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This article analyzes the actual gastronomic practice of fast food. Traditional gastronomic culture is undergoing transformations in the modern world. New gastronomic scares are developing that are related to an inability to predict ingredients in consumed foods. Fast food is neutral on the basis of ethnic gastronomic cultures and is becoming a prevailing eating style. As opposed to fast food, alternative gastronomic practices are becoming more essential. They bear a relation to the establishment of individual patterns, the search for and selection of new diets, care for the information aspect of food, and a need to know its cultural and historical connotations. Those gastronomic practices that appear to reflect the primitive nature of human existence are registering present and future changes in people's ways of life in a most adequate manner.

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In the modern world, traditional gastronomic culture is undergoing transformations that show that gastronomic practices are not accidental and secondary in their relation to the aims of human existence. Moreover, they also express the truth of the human being and play an important role in shaping personal identities. Food is a material medium of cultural symbols and signs that are absorbed directly on the level of bodily experience. Food consumption takes place in the system of complex communication links when importance is attached not only to the food itself (the culinary order) but to the context of the meal as well (the gastronomic order). At the moment, food technologies have changed food composition to make it increasingly artificial. The traditional link between natural taste and a finished dish has disappeared, as today it is possible to create any flavour and any material substrate for it. In such conditions, a particular role arises from humanity's collected gastronomic memory. New gastronomic scares are developing that are related to an inability to predict ingredients in consumed foods. The traditional meal format as a topos used to reproduce a social and cultural identity has declined in importance, giving way to the snack format. Gastronomic symbolism is actively resorted to as an enticement-based advertising method. The gastronomic culture is generating a contradictory standard of the body image. On the one hand, today's practices of excessive food consumption are connected with the obesity epidemic, while on the other hand in such an environment it is thinness that is becoming a standard body image. Fast food is neutral on the basis of ethnic gastronomic cultures and is becoming a prevailing eating style. The practice of eating fast food is registering new forms and ways of not only gastronomic communications, but relations between the person and the government as well, and those of a new gender order that is weakening the meaning of the woman's archetypal role as a housewife and author of everyday meals. As opposed to fast food, alternative gastronomic practices are becoming more essential. They bear a relation to the establishment of individual patterns, the search for and selection of new diets, care for the information aspect of food, and a need to know its cultural and historical connotations. The gastronomic practices that appear to reflect the primitive nature of the human existence are registering present and future changes in people's ways of life in a most adequate manner.

Fast food: theoretical discussion and main definitions

Fast food is today's most relevant gastronomic practice, but along with it other gastronomic practices are actualized as well. They are mainly related to the construction of individual dietary pathways with knowledge of various types of food and possibilities of their preparation being extended. However, the universality, general affordability, and cultural neutrality of fast food are a huge attraction for diverse consumer audiences. From the perspective

of researchers, definitions of fast food can be summarized in two ways. The first view, represented by F. Fernandez-Armesto (Fernandez-Armesto, 2002), considers how fast food is a simple food of quick consumption, which was eaten by ordinary people who had to work hard everyday. Hence, fast food existed from the very beginning, but through food industrialization the simplicity and speed of such food was just further expanded with the ability to store it for a long time and use without complicated culinary rituals. This view is associated with theories that analyse the role of food status. Both T. Veblen (Veblen, 1994) and P. Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 2001) noted that consumption patterns symbolize social statuses and, therefore, food consumption can serve as basis for distinguishing its form and content. At the same time, the content reflects the functional role of food – its ability to satisfy hunger and maintain a satisfactory state of the physical body. And the form expresses the cultural role of food – its capability to be a medium of various complex cultural values, to be a means of human communication, and be a way of marking a refined sensuality. Therefore, fast food appears to be a food of content as it is intended to quickly (without sophisticated gastronomic rituals) and qualitatively (calorically) satisfy one's hunger.

Another approach to fast food links its birth with the possibility of large-scale industrialization of food with the advent of the food industry. O. Pas (Pas, 1996) looks at fast food and says that it is an exceptionally industrialized food and its key point is not in its cooking by the consumer himself, but rather by some anonymous institution. "...Food engineering ... is a real evil. Culinary morals are undermined and it may entail unpredictable consequences" (Pas, 1996: 162). A special model of food consumption is being realized: One individual provides cooked food, while another receives this cooked food. Fast food excludes cooking from basic everyday gastronomic practices. At first sight, it is harmless, but in fact may result in changes in the structure of the family up to its total disappearance as such, according to R. Wrangham (Wrangham, 2009).

