

The Poetics of Food Consumption: Alimentary Rhetorics and Creative Practices

Silvia Barberani

Lecturer in Cultural Anthropology
and European and Mediterranean Studies
Dipartimento di Scienze Umane per la Formazione "R. Massa"
Università di Milano-Bicocca (Italy)
silvia.barberani@unimib.it

Abstract Contemporary society is characterized by the spread of contradictory discourses around food, by alimentary hyper-reflexivity and by the gradual individualization of food choices and alimentary-related risks. Food has increasingly become a means of personal (e.g. nutritionism, scientific and spontaneous dietaries, eating disorders, consumption of industrial organic products) and global (alternative modalities of production and consumption) identity management, and a tool that allows for the construction of new subjectivities, forms of belonging and planning, and of specific worldviews. My hypothesis is that individuals select, manipulate and utilize hegemonic food rhetorics to create new forms of self-representation and belonging, to subscribe to and to question values, and to explore alternative meaning-making possibilities. This paper is intended as a critical examination of some of the contemporary hegemonic discursive fields (nutritionist rhetoricals, advertising narratives, techniques of food traceability and labeling, certification, speeches which promote alternative food production and consumption) that determine individual and collective food choices and consumption practices. In this sense, food may be considered as a "technology of the self" and alimentary practices are strategies, creative modes of resistance, subversion or adjustment to institutionalized structures of power, means to manage livelihoods, uncertainty and the effects of critical times and to "imagine" individual existences and alternative futures, in the acception suggested by Appadurai.

Keywords: Food; Alimentary consumption; Anthropology of Food; Food styles and choices.

1. Introduction

Food consumption is not merely a biological fact. Social actors transform nutritional substances into food – that is, culturally manufactured natural elements consumed in the context of codified social practices, as pointed out by Poulain (2008). What becomes edible in a society is the product of cultural choices and semantic shifts, the selection of determined natural elements and their transformation into dishes.

Anthropological scholarship has long insisted on the mental categories – the juxtaposition of nature and culture (Lévi-Strauss 1996), the symbolic order (Douglas 1985) the appropriate symbolic and ritual distance (Tambiah 1969) – that orient collective food consumption and set the boundaries between the Self and the Other, define the collective order and minimize the risks of contamination.

In contemporary society, the act of consumption in general has proven to be particularly effective in the construction of new forms of subjectivity¹. The present article is intended as a critical reflection on the ways individual and collective food consumption forges new forms of identity (for instance, nutritionism, scientific and spontaneous dietaries, eating disorders, consumption of industrial and organic products, alternative modes of production and consumption). It analyzes the discursive production on food and food consumption from a perspective consistent with a post-structuralist approach (Lupton 1996). Such rhetorics – heterogeneous, public, popular and widely media-assisted discourses on food and food consumption - originated in diverse contexts (medical, agricultural or ecological for instance) and have become part of the everyday life of individuals and collectivities. They inform choices and self-perception. Reciprocally, they are also instruments to forge new identities, assert affiliation, adhere to ideas and values, suggest change, resistance and subversion. The article raises the following questions: which elements of modern society, one that is characterized by the progressive loss of collective references, orientate dietary choices and practices among individuals? Does food still

1 I employ the term subjectivity in the sense suggested by Ortner (2005) to refer to the notion of a contextual Self within the limits of culture, power relations and institutions, and to the idea of a strenuous and continuous work on the Self carried out by social actors. I refer here specifically to the act of deciding what kind of aliments social actors introduce into their bodies.

maintain a symbolic and identitary function? Do mental categorizations still define practices or do practices convey different conceptions of the self, feelings of belonging and views of the world instead? Before delving into these issues, I will reflect on the relationship between food and body.

2. Body, food and Self

As Feuerbach maintained: "Mann ist, was er isst", man is what he eats. The near perfect coincidence of the verbs "to be" and "to eat" evokes the correspondence between human identity and corporeality, and the interpenetration between the biological and the cultural, inherent in the act of eating. There is a close bond between body and food (Becker 1995; Lupton 1996) and both notions have undergone significant historical, social and cultural changes in recent years.

