cover the needs of a holy stomach (see Ecclesiasticus 24:21). And if Christ made his flesh the center of the feast, he will be both the cook, the serving page, and the initiator of the subsequent dance:

> A deshora salían de sus preciosas llagas, manos y pies y costado y de todas las llagas y heridas que en su precioso cuerpo le dieron, muchas hostias consagradas. Y que como estaban en aquel alcázar puestas muchas mesas muy adornadas y enriquecidas y todas llenas de platos y vasos y copas de oro y de piedras preciosas, caían en ellos y se henchían de aquellos sagrados manjares. Y dijo el Señor, a deshora se tornaban algunas de aquellas hostias hechas a manera de alcorzas muy dulces y olorosas y confortables. Y otras como rosquitas y panecitos de azúcar y de pan muy blanco y floreado y sabroso […]. Y dijo el Señor, él los mandaba a todos levantar y los asía de las manos y danzaba con ellos y después los hacía asentar a todos en aquellas mesas y los servía él a todos, así como paje muy galán y apuesto, y los hartaba y recreaba de los manjares de sí mismo. (Juana de la Cruz 1999: II, 1200-01)[13]
> [At that moment, many consecrated hosts flowed from his precious wounds, hands and feet and side and from all the sores and wounds inflicted on his precious body. And as in that fortress there were many very ornate and rich tables, all full of plates and glasses and cups of gold and precious jewels, they fell into the blessed, who were stuffed with those sacred delicacies. And the Lord said that at that time some of those hosts changed into pastries made in a certain style with very sweet and fragrant and soothing icings. And others became like round cakes and sugar muffins and very white bread that is very flowery and tasty. And the Lord said that he ordered them all to stand up and he grabbed their hands and danced with them and then made them sit at all those tables and served them all himself, in the manner of a very gallant and handsome pageboy, and he satiated and refreshed them with these dishes of himself.]

And Christ can also become the waiter who divides his sweet body to others: "los mandó él mismo asentar […] y se arremangó él y los sirvió a todos, y fue el manjar de los convidados" [he ordered them to sit down and he rolled up his sleeves and served everyone, and he was the food of the guests] (II, 1044). This body with which God feeds the blessed will make them full of food, since until Christ's body is eaten the feast does not seem complete.

- Ahora, mis amigos, yo os hartaré y os recrearé […]. Y diciendo estas palabras, a deshora se le abrió la llaga de su sagrado costado y le manaba de él un caño de agua muy clara y olorosa; y, por semejante, caía en todos los cálices y tazas […]. Y de la mano siniestra le manaba otro licor muy precioso y oloroso; y de las llagas de los pies le salían muchedumbre de manjares. Y luego voló en alto, y púsose sobre las mesas. Y a deshora salieron de todas las llagas y azotes que padeció en su sagrado cuerpo muchedumbre de panes y roscas muy recientes y dulces y sabrosas. (I, 342-43)
[- Now, my friends, I'll feed and refresh you. And saying these words, at that time he opened the wound in his sacred side and a jet of very clear and fragrant water flowed from it; and in this way the water fell in all the chalices and cups. And from his left hand another very beautiful and fragrant liquor flowed, and from the wounded feet came a great number of delicacies. And then he flew on high and stood on the tables. And at that time a great number of breads and very recent and sweet and savoury pastries came out from all the wounds and scourges suffered in his sacred body.][14]

Thus, throughout the *Libro del Conorte*, Christ is always inviting the blessed to enjoy, be satiated by, and get drunk on the sweets and delicacies of his body (II, 841, 862-63, 1065-66 & 1181), which he distributes in turn among the saints around him. Of course all this came from Christ's claim that he is the bread who comes down from heaven (John 6:35), an image repeatedly developed by Juana when he opens the wound in his side to spill water and spiced wine, and when food and spirits emerge from the sores of his feet, hands, and head. But sometimes the explicitness with which Christ himself is dismembered to encourage diners calls out for our attention:

Y dijo el Señor que […] llegaron todos los Bienaventurados, y uno tomaba la una mano y otro otra y un pie y el otro pie, y cada uno de los otros tomaba una llaga de las espinas de su sagrada cabeza y de las llagas de los azotes de su sagrado cuerpo, y ponían las bocas en todas aquellas sagradas llagas, y que así manaban dulcedumbres y manjares y bebidas y licores de ellas […]. (II, 1299-1300)
[And the Lord said that all the blessed came, and one took one hand and another took the other and another one foot and the other foot another, and each of the others took a sore from the thorns in his sacred head and the wounds of the scourges on his sacred body, and they put their mouths on all those sacred wounds, and thus flowed sweets and food and drink and liquors.]