Thus, fast food has become a food that is symbolized by McDonald's (Levenstein, 1988; Ritzer, 2011; Sapozhnicov, 2007; Spurluk, 2005; Schlosser, 2002). In this sense, fast food is no longer regarded as the food of the lower social class, because it becomes an attractive functional food that unites a variety of social groups. Fast food is associated with youth, healthy body, efficiency, and diligence, which require speed in actions and decisions. This understanding of fast food closely links it with the main ideas of American culture and mentality: "The worth of a American value is American food" (Sapozhnicov, 2007: 54). Fast food is also called MAC food, and as a result, the MAC prefix and related meanings spread to other spheres of life. Such food is the quintessence of rationality (Ritzer, 2011), as far as it can be developed in the food.

Consequently, the flavor and the whole array of cultural meanings, whose material medium is food, are destroyed in the idea of its rational use. Here we find the connection with utopian ideals of nutrition, and their examples hypertrophied in dystopias.

Researchers studied not only the features of fast food as a specific nutrition type. Using an unexpected perspective, A. Sarna (Sarna, 1997) analyzes a top gastronomic fast food territory – the architectonics of McDonald’s restaurant. The McDonald’s space is like panopticon, therefore it changes the character of the traditional meal: people do not communicate but rather oversee each other in the performance of the functional ritual. All of the above indicate the ambiguous nature of such a phenomenon as fast food. On the one hand, it is just quick food that is popular today, but which is being criticized by nutritionists and adherents of a healthy lifestyle. On the other hand, fast food is not only McDonald’s, but extends to any pre-prepared or semi-finished food that can be quickly warmed up and eaten – food as fuel for the body. After all, fast food is also any food with a long shelf-life or that cooks fast from so-called economy-class supermarkets. Fast food is implementing a string of cultural meanings that point to new opportunities for further development of gastronomic culture.

Fast food and its place in the structure of gastronomic culture

The structure of gastronomic culture includes four levels: pre-cooking procedures, culinary level, gastronomic procedures, and reflection on gastronomic culture (which is primarily embodied in a cookbook as a representation of any type of gastronomic culture) (Gronow, 1997; Kapkan, Likhacheva, 2008). How does fast food influence on each of these levels? Pre-cooking procedures are the initial stage of the communication between the human and his food when natural things are processed by means of culture – cultivating land and growing plants and animals can be seen as preparation for the cooking proper. For the traditional human, the pre-cooking stage was part of his gastronomic culture, while the modern human passed through this stage. For him the pre-cooking stage is reduced to buying food at the supermarket. In fast food the pre-cooking stage is represented by the food industry, which changes the original natural content of products. It creates genetically modified foods and abuses chemical additives; in other words, it takes products as far beyond the natural cycle of their production as possible.

The culinary level of gastronomic culture comprises all the wealth of recipes and food processing techniques specific to the region (ethnic culture, etc.). Recipes reflect the full range of cultural symbols that can be represented in the food. Fast food unifies and simplifies culinary diversity. It is reduced to a limited set of dishes that do not require cooking. Not without reason, the permanent symbols of McDonald’s are hamburger and Coke; they are a ready meal that does

not change, and ensures taste consistency and reproduction of the same food experience.

The gastronomic level is also devaluated in fast food. Table etiquette is greatly simplified. Table practices of fast food consumption do not require substantive filling of the meal space: dishes are replaced by disposable counterparts. Fast food represents two levels of gastronomic consumption:

- as a snack, which is dominated by the idea of food as fuel;
- fast food can also be viewed as extremely public space for taking meals where everyone is with everyone and at once every person is for themselves.

The last level of gastronomic culture is defined as the capacity for gastronomic reflection in the form of a cookbook. This is impossible in fast food, as this food is prepared and may require only reheating in the microwave. A cookbook contains expert knowledge on cooking, while the food industry is also guided by certain standards in the food production. It is these standards that can be called the fast food cookbook. More precisely, it is ersatz.

Fast food as the fourth stage of evolution of gastronomic culture

The stages of food transformation reflect cultural changes and contain the potential of subsequent development of culture and society. For example, processing food by fire became an anthropogenic revolution that ensured the further evolution of humanity and development of basic cultural forms of human transcendence. When the tradition of thermal food processing emerged, it meant a change in the food biochemical composition, and, therefore, a change of opportunities (qualitative and quantitative) for food consumption. Processing food by fire led to a reorganization of social space, when relations between a man and a woman changed and acquired a new dimension. It organized and sent the process of human cultural development on an evolutionary path. Traditionally herbal foods are perceived as for women, while meat is considered as a food for men. Therefore, the woman originally gathered vegetable foods, and the man hunted. Processing food by fire changed and enhanced the woman's cultural status and now she became a keeper of the fire-hearth.