Socio-anthropological scholarship has documented the shifts in the conception of the body: from the body as a socially-determined technique (Mauss 1983), to the culturally-regulated fabrication of human life (Remotti 1999); from the Christian notion of "flesh" to the body as a strategic response to the challenges posed by nature in the world of agriculture (Tirelli 2006); from the body as workforce in the classical economic theory, to the sacred body of capitalism – commodity, capital, and fetish (Baudrillard 1970; Lupton 1996). Ultimately, these changes signal the shift from a conception of the body as "open" typical of pre-modern societies, where the single individual and the body were assimilated to society through rituals, to a performative conception of the body as inherently "closed", typical of modern societies, where the individual asserts control over his/her own corporeal boundaries and chooses what to assimilate (Falk 1994). In contemporary society, the body is not the natural site where culture is inscribed, but the material basis to forge, exhibit and revoke plural identities (Le Breton 1990). It is a project, a task, a result and a challenge; it is a responsibility: in this sense, for instance, being in bad shape, or being ill are indicative of scarce self-control and represent a form of failure in the personal management of one's body.

At the same time, several scholars suggested that the loss of collective references and the individualization of single biographical trajectories have led to the emergence of a hedonistic and a late-capitalist superego (Franchi 2009) motivated by the imperative to pleasure, one that conveys an image of the body as a source of pleasure, the expression of inner instincts and a means to transgress the rules. This two-fold morale, simultaneously directed to self-discipline and to the satisfaction of instincts influences the behaviour of consumers, who are suspended between a rational propensity for spare or abnegation and self-control, and the emotional inclination towards the satisfaction of impulses (Miller 1998). Food consumption and alimentary-related practices stimulate this dual aptitude because food – in itself intrinsically ambiguous – is at once a means to reach personal wellness and well-being, a remedy, a pharmaceutical, and the source of pleasure. Food, as we shall see, is a form of embodied commodity, and the moral qualities attached to it sum up the contradictions of the individual's relation to his/her own body.

3. The pervasiveness of food

Food, as well, has been the subject of numerous shifts in meaning over the course of the years, and has undergone a process of progressive individualization²: it has gone from being a private practice and custom, an act of care, responsibility and the symbol of female virtue in the domestic sphere, to being recognized as a public phenomenon, an index of personal care, of recreational activity, of creative endeavour at all levels (private, public, virtual), the starting point new forms of sociality based on common interests, values and tastes (for instance the proliferation of organizations that promote sustainable food consumption, community-supported agriculture (CSA)³, cooking classes, alimentary-related blogs etc.). Food has become pervasive, and flexible (Franchi 2009). Its "magic" quality, its ability to vehiculate well-being or illness, to aggregate, to create social distinctions (Bourdieu 1979), to influence social behaviour and consumption make it a good example of "total prestation" (Mauss 1983).

In contemporary society, the centrality of the body and the pervasiveness of food are well visible in the act of incorporation, which is fundamental in the construction of individual subjectivity: food, a liminal substance that cross-cuts

² I refer here to two processes: the medicalization of food consumption, the expression of nutritional values in terms of calories, and the reconfiguration of meals that inaugurates new modalities, time-frames and sites for food fruition and that seems to undermine the aggregating function of family meals and traditional modes of production, selection and articulation of dishes.

³ The groups, known as Gruppi di Acquisto Solidale (GAS) first originated in Italy in 1994 and are based of a critical approach to consumption: they extend the principles of equity, solidarity to producers, workers, consumers and more in general the people of the Global South.

the boundaries of nature and culture, inside and outside, Self and Other, forces the individual to manage anxieties related to potential – real or symbolic – poisoning (Fischler 1992) and to commit to choices that are often durably and indelibly marked on the body.

Such double bind (Bateson 1956), food as the vehicle of illness or pleasure, imposes a choice between self-discipline and the satisfaction of instincts and impulses; such idea is well present in some of the diffused alimentary rethorics about intentional choices and individual responsibilities and about food as a means to reach physical and psychological well-being, as I shall further examine.