If, as we have seen, Juana focuses on occasion on the typical food of the Last Supper, in others her focus is directed to tables loaded with sweets and rich treasures that seem to play an ornamental role: delicacies which make the blessed get drunk and gorge themselves at highly adorned tables enriched with golden and jewelled cups. Thus, reading the *Libro del conorte*, it appears that Juana's heaven is mainly comprised of delicious and varied meals, with a touch of luxury in a well laid table and a whole *atrezzo* (set of theatre props) of palatial objects and precious jewels.

Y diciendo estas palabras [Cristo], a deshora fueron aparecidas allí unas mesas, las más ricas y preciosas que nadie podría decir ni pensar, todas ordenadas de sobremesa y manteles y pañizuelos tan delgados y lindos, que el oro y las piedras preciosas se traslucían por encima de los mismos manteles y sobremesas. Y todo era tan claro y resplandeciente como el sol, y así se podían ver en ellos como en espejos muy claros. Y todas las mesas estaban llenas de platos y cálices y tazas de oro llenas de vino muy oloroso y adobado, que estaba hirviendo y bulliendo dentro en los mismos cálices y tazas. (I, 339-40)
[And [Christ] having said these words, at that moment some tables appeared there, richer and more beautiful than anybody could speak or think of: they were all tidy with covers, tablecloths, and fine linen so thin and pretty that the gold and precious stones shone through these same tablecloths and covers. And everything was as clear and shining as the sun, and so they could see themselves in them as in very clear mirrors. And all the tables were full of plates and chalices and golden cups full of very fragrant and aged wine, which was boiling and bubbling inside those chalices and cups.]

Y después […] tomaron en sus manos unos platos de oro muy grandes, llenos de roscas y tortas muy blancas y pintadas y recientes y muy olorosas, cubiertos los mismos platos con unas vestiduras y tobajas de oro muy pintadas y labradas. Y allí encima llevaban unas a manera de tazas, todas de oro y piedras preciosas, llenas de tesoros muy ricos. (I, 372)
[And, later on, they took in their hands some very large plates of gold, full of round cakes and very white or mottled scones freshly made and very fragrant. The dishes were covered with some clothes and towels of elaborately painted and carved gold. And over there they held some made in the manner of cups, all made of gold and precious jewels and full of very rich treasures.]

Y dijo el Señor, que después que él hubo servido a su preciosa Madre y Señora nuestra con muchedumbre de manjares y frutas y licores y aguas y vinos muy dulces y olorosos y suaves, y después que él hubo – él mismo – puesto delante su trono muchedumbre de mesas muy adornadas y enriquecidas y abastadas, tornaba él con aquella muchedumbre de pajes a servir a nuestra Señora, trayéndole infinitas arcas llenas de tesoros y riquezas y joyas delante de ella, y haciendo muchas reverencias y cortesías se las ofrecía […]. (II, 945)
[And the Lord said that after he had served his precious Mother and Our Lady with a great number of fruits and delicacies and spirits and waters and wines that were very sweet and fragrant and delicate, and after he had himself set before his throne many highly adorned and enriched and full tables, he and that crowd of pageboys again served Our Lady, bringing her endless chests full of treasures and riches and jewels, and he offered them to her while making many bows and saying courtesies.]