The next consequence of thermal food processing includes the strengthening of communications and the creations of methods to regulate communication. The meal ritual originates around food processes, when food is not simply nutrition, but a communicative act where a person overcomes their biological content and animal nature. G. D. Gachev (Gachev, 2007) writes about the unifying role of fire, which helped to overcome differences between farming and nomadic peoples: It is known that the food eaten affects the ethnic type of corporeality as it affects the type of ethnic mentality. Fire united people and eliminated the

determinism of specialization in a sphere of nutrition, which is typical of wildlife. The variety of food also means the diversity of ways of cultural development.

The next stage is the sacralization of food, when a person identifies various types of food and gives them symbolic meanings and a special communicative status. Each type of food has its own meaning and, therefore, supports a particular format of life. For example, the daily festive food code regulates the necessary balance of daily life and holiday. This balance is disrupted in the modern world and this code has lost its relevance. The original meaning of the holiday as a sacrifice expresses a breakthrough to transcendence, which is impossible in usual reality. But modern culture has distorted archaic semantics of holiday because it exploits festive conditions as well.

The third phase in food history can be defined as the phase when ethnic food types developed. Ethnic food creates the identity of a person's ethnic type of corporeality. National cuisine reflects the ecosystem in which an ethnic group lives. National traditions of food formed in close connection with this ecosystem. A. I. Kozlov (Kozlov, 2005) writes, "When an Italian invites someone to have a meal, he invites him or her to eat 'carbohydrates' – the word 'pasta' means for him not only dough dishes, but food in general. A Russian invites guests to eat 'carbohydrates with microelements': 'bread and salt'. In Greenland, food was traditionally denoted with the same word that meant meat, 'neri'" [Kozlov, 2005: 7]. G. D. Gachev writes that national dishes are ways of 'reading' the world: "Each dish is a thought and judgment about the world" (Gachev, 2007). Ethnic characteristics of food are expressed not only in the natural composition of ingredients, but in the manner of their treatment: to boil or to fry, to cook as whole or to grind, to mix or not. A Russian proverb, which states, "Shchi and porridge are our foods" expresses a relation to basic dishes of Russian cuisine in its archaic form. Later Russian cuisine was subjected to strong foreign influences. Porridge is the "collectivity of seeds" [Gachev, 2007: 71], and represents a principle of collectivity as a significant aspect of the Russian mentality. And shchi and porridge are boiled and vegetable dishes. It is the food of a farmer and a farmer's characteristics can be described as follows: sustainability and ability to work hard, respect for the land and especially a close relationship with it.

The fourth stage is urban expansion. A civilized person wanted to overcome the natural composition of food, overcome cultural meanings of food and use it only functionally. The cultural diversity of national cuisines is overcome in unified social space, which creates a similarly unified type of a person. The reasons for it are very simple – most "civilized" products as a rule are semi-finished and canned, they are ready to be eaten and have attractive bright packaging, and they can be stored for a long time. Traditional cuisine has no such qualities. The

symbol of “industrial” food is fast food. Fast food has a solid position as a modern food for modern active young people around the whole world. Fast food is a unified democratic available food, a specific “fuel” for the body; fast food is simple and caloric. Fast food is a format of nutrition simplified to the greatest extent. Modern people have some fears regarding food. Particularly, it is a panic fear of mutation and transformation of the human corporeality, which can be changed very much by such “industrial” food. The wonders of modern technologies are seen as a threat to human identity, while previously these technologies were perceived as an opportunity to solve the problems of famine (food shortage). Food has become one of the main subjects of advertising and was liberated from its original semantics. Modern advertising and media create and offer a food image that ensures some predictability of identity and the values-behavioral orientation of the average person.

The disciplinary function of gastronomic culture: the role of fast food

The value of fast food was discovered by the government and concerned the use of its disciplinary capacity in gastronomic practices. The role of gastronomic practices in the identity construction may be specifically utilized by the state. The necessity of studying this issue was closely approached by Michel Foucault and was studied more specifically by T. Kondrat’eva (Kondrat’eva, 2006) and Y. Gronow (Gronow, 1997). This issue is also analyzed in my book “The Totalitarian Project of Gastronomic Culture (as illustrated in the case of the Stalin era in 1920-1930)” (Sokhan, 2011). The disciplinary potential of gastronomic culture can be realized by means of violence that is through controlling the nutrition of the person and society. Yet it is most fully realized in fast food – an affordable abundant food, irresistibly attractive to each individual.