The call for individual responsibility translates into a moral imperative based on a form of “magical thinking” according to which the symbolic qualities of elements (natural, artificial, living or inanimate) are transferred to and affect “by contagion” aliments and, consequently, consumers as well. Such symbolic meaning attached to food⁴ – its transcendent nature and its being a threat to health - allows for comparisons between cannibalism⁵, taboo prescriptions and practices of anthropological interest and contemporary dietary habits and practices (Fernandez-Armesto 2001). Furthermore, the “magical” quality of food, and its representation as nourishment, pharmaceutical, fetish or relation are present in the various rethorics of food consumption that I will describe later.

The emphasis on individual responsibility and the dichotomous distinction between good or bad aliments, healthy or unhealthy food, just or unjust alimentary habits – a categorization that pertains individual behaviour and global responsibilities (environmental and biodiversity protection) – distinguishes food consumption from other forms of consumptions. Furthermore, and most importantly, it underlies the moral connotation assigned to food-related practices and to consumer: a “bad” aliment is harmful to one's health; its ingestion is sign of moral weakness and scarce self-discipline; vice versa, “good” aliments are healthy and the sign of moral strength and self-discipline. If such taxonomies insist on self-discipline, alimentary rethorics that promote alternative forms of food consumption insist on personal responsibility; in either case, “good food” is also “just” (Petrini 2005).

4. A gastro-anomic and orthorexic society

Research by Paul Rozin (1994) and Claude Fischler (1992) have evidenced the pervasiveness of “magical thinking” and the persistence of anxieties in the relation between man and food in contemporary society: alimentary choices carry within themselves the risk of material or symbolic contamination, of physical, identitary, ethical and ideological detriment. In contrast with “traditional” societies where a collective order – a *gastronomy* – is created through the ingestion of food, nowadays the coercive bond of alimentary practices seems attenuated. Individuals are progressively less aware of the origins of their aliments, their modes and times of production and the importance of power relations that lie behind food and food-related practices⁶. Food has become an opaque object, less invested with symbolic and identitary connotations: the industrialization and the distribution of aliments are perceived as detached from the act of consumption, and aliments themselves are progressively separated from nature; as a result the consumer is kept away from his/her bio-cultural universe. Food is a mere commodity and individuals are reduced to mere consumers.

Such process is similar to the above mentioned individualization of the body, that separates the individual from society as a whole, the primitive body of the community (Le Breton 1990). At the same time – however - it is revealing of a diffused sentiment of regret, a nostalgia for a time of perfect reciprocity in the relation between men and food, once

4 An imitative magical thinking lies at the core of the analogical thinking and the transformation of aesthetic qualities into nutritional and moral qualities, for instance in the equation red meat – strenght or green vegetables – purity. A similar dynamic is observable within marketing strategies, where the essences of aliments that are considered carrying a beneficial effect are transferred into disparate products, such as detergents, and by contact to consumers.

5 Ritual cannibalism or anthropophagic behaviour has been associated with the nourishment of communities, with self-transformation, acquisition of power, ritual transformation of the relationship between those who eat and those who are eaten; their effect encompasses the mere material aspect of consumption. According to historian of alimentary practices Fernandez-Armesto, self-affirmation, moral superiority, beauty, purity are the stakes at play in healthy dietary regimens.

6 The progressive loss of seasonal markers and references, artificial food, contradictory nutritional information, the reduction of the time spent in the kitchen and the shift from locally-rooted food products to de-localized food products (Franchi 2009) are amongst the factors that contribute to render food an opaque object.

mediated only by near social relations and intergenerational knowledge, much similar to the idea of “structural nostalgia” elaborated by Michael Herzfeld with reference to the political arena⁷.

As a result, a growing number of individuals have become aware of the overdetermined nature of their alimentary choices, have voiced critical concerns towards the assimilation of aliments void of identitary character, and have embraced a new-found interest in the idea of food as a means to assert identity. Sociologist Guido Nicolosi (2007) has elaborated on the notion of orthorexia⁸ to metaphorically define a prominent feature contemporary society, one that is characterized by a high degree of reflexivity at the level of alimentary practices. Such hyper-reflexivity is presented in its various meanings: dietary (fitness), ethical (critical consumption), aesthetic (food design), symbolic (slow food), psychopathological (alimentary disorders), and translates into a modern *gastro-anomy*⁹ (Fischler 1979), the superabundance of food and contradictory food-related discursive practices and the simultaneous lack of social criteria and social control over alimentary practices and dispositions.