At this well-prepared table, Christ acts like a knight who serves his lady (his mother), offering her treasures and riches "para vuestro servicio" [for your service] (945). These celestial tables with gold plates are likewise found in Mechthild of Magdeburg and we also encounter them in the third revelation of the Blessed Lucy of Narni (1476-1544), who was very influential upon the "living saints" of this era. In Lucy's text, Christ shows her four places to sit, giving great importance to the setting on the table, which is framed by a paradise with palaces, gardens, angels, maidens holding cups, altars covered with tablecloths, and heavenly chairs (Matter, Maggi & Lehmijoki-Gardner 2001: 325; Matter 2001: 7).

I believe that to understand this imagery it is important to realise that the sixteenth century was marked by the development of a Mannerist culture of feast and meal manners, including the use of expensive utensils, decorated dishes, golden glasses or embroidered tablecloths (Jeanneret 1987: 56-57).[15] As Roy Strong (1987: 75) states, during the Renaissance food became a key element of a vast theatrical production, displaying that era's penchant for the deployment of wealth through giving banquets (138-209; Camporesi 1988: 67). This culture is found in the Iberian Peninsula in fictional texts such as the famous *Tirant lo Blanch* by Joannot Martorell, where one can find ostentatious banquets that include vessels of gold and silver (see, for example, Martorell 1990: 549); food there serves as a metaphor for social communication and erotic love (Anton Ferrús 2010: 12) in a display strikingly similar to the heavenly treats envisioned by our visionary women.

In the heavenly table contemplated by Juana de la Cruz, sweet foods are especially common. Even from the branches of the Cross, "frutos muy dulces y suaves" [very sweet and delicate fruits] (Juana de la Cruz 1999: II, 1160) flow, and on one occasion the blessed see the following things in the sun:

> una masa muy grande y blanca [...] de la cual [...] salieron a deshora infinitas hostias y rosquillas y panecicos más dulces y blancos y sabrosos que de alfeñique y azúcar y alcorzas, y más olorosos y preciosos que todos los olores y preciosidades del mundo ni del cielo, por cuanto eran manjares divinales que procedían del poderoso y eterno Dios. Las cuales hostias y rosquillas y panecitos tan sobreexcelentes manaban y procedían de la suavísima y purísima masa, y caían a las bocas de todos los Bienaventurados de la corte del cielo, desde Nuestra Señora, la Virgen María, hasta el más pequeño. (II, 839-40)
>
> [a very large white dough from which at that moment endless communion wafers and little pastries and little loaves sweeter and whiter and tastier than nougat or sugar or icings, and more odorous and precious than all the smells and platters in the world or heaven, because they were divine delicacies that came from the Almighty and eternal God. These more than excellent hosts and pastries and little breads flowed and came from that most gentle and pure dough, and they fell into the mouths of all the blessed from the court of heaven, from Our Lady, the Virgin Mary, even to the least of the blessed.][16]

This predilection for sweetness, evident in this allegorical representation of the Holy Trinity, is very typical of the recipes of Juana's time. According to Javier Martínez Monzó's (2011: 26) discussion of the massive presence of sugar in this century, when reading the texts of the sixteenth-century kitchen one can infer that the dominant taste was sweet, even though one cannot forget that this ingredient could be an element of social distinction. Indeed, according to studies dealing with food in its diachronic dimension, in the Renaissance there was a growing taste for sugar (Strong 2003: 84).[17] And if cane sugar replaced honey as a sweetener in the Western world at the end of the fifteenth century, and sweets made with sugar were no longer exotic luxury items at the beginning of the following century but became an everyday product, it is not surprising that foods such as bread, wine, water, fish, meat or eggs are likely to be dusted with this substance, which is employed in this period for flavouring as much as salt (Fernandez-Armesto 2009: 190 & 239).[18]

Neither should we feel wonder at realising that epistolaries from the early seventeenth century proved that conventual sweets were all made of sugar.[19] However, in Juana's culinary paradise chocolate is not yet mentioned: we must await the seventeenth century to find this food in abundance, as we see in many poems and colloquies composed by the visionary Francisca de Santa Teresa (1654-1709) or in Christmas carols.[20] In conventual songs, chocolate constituted a constant presence, and we can also run into round cakes (Francisca de Santa Teresa 2007: 125), though not framed in the heavenly treat as Juana had envisioned, who undoubtedly is the visionary woman who developed the most original vision of the sacred banquet.[21]