All known utopian projects (Bacon, 1972; Campanella, 1947; Fourier, 1954; Mor, 1978; Plato, 1971) that imply a total transformation of the person for the benefit of general well-being and harmony also speak of a necessity for the absolute reformation of gastronomic culture and full state control over it (Ainsa, 1999). This utopian project was actually implemented in Soviet Russia in the 1920s and 1930s. From today’s perspective, it is difficult to assess the degree of its actual accomplishment. The cause is that there is a significant gap between reality and its representation, typical of totalitarian societies, which imposes certain limitations on the analysis of everyday totalitarian life, including that of gastronomic practices. However, it is only symbolical that in the end the totalitarian project of gastronomic culture was marked in 1939 through the appearance of the well-known Book of Tasty and Healthy Food. The Book announced a return of gastronomic practices to home cooking and partially delegated state

powers in this area back to the housewife. The explanation for this lied not only in the necessity of exhibiting “gastronomic communism” as a reality. Thus, the state acknowledged the inefficiency of the gastronomic disciplining based on public catering, the denial of private home cuisine and subjection of the meal to public control, food shortages and the system of their hierarchical distribution, and famine. The Book of Tasty and Healthy Food postulated that human life could not be liberated from gastronomic practice as a basic practice required for existence, as well as the meal in its private and family version, as an initial unit to produce cultural and social being. The postulation of the fact comprised numerous complementary rhetoric notes related to the excellent performance of the Soviet food industry. The success of the food industry is understood as the capacity for effective discipline, which the traditional practice of restrictions shortages and distribution failed to achieve.

Today, when it has become evident that the food industry gave birth to specific gastronomic monsters,— such as fast food-style dishes and a habit of having pre-prepared foodstuffs, and transformed ingredient formulations that are out of scope of traditional gastronomic standards – its results are no longer viewed as advancements (Levenstein, 1988). They rather symbolize the irreversibly deteriorated gastronomic culture.

Therefore, the publication of the Book of Tasty and Healthy Food also indicated the transition from the harsh gastronomic disciplining (by means of famine and food shortages) to more lenient disciplining (by means of abundant cheap and accessible foods) in the enticement format. A plethora of culinary recipes and various efforts to raise the awareness of the eating culture, advertising of food industry advancements were signs of the coming transformation in the use of power instruments. Harsh gastronomic disciplining was to be replaced with a more lenient (and more effective) disciplining method that is linked with product abundance, manufactured by the food industry and imposed active consumption of this abundance. This seemingly unimportant fact can only be registered in the very historical context after the end of the Soviet project of creating a totalitarian gastronomic culture, as a power means used by the state to explicitly and harshly reconstruct the person. Significantly, the affluent society, which the food industry cares so much for, offers a new type of power and corresponding disciplining methods – it is soft, inconspicuous, and based on the mechanism of endless pleasure and immediately fulfilled wishes.

The gastronomic project of Stalinist Russia illustrated that changes initiated from outside and brutally imposed, as a rule, cause resistance from the person who tries to protect their private space and prevent the state from penetrating it on the most intimate bodily level. In this case, the food becomes a material medium of the pervasive state. Despite the state attempting to eliminate

private cooking practices, people sought to arrange their own meal space even in squeezed communal conditions. The reason was that individual and family meals turned out to a means of defining personal boundaries and remain corresponding to one's own self rather than public and political dominant concepts. Still, what the state failed to secure with brutal force became possible with the use of the opposite methods – this is what Aldous Huxley warned us of in his famous dystopian novel *Brave New World*: “There is, of course, no reason why the new totalitarianism should resemble the old. Government by clubs and firing squads, by artificial famine... is not merely inhumane (nobody cares much about that nowadays); it is demonstrably inefficient...” (Huxley, 2002: 20). The conclusion is that the modern gastronomic culture is demonstrating new means of disciplining people, which are applied to the person who is inevitably integrated in the discourse of the dominating consumption practices. Advertising initiates new desires and manipulates people into eating by attributing additional and obviously attractive senses to foods, while the freedom to choose and organize a personal gastronomic space is replaced with feeding practices facilitated by the food industry.

Thus, fast food is a central phenomenon of modern gastronomic culture. It is not just a food that is quickly prepared and served, but rather a food with distorted ontology, since it is based on the food as some material substrate, whose gustatory and esthetic characteristics are determined by the food industry's advancements. Fast food emerged in the 20th century and there is little doubt that it originated in American culture (Pas, 1998; Gachev, 1997). It was inherent in the food industry and its findings that allowed transforming the natural appearance of foods, as well as storing and preserving them, and in doing so they made it possible to overcome the age-old gastronomic fear of famine and food shortages. Artificial food lost its connection with nature and natural cycles to become a specific way to store up existence. The latter, however, yielded its openness and orientation to the person: Instead of naturally initiated food, they received its substrate – a simulacrum of food and ersatz sustenance. Foods are becoming substrate, empty matter that can be a medium for any gustatory meanings and senses accumulated in the collective human memory. As a result, people are offered false gastronomic abundance and pushed into consuming foods excessively through enticements. The advertising discourse, which is actively using food images, positions the food as a most authentic vehicle to transfer various meanings directly into the bodily space, which indicates an archetypal relation between food and power, since everything that is eaten becomes the object of power. Initiating the excessive food consumption, competing for the consumer desires to eat certain foods, and forcing fast food on them are current processes today that also constitute inconspicuous strategies of power that is eager to set itself in routine existence. While anthropologist Margaret

Mead (Mead, 1998) complained once that sustenance was becoming a product and regarded the fact as the general degradation of culture, nowadays it is safe to say that at the same time sustenance is also feed. The idea that food is a product reflects its market value and economic status, while the concept that it is feed registers the ability of food to act as a vehicle between the person and power, between the one who is fed and the one who feeds.