In this cacophonous polyphony that characterizes alimentary hyper-reflexivity, numerous hegemonic discursive productions have emerged in the attempt to *de-fetishize* food (Sassatelli 2004: 487) and highlight its identitary aspect, such as nutritional rethorics, commercial narratives, techniques for alimentary traceability¹⁰ and labelling, quality certifications, alternative food narratives and discourses.

5. Food rhetorics

In this section I will focus on two different hegemonic narratives: nutritionist rethorics and organic-oriented discursive productions, the latter in their various meanings. They articulate different conceptions of food consumption, imply different ideas of subjectivity and insist on different degrees of intentionality and personal awareness, while being solicited by moral preoccupations and eliciting different forms of “magical thinking”.

These rethorics and discursive productions have originated and gained popularity at different times and in different contexts: such is the case of nutritionism or the organic revolution, which originated respectively in the 1950s and 1960s in the medical and agricultural world. I argue that such rethorics and discursive productions are selected, manipulated and strategically employed by individuals in order to create worldviews, new forms of self-representation and to adhere to norms and values at different levels and to different extents. Food can be considered as a “technology of the self” and alimentary practices are strategies, creative modes of resistance, subversion or adjustment to institutionalized structures of power, means to manage livelihoods, uncertainty and the effects of critical times, and to “imagine” individual existences and alternative futures, in the sense suggested by Appadurai (1996).

5.1. Nutritionism

The ideology of nutritionism¹¹ is based on a series of interrelated assumptions, rather than on scientific demonstrations and verification: the priority of nutrients over food, the mediating role of scientific experts¹², physical well-being as the ultimate purpose of food consumption. Such reductionist approach equates food as nourishment – the primary source of

7 Michael Herzfeld refers uses the expression to indicate “the collective representation of an Edenic order – a time before time – in which the balanced perfection of social relations has not suffered the decay that affect everything human” (1997: 109). The efficacy of such category lies in its ability to reproduce itself through generations and to assume to form of damaged reciprocity.

8 The term was first introduced by Bratman (2001) to indicate an exasperate attitude towards health consciousness that translates into a compulsive obsession and attention towards alimentary habits and food choices. Research has demonstrated that such alimentary disorder is frequent among male and female subjects over 30 years of age that present high levels of education.

9 The term is derived from the Durkheimian notion of anomy, the absence of social and moral norms, and has been widely criticized (for instance by Courbeau, 1995). However, I agree with Reynaud (1995) and underline its inherent heuristic quality as synonymous for the excessive number of contradictory discourses about permitted or prohibited aliments.

10 First introduced in Europe in January of 2005, it corresponds to a series of rules, technologies and certifications that allow to track down the location of aliments, from the site of their production to the place of their consumption.

11 First originated in the United States during the XVIII century, it gained popularity in Europe in the second half of the XIX century; it is based on the breakdown of aliments into nutrients and on the allocation of specific physiological functions to such nutrients. It has been widely criticized due to its tendency to isolate aliments from actual alimentary regimens.

12 Aliments are reduced to the sum of macro-nutrients (carbohydrates, lipids and proteins) and micro-nutrients (minerals, vitamins, polyphenols); such composition requires the expert interpretation of scientific professionals, modern religious operators that mediate the relationship between consumers and the world of food (Pollan 2006)

calorie intake – to an object, the subject to a consumer, health to the act and the effects of incorporation, food and body to a set of nutritional and chemical components rather than a system.

As a result, food is reduced to its organoleptic properties and voided of any identity significance: a commodity, whose origins and production are ignored. Such approach further distances food from nature, a process that was initiated with the introduction of preservation techniques, the creation of techno-food (Conti 2009) and the *food system*, and the production of nutraceuticals or functional food (medically enhanced products that have supposed beneficial medical effects), which postulate the uncompetitiveness of natural aliments with technologically-enhanced and industrially-manipulated food.

