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Tastes of Reflection, Food Memories and the Temporal Affects of Sedimented Personal Histories on Everyday Foodways.

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Chapter: Tastes of Reflection, Food Memories and the Temporal Affects of Sedimented Personal Histories on Everyday Foodways.

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Abstract:

This chapter draws upon written auto/biographical narratives from seventy-five respondents who engaged in asynchronous online interviews on the topic of food over the life-course. These narratives of relational affectation, demonstrate how food preferences are embedded, produced, reproduced and maintained through the practice of doing 'taste' over and over again. They are affective practices because they are on-going, emotional, socially constructed, embodied and situated practices, exemplified through visceral reflections on everyday foodways past and present. These food memories bind together the gustatory experiences of taste, smell, touch, sight and sound, whilst providing a significant commentary on contemporary foodscapes and changing tastes.

Introduction

In this chapter, I draw upon written auto/biographical narratives received from seventy-five respondents who engaged in asynchronous in depth online interviews on the topic of food over the life-course in 2011. These rich and evocative food (his)stories are reminiscent of Proust's ([1913] 2006) *Remembrance of Things Past*, in that respondent's food memories simultaneously capture both the personal and the social, as well as past and present foodscapes. Thus whilst respondents develop personal tastes and dis-tastes, these are embedded in 'common vocabularies' (Mills, 1959) that detail a transformation in middle-class values towards 'good' foodways (ways of doing food), prevalent within westernised neo-liberal societies. Mostly, this centres on a critique of the excessive industrialisation of food production from the 1970s (Mennell, 1985) and convenience foodways in favour of a kind of 'noshtalgia' (Beckett et al, 2002) infused with temporal cultural markers of class status, such as preparing home cooked meals from scratch (Pollan, 2013), 'healthy' eating (Parsons, 2015a, 2015b), a preference for fresh seasonal fruit and vegetables, as well as knowledge of what counts as good or bad 'taste' (Naccarato and LeBesco, 2012; Coles and Crang, 2011; Taylor and Falconer, 2015). Further,

as Bourdieu (1984) reminds us when arguing against a Kantian (innate) sense of taste, in favour of a taste of reflection, taste is inculcated over time. Thus memories of everyday foodways become narratives of relational affectation, how we learn to know food, with our food preferences embedded, produced, reproduced and maintained through the practice of doing taste over and over again (Carolan, 2011:06). These food memories bind together the gustatory experiences of taste, smell, touch, sight and sound, but also provide a significant commentary on contemporary foodscapes and changing taste. They are temporal in terms of capturing an essence of the past through a contemporary lens.

Sociologists, anthropologists and food studies scholars have explored individual and collective relationships with food through memory (Lupton, 1996; Sutton, 2001; Belasco, 2008), what Arendt (1996:15) refers to as 'the storehouse of time'. Indeed, time is significant for Bourdieu (1984) in terms of cultural capital and habitus; the disposition and embodiment of taste is inculcated or sediments over time, with tastes in food imbued with a kind of 'temporal power' (Bourdieu, 1984:315). Further, Morgan (1996:166) argues that 'food represents a particularly strong form of anchorage in the past [and] serves as one of the links between historical time, individual time and household time'. The purpose of this chapter therefore is to demonstrate how 'taste' following Bourdieu (1984) is inculcated over time, and how reflections on everyday foodways from the past viewed through a modern-day lens, reifies and legitimises contemporary middle-class values and tastes through powerful affects of disgust.