Fast food as a technologically transformed food

Food ingredients have also overcome fundamental changes as some solid structures in the gastronomic culture that traditionally guarded boundaries of bodily standards. On the one hand, it labeled some types of food as permitted and related to encouraged pleasure. On the other hand, it rejected the food that could be seen as a threat to the identity. But the person was always considered to have knowledge of the food they ate. If culture approves of certain food products as well as their cooking formulas, the adopted gastronomic strategies are also directly related to the formulation of bodily standards, whose semantics is clear and transparent. The food industry with its complex technology has altered food ingredients as transformations have taken place in traditional associations between natural food ingredients, their culinary processing, and the resulting flavour. The customary gastronomic logic has disappeared and today nearly any material substrate can be fitted with gustatory codes that reanimate concepts in the collection of gastronomic memories. Boundaries of what is acceptable and unacceptable in food are only limited by the capabilities of the food industry for revealing various tastes and their implanting in the material substrate. In a certain sense, the food capability to be an empiric medium for any cultural meanings has reached here its maximum purity and potential. The natural substrate is now possible to purify from its original determined nature to such an extent that its material substance starts amounting to naught, and afterwards the food industry, armed with latest technology, can assign any meanings to it.

The key aim of these modifications is to make salient the functional purpose of the food and eliminate its other roles that are related to the definition of individual consumption patterns. This tendency is represented in dystopian discourse, where the food is transformed as much as possible following scientific technologies and so signals a change in the person's status. The status looks, on the face of it, like some improvements on the body image as it now receives technological parameters in compliance with the growth in the industrial environment. But it actually shows that they are necessary impairments of traditional anthropological qualities and are, consequently, a qualitative deterioration of its existential potential. The enemy in the gastronomic culture is famine, since it stops its development. However, technology-related food

standards also check any opportunities for the gastronomic development because the food is reduced to a material substrate with a set of selected flavouring injections to meet quite limited personal needs. When the possibility for food to be a source of pleasure is dismissed and its culinary and gustatory properties are substituted with one-sided medicalization promoted as scientific progress, the food becomes ontologically empty. It loses its importance as a mediator and material medium of sophisticated cultural meanings. The process when the food as a substrate is degraded in its cultural significance exposes its primitive, natural stratum, which is its ability to be feed and reproduce a basic, yet one-sided communication structure that comprises the connection between the one feeding and the one being fed. By its nature, this structure is used to wield power and exercise it on an everyday level. For this reason, the science-based degradation of the cultural status of food – its transformation into gastronomic ersatz – perfectly expresses the role of food as feed when it is a means of establishing an association between government power and those whom it feeds. It is worth reminding of the recurring motif in utopias and dystopias when it presupposes a transformation of the food (in ideal space of the utopian ontology) with its natural connotations (natural substantiality) removed and artificial foods exclusively manufactured. The latter typically has several explanations:

- scientific inventions (the problem of famine is resolved by means of making bread of petroleum, for instance in Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (Zamyatin, 1988);
- a need to feed everyone – this is a way to end the eternal war caused by famine and the struggle for bread;
- a need for an agreement between a person's new status and the food they eat and that reproduces their identity – “a person number is due to have another person number”, the novel *We* notes.

Moreover, the person number is also due to eat relevant food – it is actually not the food as it is in its initial ontological sense, but its simulacrum. An instance is petroleum-based bread. Such absurd food reflects the absurd existence of the one who eats it. Freedom is as much inherent in the human nature as the number person is anti-human, as the human core negates itself in him, postulating that its essence is not freedom but rigid forced and schematic existence.