I have shown that food rethorics assign moral qualities to food and to consumers through a form of “magical thinking”. According to the ideology of nutritionism, food is likened to a pharmaceutical, its organoleptic properties broken down and believed to influence the consumer's health. The object of a Manichean interpretation, “good food” is what is nutritionally “correct” and food consumption is a mere act of individual incorporation that localizes risks through the ingestion of negative or positive, inappropriate or appropriate aliments.

The act of eating becomes an act of control and self-discipline over the body and over specific lifestyles; the body, in turn, is the site to exhibit self-government, balance and adherence to values and models. In this sense, social actors are only partially free and responsible for their choices: the latter are often delegated to professional systems detached from nature and from local context of human interaction, well embodied in the community of food scientists and media-assisted health discourses. Social actors assign to food, an opaque object, an identity meaning through ingestion; food becomes the immaterial symbol that defines subjectively an individualized Self and body.

5.2. *Alternative practices and forms of consumption.*

Organic-related food practices and modes of consumption¹³ – a inherently heterogeneous category that includes a variety of aliments, modes of production, distribution and consumption and various social actors more or less actively involved in the search for valid alternatives to industrial food chains – represent a viable path to overcome the limits of nutritionism.

The term “organic” first appeared in the agro-alimentary sector during the 1940s and quickly become the manifesto of the 1960s Anglo-Saxon counter-culture of alternate alimentary consumption and societal cooperation and its attempt to promote the ideal reconciliation with nature. In contrast with the capitalist supremacy over the environment, the Anglo-Saxon movement argued for the creation of a food chain similar to the ecosystem (that gains its energy and fertility from the sun), and promoted a mode of production based on self-induced fertility through the diversification and rotation of crops. This alternative approach, funded on the interconnection between soil fertility and the health of plants, animals and men – in the words of botanist and pioneer of the organic farmer's movement Sir Albert Howard (1943) “one greater subject” - suggests a holistic vision of food, no longer considered as a mere object but as a relational construct, from an ecological (the relation with the environment, the animals and the plants) and social (the relation with the producers) point of view. A healthy diet is no longer determined by the ingestion or the exclusion of determined nutrients but by the idea that the health of the body and that of the environment are interconnected. Eating, here, becomes “an agricultural act” (Berry 1990): food consumption influences agricultural practices that, in turn, have an impact on the ways food is transformed and consumed, with important consequences on the quality of life, on the individual's health, on the beauty of landscapes, on the well-being of animals, on biodiversity and earth.

From this perspective, eating is an economic and political act (Pollan 2006) and social actors are not passive consumers: they are co-producers, co-participants of the food-chain, responsible for their alimentary choices and the social and ecological consequences they entail.

5.2.1. The industrial organic

The oxymoron “industrial organic” designates an alternative food-chain that rests on only one of the three main pillars of

¹³ The term “organic” first appeared in the United Kingdom in the XIX century as a social critique to industrial revolution and evokes the idea of a long-lost “natural” society (organic) characterized by cooperative bonds of affection. It was later applied to the agro-alimentary sector by J. L. Rodale, the founder of the “Organic Gardening and Farming” Journal, the manifesto of a movement that quickly spread over to the United States and later saw the occupation of land cultivated without fertilizers or pesticides in California, the so-called “Robin Hood Commission” of the People's Park, in turn inspired by the occupation of state land and the distribution of food to the poor by British diggers in XV century England.

the organic revolution - alternative mode of production (rejection of chemicals), distribution (the use of anti-capitalist food cooperatives) and consumption: food is produced accordingly to the organic ideology, whereas distribution and consumption follow an industrial model.