'Taste' in food draws upon what Mills (1959) refers to as 'common vocabularies' that position our autobiographical accounts of everyday life within time and space. When referring to changing 'taste' in everyday foodways the majority of UK born respondents in my study reflected on the past through a modern day lens that demonstrated an awareness of what might be considered contemporary 'culinary capital' using food and food practices as markers of social status (Naccarato and LeBesco, 2012:02). This was especially pertinent when considering shifts in everyday foodways from the 1970s to the present day. Hence, respondents' tastes of reflection focus on changing cultural norms and values and what counts as 'good' or 'legitimate' food/foodways. Notably respondents eschew convenience food in favour of 'home-cooked meals prepared from scratch'[1] (Pollan, 2013; Parsons 2014b, 2016), express preferences for fresh fruit, vegetables, brown bread over white and demonstrate an awareness of culinary trends. Together they form symbolic cultural markers of distinction and taste in a culinary field that values 'time' or the temporal affects of personal histories, sedimented, like limescale fixing itself to the bottom of a kettle. It is the awareness of what has become to be known as 'good'

food that enables the retrospective narratives inherent in foodways to evoke powerful affects of disgust and pleasurable temptation.

Background and definitions

Throughout this chapter I use the term 'foodways', which usually refers to the production and distribution of food at a macro level. Although it is used in anthropology when exploring food cultures or shared common beliefs, behaviours and practices relating to the production and consumption of food (Counihan, 1999). Here, foodways is considered at a micro level, to reflect the multiplicity of ways of 'doing' food that incorporates all aspects of everyday food practices. This incorporates the notion of foodways as an essential aspect of an individual's cultural habitus (Bourdieu, 1984), which is cultivated and inculcated over time. Thus foodways are 'affective practices' (Wetherell, 2012:96), because they are on-going emotional, socially constructed, embodied, situated performances infused with sedimented social and personal history.

Further, 'foodways' has multiple meanings; it highlights the significance of modes of practice or ways of 'doing' food, as well as movement and direction across time (history) and space (culture). Consequently, foodways connect the individual with the social through everyday practices (action/habit). The significance of foodways or ways of doing food is reminiscent of West and Zimmerman's (1987) notion of 'doing' gender, Butler's (1999) conceptualisation of gender as performance, and Morgan's (1996) theories on 'family practices' as significant in distinguishing between what families 'are' and what families 'do', in contrast to the institution of 'the' family (Morgan, 2011). A focus on foodways therefore emphasises the embodied, affective, everyday food performances, and the interactions and temporal ways of doing food that connect past, present and future. It is notable therefore that foodways (like gender and class) works 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 (Risman, 2004). Thus performances of everyday foodways are validated, constrained and facilitated by reference to wider institutional contexts that *may* include gender (patriarchy), class (economics), culture (capital) and 'the' family (discourse). Accordingly, everyday foodways inculcate a cultural habitus through the repetition, reproduction and reinforcement of values and tastes.

The research study

The primary aim was to investigate the relationship between individuals and their food choice, using an auto/biographical approach. This included four interrelated objectives, to explore how an individual's relationship with food may have changed over time, to consider how useful is it to see food choice as a gendered experience, to contribute to current sociological understanding of 'food culture(s)' and the impact of health discourse(s) upon food choice and to consider the extent to which individual food histories are related to issues of weight management if at all. There was an explicit auto/biographical focus in order to explore the sameness and difference across 'our food stories', and to highlight the interconnectedness of the individual with the social, the autobiographical and biographical (Morgan, 1998), the micro and the macro, the private and the public. This enables an exploration of the private troubles and public issues around everyday foodways (Mills, 1959), whilst demonstrating the inter-textuality of auto/biographical accounts. The study made use of asynchronous online interviewing techniques, which produced written texts from respondents. These texts are considered social products, not unproblematic reflections of reality, but constrained by structural influences beyond their own free will (Stanley and Morgan, 1993). The use of asynchronous in depth online interviews as a technique for gathering data is part of a repertoire of computer-mediated communication (CMC) (Illingworth, 2006; Kozinets, 2010). Although considered an 'interview' it shares attributes with correspondence techniques (Letherby and Zdrodowski, 1997; Kralik et al, 2002). One of the benefits of this particular method is the time respondents have to reflect upon and articulate their narratives. It also means 'interviews' can be conducted across time and space. I therefore engaged in a series of (mostly) asynchronous in depth online interviews utilising an opportunity sample, drawing initially from my social network. I interviewed 75 respondents across the UK over 9 months in 2011, contacting between 5 to 10 people per week, to ask if they wanted to participate. I gained full ethical approval from the University of Plymouth and all respondents were given or chose their own pseudonyms. The focus of the inquiry was food over the life course, and respondents were invited to write their own autobiographical food narratives. Once they had agreed to participate, I sent the following instructions:

> 'What I'm really after is your 'food story'. Perhaps, this will include your earliest food memories, favourite foods, memorable food occasions, whether your eating

habits have changed over time and why this may be. Also, absolutely anything food related that you'd like to share [...] '.