Transformations of traditional gastronomic culture: the impact of fast food

Fast food should be given neither a positive nor a negative assessment. Yet it is necessary to accept the fact that it is fast food that has become a primary strategy in the new gastronomic culture that has incorporated basic codes of technocratic, urban, and technomorphous reality into

itself. For instance, human cloning and genetic experiments produce new informational content of the human-created body image and pose a question of spiritual, existential, and other levels of the human existence. Much concern is also expressed over experiments in the food industry. Taking into account the principle that “people are what they eat”, can people start to lose their anthropological image if they start consuming cloned meat, food products, torn away from the natural cycle by changing their genetic code? What consequences will ensue after eating such food and will they bring about a phenomenon of consistent deterioration of bodily identity? Fast food has generated new forms of cultural expansion. It is the fast food phenomenon that serves as a basis for Americanization of traditional eating styles and may be a method of assimilating one culture into another. Fast food breaks into the ethnic identity of the person in the traditional culture and proposes its reconstruction on a new level using the following processes:

- reliance on natural cycles of food reproduction is weakening; food and, correspondingly, body image are becoming highly functionalized;
- fast food switches off the basic cultural code (our food – their food) that functions as an ethnic status marker within the ethnic gastronomic culture;
- the conventional structure of everyday life, whose cycles are reproduced in various types of meal (from the ordinary to ritual ones), is crumbling;
- it is in fast food where the idea of the food as a substrate has gone to its extreme when the food is eaten to seize an opportunity and consume the food symbolic context.

Fast food is nullifying the basic gastronomic standards that make it possible to establish a relation between initial natural food ingredients and the resulting effects of its processing. Conventional cooking methods, either communicated from one generation to another via oral tradition or formulated as expert knowledge in recipe books, set forth special gastronomic laws that specified what was allowed to consume as foods, with whom, how, and when. This ensured the predictability of bodily experiences. In other words, integrating the other in the individual’s bodily experiential structure is integrating the intelligible that is predetermined and sanctified by the cultural tradition of the other, rather than something alien that threatens to exert negative influence on the identity. In traditional culture, the food had a nature-based substrate and, even when transfigured in creative culinary processes, the latter could still be identified and referred to its nature-authentic source. Such food guaranteed high quality of bodily characteristics produced with the food, above all being health and pleasure as markers of the positive bodily experience. Conversely, fast food is overpassing gastronomic laws, converting them into a playing rule that is undermining a stable relation between the primary substrate and resulting product. Fast food is

the food that is processed by some forces, anonymous to its consumer in any slot of the entire food industry complex, from the chemical laboratory, which produces flavours, to the workshop, which manufactures prepackaged meals. Industry-processed food postulates the presence of some imitated content. For instance, there is a certain flavour implanted in a given substance that is put into shape of food. But the flavour is of an artificial origin, and so its perception is based exclusively on the eater's gastronomic memories. This flavour does not define this food, but acts as an enabler of culinary sensory experiences in an individual, meaning that the food merely has a simulacrum nature. While the refusal from cannibalism and ability to process food with fire shaped gastronomic history at its dawn, the fast food phase displays somewhat of its end, since in the end the ability to process natural matter has resulted in exhausting itself:

- it has become a source of universal substrate to be converted into food;
- its flavouring combinations have been cemented in the human gastronomic memory and can now be artificially activated there.

Fast food utilizes food more as a form, while its content is mainly unknown. Fast food consumers have to put up with eating anonymity that they ontologically objectify in their bodies. Still, there is one thing they can be sure of and that is that fast food brings happiness, as the omnipresent advertising suggests. Other key oppositions in gastronomic coding are ruined here, particularly the opposition between "ours" and "theirs", between the cannibal's food and the non-cannibal's food, etc. This has also given rise to relevant food horrors – not so much fears over famine and food shortages, as food abundance and its affordability. Hence there is an inevitable question of what content is actually inserted in the consumed gastronomic form and what may happen to the personal identity after consuming it. From a psychoanalytic perspective (Frankl, 2007; Perlz, 2010), food preparation is alienation of the cook's unconscious into the food. So from this viewpoint, everyone feeds everyone with his or her own self. This is how cannibalistic intentions are sublimated in the symbolic order of the gastronomic culture. But what happens if preferences are indicated for the pre-prepared food? Who feeds whom and how does this alter communication schemes and symbolic sharing? Fast-food cultural authority with its neutrality is not an authority proper, as it does not fix boundaries of what is acceptable and unacceptable, but states that everything is acceptable which is advertised as edible. For its part, something that is edible has undergone anonymous preliminary processing with food technology and assumed a certain form that is positioned as fit to be eaten. Food horrors of the modern person take on the appearance of a fear that is not of unexpectedly eating something that is not encouraged by the cultural authority, but rather a fear about eating something which can adversely influence anthropological identity. Hence fast food-related horrors are localized as a

fear over eating something that you do not know, but which is, nevertheless, allowed.