Finally, I must say that Juana de la Cruz was not the only Spanish visionary and fasting woman that imagined celestial treats with pleasure: María Vela y Cueto (1561-1614), who made food abstinence a major focus in her life, has the heavenly *agape* meal in mind as well.[22] On the Day of the Dead, as told in her *Libro de las mercedes*, she prays for the soul of a companion to rise to the heights, and to gather together with her in heaven, "en aquella eterna mesa. Representóseme que esta mesa era redonda, que es el ser de Dios que no tiene principio ni fin, y que los manjares eran sus divinas perfecciones" [at that eternal table. I envisioned that this table was round, which is the being of God who has no beginning nor end, and that the dishes were his divine perfections] (Vela y Cueto 1961: 257).

I believe the interesting thing about all this is that these heavenly banquets where food is shared fomented the joy of conviviality against the lonely and elitist practice of fasting (which sometimes gave rise to the deceiving of others with the simulation of eating, as in Vela y Cueto 1961: 218-19). Precisely for this reason, it is most striking to find these heavenly rich meals in the writings of extreme fasters (near to starving) such as Juana de la Cruz and María Vela y Cueto rather than in women who practiced moderate food abstinence like Teresa of Avila. But perhaps it all makes sense, since food in Juana's texts is mostly read as a reward given to the blessed to reinforce the idea that penance in the world will be offset by the Saviour with delicacies in heaven (Luengo Balbás 2012: 230).

In this sense, we can assume that Juana would identify fully with Christ in this passage that recounts his fasting in the desert, or perhaps I should say that Christ utters these words precisely because they are pronounced through a fasting Juana (the instrument of God's voice):

Y cuando había hambre y sed y desmayo, contemplaba en las harturas y manjares celestiales, y así luego me parecía en espíritu que veía allí, en el mismo desierto, puestas mesas muy adornadas y llenas de manjares de diversas maneras de sabores – y hasta pan reciente y mojado en leche me parecía veía en las mesas –, que el olor de ellos me parecía me hartaba y conhortaba en mi necesidad, y el gusto y sabor me daba esfuerzo para poder ayunar tantos días y noches sin comer ninguna cosa. […]

- Porque el mundo se puede comparar y partir en dos partes. A los buenos y contemplativos les es paraíso y refrigerio muy grande, porque, ayunando y nunca comiendo sino poco, pueden contemplar y gustar y tener delante de sí presentes todos los manjares y dulcedumbres divinales; y pueden gustar y comer y hartarse y embriagarse de Dios y de sus excelentes gustos y suavidades que son más sabrosos al gusto del ánima que puede ser, al gusto del cuerpo, pan reciente mojado en leche. Así, por semejante, los manjares celestiales hartan y gobiernan y esfuerzan al espíritu y el ánima de todos los contemplativos que, por amor de mí, ayunan y dan sus cuerpos a muchas penitencias y abstinencias y vigilias. (Juana de la Cruz 1999: I, 548 & 549)

[And when I was hungry and thirsty and fainting, I used to contemplate heavenly abundance and delicacies, and so, after that, it seemed to me that my spirit saw displayed in that same desert very ornate tables, filled with dishes with many different types of flavours – I even saw fresh bread dipped in milk on the tables – and it seemed that the smell of them filled me up and comforted me in my need, and the taste and flavour gave me the strength to be able to fast for so many days and nights without eating anything. [...]

- Because the world can be split into two parts and be compared. To good people and to contemplatives it is paradise and a great refreshment, because, fasting and only ever eating but little, they can see and taste and have before them all the divine platters and sweets; and they can taste and eat and gorge themselves and overindulge in God and his excellent tastes and delicacies that are tastier to the soul than fresh bread dipped in milk may be to the body. Thus, for such people, the heavenly platters satisfy and govern and reinforce the spirit and the soul of all contemplatives who, for love of me, fast and inflict many penances and abstinences and vigils on their bodies.]