For some, if this proved difficult, I sent a series of questions along the same lines that centred on eating and cooking. I did not set out to question respondents about any specific tastes or memories; it was very much open for respondents to tell their own stories in their words and on their terms. The narratives I received varied in length from a paragraph to twelve pages of text and the interviews took from a day to several months to complete. This approach resulted in rich narratives and 'thick descriptions' (Geertz, 1973) that incorporated a range of food memories from the 1940s in the UK and beyond.

In terms of demographics (please see the table at the end of the chapter, identifying all respondents whose narratives have been used here), I interviewed 49 women and 26 men and most respondents had occupations from National Statistics-Social Economic Classification (NS-SEC) classes 1-4, although for some this marked upward mobility in class position from more 'modest' or 'working class' backgrounds[2]. The age range of respondents was 27 to 76 years of age, though the majority were born in the 1950s and 1960s and predominantly in the UK (although some were born outside of the UK and others were living abroad at the time of the study). There was a geographical spread of respondents across the UK from Southwest England to Northern Scotland. The majority were living with partners or married, and two thirds were parents (though not all with dependent children). After several levels of analysis running concurrently with data collection and beyond, five broad themes were identified and verified within the data. These were family, maternal, embodiment, health and epicurean foodways (Parsons, 2015b). These themes have been discussed in detail elsewhere (Parsons, 2014a, 2014b, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). In this chapter the importance of affective reflection in understanding contemporary foodways is explored.

A (dis)taste of reflection

Almost without exception respondents made some reference to the 'food revolution' that occurred in the UK from the 1970s, with the expansion of supermarkets, frozen, tinned, pre-packaged, processed and fast food. In reflecting on the past respondents showed distaste for the 'fast food prepared by corporations' (Pollan, 2013: 9). Instead, they favoured home cooking from scratch as *the* legitimate means of performing a middle-class cultural habitus (Parsons,

2014b, 2015b, 2016). Therefore, supporting broader arguments that link culinary capital with elite status (Naccarato and LeBesco, 2012) and a politics of disgust that uses everyday foodways as a means of drawing distinctions between social groups, which then becomes symptomatic of wider social relations of power (Tyler, 2013).

Hence, reflections on everyday foodways experienced during childhood in the 1970s tended to be described in derogatory terms or written in order to illicit disgust, they are loaded with socially stigmatising meanings and values (Tyler, 2013). Ophelia for example writes:

> 'Later in the early 70s the frozen food revolution hit and marmite sandwiches were overtaken by cheesy balls and fish bites in batter that sort of exploded fatly in your mouth. I hated them. Frey Benton Steak Pies also made a short visit to our house but were universally loathed'.

Ophelia's distaste and hatred of this type of food is evident, the notion that it '*exploded*' in your mouth, adds to the alien quality of it, as somehow not quite real food. The reference to '*fatly'* is also used here to signify disgust. Indeed, notions of disgust are part of a repertoire of affective responses to foodways, identified by anthropologists such as Douglas (1966) to indicate pollution and/or taboo. Here, the strength of hatred for 'cheesy balls and fish bites' is a form of social abjection, they are polluting and symbolise a kind of inadequacy and/or lack of cultural approbation (Tyler, 2013). Hence, not preparing home cooked meals from scratch symbolises lack on many levels and fuels a classed disgust that masks wider social inequalities related to class and power (Fox and Smith, 2011; Meah and Watson, 2011).