Consequences of fast food totality

As a result, the growing fast food totality is leading to the following major issues (Fernandez-Armesto, 2002). The anonymization of the author who cooks the food contributes to its transition into the feed category, which actualizes a gastronomic power model (Wrangham, 2009). One can witness the degradation in the semantic field of the food, which traditionally was a physical medium for numerous cultural meanings that are giving way before the necessity of maintaining a vertical relation between the one who feeds and the one who is fed. This may also be regarded as regress to archaic gastronomic practices when the food was, first of all, a means of sustenance and, as a consequence, an essential object of power. It was not until later that the food became space to actively accumulate cultural symbols and hence it was the able to directly affect the person. In a certain sense, gastronomic history completed the evolutionary cycle. Its primary potential was being realized throughout its course. And today, the eating culture has returned to its archaic state when importance lies in vertical power embodied in the meal as well as in the functional effectiveness of the food. The beginning of the gastronomic evolution saw food being natural matter that was not yet processed using various methods, while currently food is, conversely, an artificial substrate that technology helped free from its natural determinacy. That the whole variety of gastronomic practices are being replaced with caring power looks like a blessing and its result makes it possible to save resources that are translated back to the individual as a gift of leisure and so-called time for oneself.

Speaking of the vertical power realized in today's gastronomic culture, one inevitably faces the question of the family. The reason for this is that it is around the hearth-fire where the first social relations were established, while the mistress of the home fire – and the author of the food prepared on it – was the woman. The family meal is becoming increasingly less significant, which challenges the very existence and essentiality of the family. The individual is separated from their family and becomes seized by popular fast food practices, if the family meal is excluded from family practices. Hence the person joins the general social discourse, where people are only offered either their privacy or, alternatively, a totally collective being.

The meal is devalued as an inherently valuable space, generating cultural senses, and as a condition of belonging to others – a space of bodily solidarity. The traditional meal requires valuable resources. This, in the first place, is the time resource. Time is necessary for completely going through all gastronomic phases – the pre-culinary, culinary, and gastronomic proper. The pre-culinary phase precedes food preparation and may have multiple interpretations. Its first

meaning reads that it is a preliminary treatment of food products (for instance, growing them); different situational explanations state that it is standing in a line to buy foodstuffs, as was the case in the Soviet period of food shortage. The culinary phase involves food preparation according to culinary standards preferable at a given moment. The gastronomic phase implies communicative mechanisms of the meal process, namely a conceptual and spiritual exchange, as well as the creation of the shared area of bodily meanings. And all these are due to be eliminated as unnecessary and non-functional atavism from the past. One most apparent consequence is that the released resources were translated into better opportunities for increasingly active consumption. As a result, it is the consumption intensity that is intrinsic to identity mechanisms of the modern-mass person.

A underlying principle of fast food is the discontinuity between form and content, because this food exists as a substrate to record any consumed meanings and is based on the accumulated gastronomic memory. The latter is an area in the collective memory that is filled with actualized meanings of culinary and gastronomic experiences. It might be possible that growing interest to various culinary practices is not only a response to the fast food totality, but it may also reflect a need to work with accomplished culinary history and gastronomic memory.

Fast food as a simulacrum food

It is impossible to speak of fast food without applying the definition of “simulacrum food” to it. Four stages in the simulacrum development, proposed by Jean Baudrillard (Baudrillard, 2006), also help understand how food was transformed into fast food. At the first stage, the simulacrum does not represent a profound reality (the notion of dream food, future food in Francis Bacon’s 1972 utopian novel *New Atlantis* and optimistic sentiments in the first half of the 20th century when the industry transformed sustenance into more reliable, better, and more nutritious food). However, the second stage already brings about a denaturing and masking of a profound reality (this is the discontinuity between the resulting form and flavour representation, and the original content transformed beyond recognition). At the third stage, one can see the simulacrum itself – it masks the absence of a profound reality. For instance, that which a food product is made of has no relation to its resulting version. This is how various flavours are created that are not determined by natural ingredients, but represented by their chemical substitutes. Finally, the fourth stage is in essence a pure simulacrum that has lost any connection to reality and represents emptiness. Such emptiness has been termed in the language of dietary standards as “empty calories” – calories for the sake of calories. Meanwhile, the advertising discourse has initiated fast food consumption. At the same time, the latter is meant to be

compensated through the consumption of vitamins and mineral nutrients, also initiated by advertising, which this time offers products from the pharmaceutical industry.

The traditional dichotomy motivating food consumption – hunger and appetite – adds the third component – enticement as the most powerful stimulus to eat. If hunger can be considered as the only appropriate incentive to eat, appetite suggests a binary interpretation. At one point, it made it possible for the gastronomic culture to evolve in principle. At the other point, multiple perversions, which in the first place leads to excessive food consumption, can also be regarded as effects of disproportionate appetite. Appetite may be traced back to enticement as a method to stimulate it, but still enticement should be differentiated. It is employed as a mechanism of inducing people into eating large fast food meals. In this case, they consume not so much food, as a multitude of meanings that are recorded in fast food as in a physical medium, as well as permanent attraction to these meanings.