The industrial organic embodies the ambiguities inherent to the category of "organic", whose boundaries are more and more often defined by government policies, national standards, certifications and rhetorics; it vehiculates an intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and political image of aliments as "products with their own history", a "supermarket Arcadia" (Pollan 2008) based upon a new-found relationship between man and earth. Such rhetoric, that evokes the return to origins is particularly effective and elicits an equation between healthy food and its scarce manipulation, their organoleptic qualities with the natural mode of their production; by contagion, via magical thinking, this produces a beneficial effect on the consumer. A similar effect is elicited by labels and certifications, despite their actual written informative descriptions; they work as magic spells and their authority prompts trust on the part of the consumer.

Health consciousness so highly promoted by the organic-oriented food rhetorics, is also invested with ethical connotations: the consumer is conscious, reflexive, responsible for his/her eating habits in their relation with the modes of production. By purchasing organic products, consumers subscribe to ecological values on their own individualistic terms: the food that is ingested and incorporated carries its own identity, origin, its production is well known, certified as "natural"; the consequences on the environment and the social expenses of their industrial-scale distribution remain in the background while labels are responsible for a "culinary taxidermy" (Patel 2007) and the "organic" caption links the producers and the consumers. Food is transformed into a fetish, a source of healing, no longer a commodity and not yet a relation: such final transition is attested in more distribution-attentive forms consumption.

5.2.2. Local food-chains.

Food rhetorics and practices that are connected with the consumption of industrial organic products show limited social consciousness and agency, far distant from the intents promoted by the original organic movement; other alternative local food chains, however, allow for a higher degree of awareness, a new found and better understanding of the relationship between consumer and producer. Such are local companies that are not strictly registered or certified as "organic" but promote an agricultural sustainable model à la Sir Albert Howard, based on the emulation of nature; post-industrial companies that do not advocate a return to pre-modern agriculture but are aware of the social costs of the industrial agro-alimentary chain and promote a new mode of distribution, in accordance with the second pillar of the organic revolution.

Unlike spontaneous or scientific dietetics or the purchasing of industrial organic products, consumers do not delegate their alimentary choices to professional expertise, nor do they authorize the rhetoric of certifications to establish the products' presumed authenticity; the consumer's trust is placed into people. Food ceases to be considered an opaque object, its components fragmented and its biography ascribed; on the contrary, it is conceived in relational terms, ecological, social and commercial: local farms produce food, shape landscapes and fashion a certain type of society.

Local companies, the *Farmers' Markets*, CSAs, municipal or unauthorized gardens are all examples of informal alimentary systems, originated in the contexts of spontaneous initiatives and promoted by producers and customers in the form of "relational marketing", direct relationships, free circulation of traditional information and knowledge, immune of any mediation. These "markets with no market", informal and self-managed, generate distribution, redistribution and dissent and attach their identity discourse to a broader level of significance, that includes the preservation of biodiversity as a response to delocalization and deterritorialization of agro-alimentary economy. At the same time, the consumption of food of known origin, mode of production and distribution, cultivated in first person represents a strategy in the construction of identity, in terms of health, environment, politics and morality. The moral component that is implicit in the rhetorics that promote ethical consumption stresses personal political responsibility: only "just" food that is, food produced, distributed and consumed in ethically responsible ways, is considered "good".

The alimentary practices introduced by such alternative food chains are intentional acts that express resistance and dissent and are directed at expressing civic and environmental consciousness and at subscribing to determined social values: eating is a political and ecological act; purchasing is a civic and assertive act, a protest vote against total economy. The social actor becomes an intentional agent, no longer individualized and more involved in the social and environmental dynamics that interconnect men and food (the reclaim of the social dimension of food and its relation with nature); food regains its symbolic value, the sign of belonging to an integrated world where nature, culture, consumers and producers, individuals and society reunite.

6. Conclusive remarks.

I have tried to examine the contemporary identitary and symbolic value of food through the study of food rhetorics. Food, in its various meanings (nourishment, source of healing, relation) becomes a crucial tool in the construction of new forms of subjectivity, adhere to norms and values, imagine and assert specific worldviews. Food consumption is a complex, structured, relational matter as well, imbued in and informed by history, culture and economy.