In Magenta's account she notes:

> 'Food at home was pretty gross too [as well as school dinners]. Lots of stodge and grease […] a common Saturday dinner was bacon, canned tomatoes heated up and fried bread – no veg included. Frey Bentos Steak and Kidney pies – which came in a can - was also a regular […]'.

In this account, whilst Magenta considers this type of food as *'pretty gross'*, emphasising the grease/fat elements of it to illicit disgust, these are served on a regular basis, unlike in Ophelia's narrative where she claims they only made a '*short visit'*. In Magenta's example, the lack of vegetables relates to contemporary middle-class cultural norms that value and reify a 'five-a-day', 'healthy' eating mantra (Parsons, 2015a, 2015b). This again is linked to the wrong sort of

eating and highlights the deeply embedded symbolic values attached to what are considered appropriate everyday foodways (Taylor and Falconer, 2015: 49).

Zoe similarly reflects on a typical lunch from her childhood in light of contemporary government discourses around healthy eating, she writes:

> '[We had] white bread sandwiches, crisps and chocolate, meat and fish pastes […] in other words what we seemed to get as our school packed lunch as a balanced meal!'.

The exclamation mark here is indicative of a distinct shift in terms of what is considered appropriate food for children (Parsons, 2014b; James et al, 2009; Wills et al, 2009). In Ophelia's account she continues:

> 'I don't remember eating any salad (apart from ice berg lettuce) and potatoes, which we grew ourselves and frozen peas were about the only vegetable we regularly ate […] Everything suddenly became "easy care and pre packed" […]'.

Ophelia's reference to '*salad*' is a specific contemporary concern for middle class families. Indeed, UK government discourses on healthy family foodways reify 'the' family as a site for inculcating appropriate healthy family values (Parsons, 2015b). Hence a:

> 'Pre-occupation with achieving a "healthy diet" reflects a middle class disposition for being "health conscious" and for taking on board "authentic" health and dietary messages, that are sanctioned by (government) experts' (Wills et al, 2009:65).

Drew on the other hand is slightly less disparaging of the convenience 'food revolution' of the 1970s and instead sees it as part of an evolving culinary field, he notes:

> 'Then things started to change - it started with boil in a bag curry, as I remember served with deep fried curly noodles - much like a quaver […]'.

Indeed, Drew positions himself as a '*foodie'* with an understanding and knowledge of food history (Parsons, 2015c) and an interest in authentic culinary practices (Naccarato and LeBesco, 2012). In Stephen's account on the other hand he refers to these as *'Dreadful Vesta curries or meals in a tin - London Grill; pale sausages mixed with baked beans',* whilst Paula finds some of the eating norms from the 1970s less disgusting and notes:

> ‘I do recall there being curry in a can. It had sultanas in it for sure, but we all thought it OK… I had a passion for Chunky Chicken Supreme; - a tin of chicken in thick sauce that I would spread on toast and grill […]’.

It is notable that Paula expresses a kind of ‘noshtalgia’ (Beckett et al, 2002) for the ‘dirty’ food of the past, the curry in a can, was ‘*OK*’. This is a classed history that marks a temporal shift in terms of social attitudes, but also reflects a sense of longing and/or belonging to another time and place (Taylor and Falconer, 2015).

Alternatively, Dalia considers the lack of convenience food in her childhood an unintended blessing, a consequence of her mother cooking for a big family (six children) on a limited budget, she writes:

> ‘The big upside to her cooking is that it was home-made and probably healthy (in part) and not just reheated processed ready meals’.

Generally, though references to a ‘lack’ of fresh vegetables and fruit in childhood diets was common, reflecting contemporary campaigns such as the ‘5-a-day’ (fruit and vegetable) Government initiative launched on the back of the Jamie Oliver television programme developed to reform school dinners in 2005 (James and Curtis, 2010). Hence, in Imogen’s account she says:

> ‘The earliest memories of food are that of Ready Brek on cold mornings with lots of white sugar, plates of beef mince with peas and carrots made into a smiley face, and brown sugar sandwiches on white bread. Sundays were always a big roast dinner with crumble or pie and custard for pudding. Teatime would be jam sandwiches and cake. Fruit would always go rotten in the fruit bowl!’.