Perhaps the most poignant of the arguments of the Franciscan tertiary, who promises to others a great feast in the afterlife after abstaining in the earthly life from rich foods, is precisely this penchant revealed by the visionary for fresh bread dipped in milk. After reading this fragment of her book of sermons, one can conclude that a sweets-filled heaven was indeed a utopian place for extreme fasters like this visionary woman from the early fifteen-hundreds.[23]

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Notes

1. This article is an adaptation, expansion, and re-writing of sections 1.3 and of 1.4 in Sanmartín Bastida 2015: 18-28 & 32-35; I thank Macdonald Daly (editor of CCCP, SPLASH) for letting me translate whole passages of this book. This work is framed in the research project "La conformación de la autoridad espiritual femenina en Castilla" (Ref. FFI2015-63625-C2-2-P; 2016-2019), financed by the Spanish Government and the FEDER funds.
2. I should clarify that at first Juana lived with her companions in the *beaterio* of Cubas de la Sagra, so they were all originally tertiaries, and could not be considered technically nuns because they had not taken vows. But eventually they joined the Clarisan order under Juana's leadership and became nuns. At the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth Spanish visionary women with fame of "living saints" were mainly tertiaries who ended up their lives as nuns.
3. Roy Strong (2003: 55) stresses how Christianity affected the secular table because the Bible offered many examples (from the wedding at Cana to the miracle of the five loaves and two fish) of eating together as a profound expression of love, communion and fellowship.
4. The Gospel of Matthew, which repeatedly describes feasts occurring in the kingdom of heaven, in one reference conceives the banquet as including the company of Abraham, Jacob, and Isaac (Matthew 8:11).
5. Rustic shepherds in Encina's theater are presented as indulging the vice of gluttony while dedicated to joyous dance. This is especially seen in the Égloga representada la misma noche de Antruejo (Encina 1991: 151-60), where there is an invitation to eat ravenously before the fasting season.
6. Faced with this poverty, Camporesi says, hell is for starving people, among other things, to get tremendously hungry and then reach cannibalistic excess. Camporesi highlights how popular imagination places the joy of delighting the senses, so repressed and absent in the earthly life, in heaven (1988: 254-55). On the other hand, Paradise in the quotation above makes us remember Camporesi's description of the fantastic land of Jauja (1986: 83).
7. For an extensive study of holy anorexia in Catherine of Siena, see Bell (1985: 22-53).