A rhetorics-based and rhetorics-centered analysis allows to explore the interstices between the subjective dimension of food consumption and its socially-determined quality; such perspective offers a way to situate the discursive productions about food at determined historical and social junctures, to analyse their relation to specific ideas of health and the body, and to explore their use, and manipulation by social actors, at different levels of freedom, responsibility and intentionality. By focussing on the consumers, their biographies, their words, their narratives and their claims it is possible to narrow the distance between practices and representations, individual choices and shared social values, actions and collective models.

References

- Appadurai, A. (1996). *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization*. Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press.
- Bateson G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Baudrillard, J. (1970). *La société de consommation, ses mythes, ses structures*. Paris: Éditions Denoël.
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society: towards a new modernity*. London: Sage.
- Becker, A. (1995). *Body, self, and society: the view from Fiji*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1979). *La distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*. Paris: Minuit.
- Berry, W. (1990). *What are people for?* New York: North Point Press
- Bratman, S., Knight D. (2001). *health food junkies: overcoming the obsession with healthful eating*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell.
- Conti, P. C. (2008). *La leggenda del buon cibo italiano*. Roma: Fazi.
- Corbeau, J. P. (1997). *Socialité, sociabilité et sauce toujours. Cultures, Nourritures, Internationale de l'imaginaire*. Arles: Actes Sud, 69-81
- M. Douglas, *Antropologia e simbolismo*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1985
- Falk, P. (1994). *The Consuming Body*. London: Sage.
- Fernández-Armesto, F. (2001). *Food: a history*. London: Macmillan
- Fischler, C. (1979). *Gastro-nomie et gastro-anomie. Sagesse du corps et crise bioculturelle de l'alimentation moderne*. *Communications*, 31, 189-210.
- Fischler, C. (1990). *L'Honnivore: le goût, la cuisine et le corps*. Paris: Odile Jacob.
- Franchi, F. (2009). *Il cibo flessibile. Nuovi comportamenti di consumo* Roma: Carocci.
- Herzfeld, M. (1997). *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State*. New York: Routledge.
- Howard, A. (2010). *An Agricultural testament*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Le Breton, D. (1990). *Anthropologie du corps et modernité*. Paris: PUF.
- Lévi-Strauss, C. (1964). *Le Cru et le Cuit*. In C. Lévi-Strauss, *Mythologiques*. Paris: Plon.
- Lupton, D. (1996). *Food, the Body and the Self*. London: Sage.
- Mauss, M. (1983). *Essai sur le don*. In M. Mauss, *Sociologie et anthropologie*. Paris: PUF.
- Mauss, M. (1983). *Les techniques du corps*. In M. Mauss, *Sociologie et anthropologie*. Paris: PUF.
- Miller, D. (1998). *A Theory of Shopping*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Nicolosi, G. (2007). *Lost Food. Comunicazione e cibo nella società ortoressica*. Catania: ED.IT.
- Ortner, S. B. (2005). *Subjectivity and cultural critique*. *Anthropological Theory*, 5, 31-52.
- Petrini, C. (2005). *Buono, pulito e giusto. Principi di nuova gastronomia*. Torino: Einaudi.
- Patel, R. (2007). *Stuffed and starved: Markets, Power and the Hidden Battle for the World Food System*, London: Portobello Books.
- Pollan, M. (2006). *The omnivore's dilemma. A natural history of four meals*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Pollan, M. (2008). *In defense of food. An eater's manifesto*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Poulain, J. P. (2002). *Sociologies de l'alimentation. Les mangeurs et l'espace social alimentaire*. Paris: PUF.
- Remotti, F. (Eds.), (1999). *Forme di umanità. Progetti incompleti e cantieri sempre aperti*. Torino: Paravia.
- Reynaud, J. D. (1995). *Les règles du jeu. L'action collective et la régulation sociale*. Paris: Colin.
- Rozin, P. (1994). *La magie sympathique*. In C. Fischler (Eds.), *Manger magique*. *Autrement*, 149, 22-37.
- Sassatelli, R. (2004). *Presentazione. Gusti, pratiche e politiche*. *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia*, 2004, 45, 475-492.
- Tambiah, S. (1969). *Animals are good to think and good to prohibit*. *Ethnology*, 8, 423-459.