Again, the emphasis on ‘white’ sugar and bread, is reminiscent of changes in taste, as Mennell (1985) highlights there has been a shift in preferences for less industrialised processed ‘white’ bread in favour of brown. There are also UK Government proposals to introduce a sugar tax on soft drinks, in response to a Public Health England report on ‘Sugar Reduction’ (Tedstone et al, 2015). Here, Imogen is highlighting how fruit was ignored in favour of a high fat, sugar and highly processed carbohydrate diet.

In Ophelia’s narrative she comments:

> ‘Bowls of tangerines sat on the sideboard with the strict instruction not to eat them all or they would have to buy more. No one ate any’.

However, this is more indicative of the expense of seasonal fruit in the past and Ophelia’s overall critique of her stepmother’s parenting skills, following the death of her mother at the age of 12. Earlier in the account, Ophelia writes about the fruit trees that grew in her childhood garden:

> ‘We had an orchard full of plum trees and apple trees though and helped ourselves to these. The plums were delicious, warmed by the sun with great globs of sticky amber resin where their flesh had burst as they hit the ground […]’.

Also, how as a family they went on lots of picnics, when she notes:

> ‘A great hunk of Spam would be un-tinned and slices cut and put onto Mother’s Pride [white bread]. In the summer we had warm strawberries in little straw pallets for pudding and I don’t think I have ever tasted such delicious strawberries in my life since’.

Indeed, there was an emphasis on seasonality that punctuated respondents’ food memories, as Stephen writes, (capital letters in the original), ‘*the FIRST CHERRIES OF THE SEASON eaten a brown paper bag on the walk back to the house (guilty – not allowed to eat in the street)’.* It is notable that, despite the acquired cultural knowledge that fresh, seasonal fruit is now a classifier of ‘good’ taste, this memory plays with a notion of shame; as a respectable middle class boy it was for Stephen considered bad manners to eat in the street, i.e. outside of formal dining around the table. This shame is consciously overturned in Stephens’ retrospective narrative, where he is confident that past recollections of eating fresh cherries on the street are sure to be met with less affective disgust than the descriptions of processed hydrogenated fat balls. However, this is also reminiscent of a kind of ‘noshtalgia’ (Becket et al, 2002) for a time when fruit was only available in season and as Ophelia notes, the summer strawberries she ate at that time were the best she has ever tasted. Again, reflections on foodways from the past are tinged with contemporary markers of what counts as good taste, such as local and seasonal eating practices (Naccarato and LeBesco, 2012). Moreover, in a contemporary foodscape, ‘good’ food is linked to the key domains of cultural omnivorousness, notably; aesthetic appreciation (taste) authenticity (participation) and knowledge acquisition (Peterson and Kern, 1996; Warde et al, 2007). Hence, Ophelia is identifying her appreciation and knowledge of what counts as good taste.

Continuing the fruit and vegetable theme, in Drew's account of childhood dis-taste he writes:

> 'I hated carrots, soft, not sweet, fury[...] that was because the only carrots I was made to eat came from tins either sliced or chunked into mixed veg. I now know it is not carrots I hate / hated but the tinned variety where all the sweetness and crunch had been sucked out'.

Again, this is an obvious reference to the 'lack' of flavour/taste in tinned and frozen vegetables or convenience foods. He continues with a comment on beetroot:

> 'School dinners, my memory is that each one included beetroot, every meal beetroot, spam, mash and beetroot, boiled fish and beetroot and the only value this vinegary pink thing added was colour - to everything, hands, potatoes in fact anything that touched It'.

Beetroot here is described as contaminating and discolours everything it touches, in contrast to the beetroot he eats now as he notes:

> 'It took me 19 years to grow to like it / even try it again - then one day at Borough Market I had a eureka moment, feta, beetroot, mint and lemon pasta - I now grow it, bake it - eat it raw and the Borough recipe is a strong family favourite'.