8. See Sánchez Martínez de Pinillos 2000: 102 and Gómez Redondo 2012: I. 793, 118. Ecclesiasticus or Sirach 37:29-31: "Don't feel that you just have to have all sorts of fancy food, and don't be a glutton over any food. If you eat too much, you'll get sick; if you do it all the time, you'll always have stomach trouble. Gluttony has been the death of many people. Avoid it and live longer". For medieval texts about moderation in food and drink, see a good summary in Sánchez Martínez de Pinillos 2000: 232-39.
9. See Mazzoni 2005 for European visionary women and the enjoyment of food, often employed as a metaphor for devotional pleasures.
10. On the vicissitudes of the process, see García de Andrés 1999: 43-53; for an overview of the problems of the beatification of Juana, despite the discovering of her incorrupted body, see Giles 1999: 288-89. Juana's fame in the century after her death is brought by her life taken to the stage by Tirso de Molina, Francisco Bernaldo de Quirós and José de Cañizares (seventeenth to eighteenth centuries). As for the judgment made about her work, controversial passages were found, such as the appearance of a feminized Jesus (e. g., when the Lord tells to little girls: "Y también soy niña como vosotras, pues soy hijo de mujer") [And I am also a girl like you, because I am the son of a woman] (Juana de la Cruz 1999: I, 401; see García de Andrés 1999: 92). On Jesus claiming to be a woman in Juana's text, see Graña Cid 2009: 499; Boon 2018: 279-81.
11. From now on, all translations of the Spanish quotations are mine. I quote here from the unpublished manuscript of her life preserved in the library of El Escorial (see bibliography), respecting the spellings and only punctuating and accentuating the text. For an English translation of six sermons of Juana, see Boon & Surtz 2016; unfortunately, the sermons quoted here have not been translated in this work.
12. Noting the importance of food in the life and spirituality of Juana de la Cruz, one can remember Noëlle Châtelet's conception of the cooking space as the allegorical figure of the universe that needs nothing else to express itself (1985: 202). We can also be reminded of the words of Teresa of Avila (1515-1582): "Entended que, si es en la cocina, entre los pucheros anda el Señor" [You should understand that, if you are in the kitchen, God dwells among the pots] (Teresa de Jesús 2004: 898).
13. Christ commands them to stand up because they have fallen (as if) asleep due to all the delicious food.
14. We can find a similar passage at Juana de la Cruz 1999: I, 740, in which Christ stands at the beautiful table and fills it with delicacies coming from his wounds onto the plates and golden chalices. Also from the wound of his sacred side a stream flows with clear and fragrant water and delicate and precious liquor (more than all the liquors and flavored wines in this world, Juana says). The blessed eat and drink them with a growing desire. On this passage, see Cortés Timoner 2005: 621, who relates it to the use of food in John of the Cross.
15. For the culture of feasting in this period, see also Strong 2003. The growing interest in food abundance contrasts with the overall pictures drawn by Piero Camporesi's studies (1986, 1988), which show us a population dealing with hunger and times of famine.
16. This episode reminds us of the manna rained from heaven, alluded to above. Juana continues this passage asserting that the more the blessed ate, the more sweet and precious delicacies flowed from that very soft dough into their mouths. This dough was the Holy Trinity, which was united and kneaded with human nature. Juana once again presents here the blessed eating and enjoying and gorging themselves with great hunger and thirst for God, receiving such great delights that they forget themselves and get drunk (II, 840).
17. Sugar (and chocolate) discovered in America produced an entire industry, something which had not previously occurred when this substance came from India. Fernandez Armesto (2009: 188) highlights the possible Arab influence in this taste for sugar from the thirteenth century onwards, because in medieval Muslim courts sugar was already a favorite ingredient. However, until the end of the fourteenth century in the Christian world sugar had been used mainly in medicine and only sparingly for cooking, more as a spice than as an ingredient. Strong (2003: 85) points out that in the sixteenth century, "The fashion for sugar in food echoed the fashion for sweet wines in drink", and a desire to give shape and color to the food intervened in the wish to produce that particular sweet taste.
18. See Fernandez-Armesto 2009: 190-91. For this scholar, the renunciation of the exoticism found in Muslim food meant that the food of kings and aristocrats became more accessible to *bourgeois* diners.
19. See, for example, Ana de San Bartolomé [1550-1626] 1998: 1505.
20. Sánchez Hernández (2011: 99) shows that chocolate was also given as a remedy for upset stomach, according to an Augustinian nun's letter. For the study of the growing taste for chocolate see Schivelbusch 1993: 85-95.
21. References to chocolate are found in several of her colloquia, along with cocoa, biscuits and wine (Francisca de Santa Teresa 2007: 131-32), but also in her poetry, along with other sweet food like buns and French toast. For the presence of chocolate in carols sung by nuns in Madrid on Christmas Eve, see BNE, sign. R. 34988.
22. For a reading of her extreme fast as a sort of holy anorexia see Sanmartín Bastida 2015: 109-29.

23. I thank Maria Luísa Malato for encouraging me to work on the heavenly banquet for this volume and Jessica Boon for aiding with the translation into English.

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Projeto financiado por Fundos FEDER através do Programa Operacional Competitividade e Internacionalização - COMPETE 2020 e por Fundos Nacionais através da FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia no âmbito do projeto POCI-01-0145-FEDER-016680 (PTDC/CPCELT/5676/2014).

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Projeto financiado por Fundos **FEDER** através do **Programa Operacional Competitividade e Internacionalização - COMPETE 2020** e por **Fundos Nacionais** através da **FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia** no âmbito do projeto PTDC/CPC-ELT/5676/2014 | POCI-01-0145-FEDER-016680.

ISBN 978-989-746-242-9