It is notable that his new found, acquired taste in beetroot is also shared with his family. He is responsible for inculcating 'taste' and cultural capital. It is a taste from Borough Market (come to be known as the most gourmet food market in London, selling high end specialised and artisan food produce) , which is a significant cultural marker, related to culinary capital and a foodie identity (Naccarato and LeBesco, 2012; Parsons, 2015b, 2015c). Hence, the place where Drew has his 'eureka moment' highlights his knowledge, engagement and expertise (Peterson and Kern, 1996; Warde et al, 2007; Parsons, 2015c) in terms of foodie practices/places to eat, and sources of 'good' food (Coles and Crang, 2011; Coles, 2014).

In Ophelia's account she similarly identifies a shift in her contemporary everyday foodways:

> 'As time has passed and after 15 years of daily cooking for my family I have become much more confident and proficient in food and what it really means. Today I balance the weekly meals between vegetarian, pasta, fish and meat and we have a lot of salad'.

The reference to salad links back to Ophelia's childhood reflections, as this was something they never ate and now they have '*a lot'*. In Magenta's account she says that now:

> ‘I don’t eat processed food on the whole and I make everything from scratch myself, so I would never buy a pasta sauce for example […]’.

Again, this is a clear culinary shift in taste that eschews convenience in favour of taking ‘*time*’ to prepare food from scratch. Imogen also refers to shifts in dietary practices from her childhood, she writes:

> ‘I think there is a lot more information available to kids now regarding a healthy lifestyle. I don’t remember ever being told about healthy diets at school or at home for that matter’.

Indeed, most respondents’ rejected convenience food as Carly notes:

> ‘I see a healthy diet as pretty much everything in moderation. No banned foods, just being sensible about not eating too much, and avoiding processed foods as far as possible, and not drinking too much (loads of empty calories). Also loads of veg and fruit of as many colours as possible – I try to do at least the 5 a day and often many more […] The main thing for me is eating as little processed stuff as possible – packed with salt and trans fats and sugar. I would choose to eat a couple of squares of good chocolate rather than a piece of cake or something (mostly). We virtually never eat ready meals of any kind […]’.

Likewise, Ursula writes:

> ‘I live to eat rather than the other way around. The food in our fridge is, in the main, fresh rather than convenient and I have never thought of cooking as a chore […]’.

Similarly, Olivia claims, ‘*I don’t like food that is over processed (ready meals, pick and mix sweets, shop bought cakes etc.)*’, and Regan notes:

> ‘I dislike processed, overcooked, tasteless food… I avoid processed and E numbered foods as much as possible…conscious of a balanced diet…proper food cooked from scratch so I know what’s gone into it […]’.

Annie writes that she hasn’t ‘*been to a McDonalds for years and find[s] fast food toxic’*, whilst Ralph says *‘I am very conscious of food fashions and trends, especially home grown produce and eating healthily’*, Nadia comments ‘*I try and keep junk food to a minimum’,* whilst Magenta notes that:

> ‘I can’t imagine just going through life and continuously filling my body with things that I have no idea what the contents or origin of them is […]’.

The association therefore between convenience or processed food and lack in terms of ‘taste’ is strong. The language used to describe the processed food is highly affective, and elicits distaste, disgust and loathing. It is alien and contaminating, of unknown provenance, and not ‘proper’ food.

Conclusion

Overall respondents’ narratives demonstrate that ‘taste’ is not an objective or fixed measure but dependent on an interplay of past and present, status and desire (Parsons, 2015b). It is linked to the politics of disgust (Tyler, 2013), which enables respondents to draw symbolic boundaries between appropriate and inappropriate everyday foodways. In some instances, this elicits a form of ‘noshtalgia’ (Beckett et al, 2002) or a longing for what might be considered ‘dirty’ foodways from the past (Taylor and Falconer, 2015). Mostly, respondents position themselves as knowledgeable participants in a contemporary foodscape that values ‘taste’ in good food/foodways, whether forms of culinary capital (Naccarato and LeBesco, 2012) are expressed in terms of a commitment to preparing home cooked meals from scratch (Pollan, 2013; Parsons, 2016), healthy eating, purchasing seasonal vegetables/fruit or shopping at places with a high degree of culinary capital, such as Borough Market (Coles and Crang, 2011; Coles 2014).

Indeed, what counts as ‘culinary capital’ (Naccaratto and LeBesco, 2012) or legitimate taste in a culinary field is continuously assigned and re-assigned through time and space. As noted previously, in Bourdieu’s (1984) thesis there is no innate aesthetic or pure taste only that which is inculcated over time. This centres on a disposition for considering the future rather than living in the present that acknowledges a ‘temporal power’ (Bourdieu, 1984: 315). Indeed, the best measure of cultural capital is the amount of time devoted to acquiring it, because the ‘transformation of economic capital into cultural [social and symbolic] capital presupposes an expenditure of time that is made possible by possession of economic capital’ (Bourdieu, 1986: 214-258).

Culinary capital is therefore an investment of time in the present that involves labour/work and an eye to the future. Convenience foodways on the other hand are associated with instant gratification and ‘lack’ on many levels, which adds to its symbolic power and a politics of

disgust (Tyler, 2013). Further, Bourdieu (1984:176) identifies hedonism and being in the present as a quality associated with a working class habitus, whilst investing in the future and abstaining from having a good time is associated with the petit bourgeoisie. In a secular age, at a time of heightened neo-liberalism, self-love/care or technologies of the self (Foucault, 1988) are ways of practicing responsible individualism. These techniques of care, consumption and leisure are forms of cultural capital. Hence everyday foodways act as cultural artefacts that shape the dynamics of cultural reproduction; they become a means of performing/ displaying appropriate and/or legitimate subjective identities and social practices. Finally, 'food stories' have an affective symbolic power that can be used to elicit both pleasure and disgust. It is a preconceived cultural and classed knowledge of 'good' taste that allows the reader to feel repulsed by exploding fat balls and hunks of slimy spam, whilst imagining the sweet warmth of homegrown plums instantly appealing.

Word count: 4807

Table 1: Demographics

No	Pseudonym	A	Occupation	Quals	Living Arrangements
3	Carly	46	Consultant	Degree	Co-habiting
4	Dalia	50	Painter	P/G	Co-habiting
7	Ophelia	53	Author	GCSE*	Married +2 child children
15	Olivia	37	PR Manager	Degree	Co-habiting
18	Regan	43	Stay at home mum	A'level	Married +2 children
26	Zoe	44	Recruiter	Degree	Married +2 children
27	Annie	50	Life Coach	A'level	Single +5 children
35	Imogen	36	P/T housekeeper	NVQ	Married +4 children
37	Magenta	39	Academic	P/G	Single
40	Nadia	40	Stay at home mum	GCSE*	Co-habiting +2 children
42	Paula	55	Food writer	GCSE*	Married + 2 children
47	Ursula	52	Stay at home mum	A'level	Married +3 children
50	Drew	42	Senior Manager	P/G	Married +1 child
68	Stephen	55	General Practitioner	Degree	Married (+2 independent)
73	Ralph	55	Writer	HND	Single

Key:

A = Age

Quals = Highest Qualification

GCSE* = GCSE Equivalent

P/G = Post-graduate qualification

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[1] Pollan (2013) discusses cooking from scratch at some length, this is either 'to prepare a main dish that requires some assemblage of ingredients' or 'real scratch cooking', which is the kind of cooking that requires chopping onions…' (pp 129-30). Respondents' narratives can be located somewhere between these two extremes; mostly they did not engage in making all ingredients from scratch. They may have bought bread or vegetable stock for example.

[2] (https://www.ons.gov.uk/methodology/classificationsandstandards/otherclassifications/thenationalstatisticssocioeconomicclassificationnssecrebasedonsoc2010).