The nature of food horrors is also changing. These are already not food deficiency or famine. Rather people are experiencing fears of their identities being damaged by unpredictable occurrences, due to a lack of accurate knowledge, inducing it with control and subjection abilities. The unknown-based torture that was effectively used in terror and violence proved efficient for the gastronomic area as well. For instance, at the level of everyday rhetoric, concerns over an unknown as a fast food ingredient reveal themselves in nostalgia for times when the unified GOST food product standard was in force and the state guaranteed ingredients in pre-prepared foods. As the traditional gastronomic culture was disposed to standardize food consumption and encouraged certain food experiences, it established boundaries that guaranteed bodily safety and predictable consequences. Today, fast food practices are attempting to intensify eating pleasures while making them the aim of food consumption. At the same time, they are displacing necessary fears with civilizational fears, generally viewing them as unavoidable costs of the current life style.

Fast food and the body

Yet another crucial result of the changed main gastronomic line comprises new body standards that pose a problem in the following perspectives. This is the thin body imperative that has deep cultural connotations, implying the body of a person who has not yielded themselves to the world and is escaping its challenges (Bordo, 1989, 1993; Chernin, 1981, 1985; Darmon, 2008; Woodman, 2011). As Porphyry of Tyre (Porphyry, 1994) put it, this is the body of the man who retained his soul rather than utterly wasting the resource to please his body that strives to strengthen its empirical positions at the expense of the soul. But these connotations are altering

today. The thin body is still a preferable bodily image and up to making a cult of it, while everything beyond its boundaries is perceived as much as a perversion and causes panic over non-compliance. The owner of the body does not have to remain inaccessible for food enticements; on the contrary, the ability to succumb to them and remain thin is the real modern ideal. To retain self-identity, avoiding the penetration of the other, instead of resisting its influence at the internal and external level, is the superhuman ability that is deemed to be desirable and of highest priority. The ability represents the power type that can help the individual counter the totality of the external power that intends to fully take the individual over and subdue them. For this reason, the fashion for the thin body will never cease – moreover, it is in thinness that the kernel of the fashion directing mainstream consumption is expressed.

Numerous eating disorders (anorexia, bulimia, and gluttony) are emerging in reaction to challenges of destructive gastronomic tendencies. These are caused by pressure from esthetic body ideals that in turn represent the corresponding consciousness and mindset. At the same time, studies into eating disorders (first of all, psychological and psychoanalytical studies) still suggest some norms that are a result of a recovery from deviant eating behavior. It is important here to correlate eating disorder symptoms with a number of other issues that are arising in the development of the modern person's identity.

Finally, as it has been mentioned above, while Michel Foucault (Foucault, 1999) defined the prisoner's body as a body deprived of anything in the highest possible degree (the body that is affected by the power exertion to the maximum extent). Today, the prisoner's body is of a different form – this is the obesity of the person totally locked in his or her own body. One should take into consideration that psychoanalysis metaphorically interprets obesity when a body is a prison because the person is unable to get free from the unconscious that seized them, as well as from injuries and complexes that result from the negative impact of the external world. In this case, one may suppose that the format of the prison is also changing: it is no longer the imprisonment space created by an external force from outside. Now it is a space evolving from within the body shell and indicating that the person is subjected to maximum power influence. If we once again take Porphyry's words that in such a body the soul completely gives itself to it, one may say that a fast food person is erecting their prison out of their own free will: there is no need to track, punish, and convict them because they are voluntarily submitting to the disciplining influence of the power.

Other gastronomic patterns as alternatives to fast food

It should be noted that despite fast food's massive popularity, there is growing demand for

various gastronomic pathways related to the conceptualization of psychological and cultural meanings of different foods. This is also linked with a possibility for actualizing bodily practices of their preparation, as well as arranging an appropriate gastronomic consumption space and increasing the communicative component of the meal. The main gastronomic discourses found in fashion magazines can be classified into:

- esthetic, when the food is, above all, important as an object of visual consumption (this is connected with a craze for photographing what one eats and posting the pictures in personal blogs), molded by notions about high cuisine.
- dietary, which includes recommendations for health benefits and information on calories and vitamins.
- educational, which links the presented dish and its recipe with its historical roots and cultural connotations. Hence, it is vital to have knowledge of what you eat. The wider educational discourse may be explained through less reliable information provided about genuine origins of food products.
- Technical, which gives detailed and intelligible descriptions of technologies used to prepare a dish and broadens the person's knowledge of their own capabilities to carry out their own gastronomic experiments.

To summarize, it is possible to identify typical properties of the modern gastronomic culture in comparison to its traditional forms. In the first place, this is the total pervasiveness of quick meals in the form of fast food that eliminates all family connections based on the common everyday meal and gastronomic authorship, the latter traditionally belonging to the woman. There is an actualizing association between the individual and the anonymous social or economic power that feeds them and monopolizes the gastronomic authorship, since in fast food it belongs to the food industry. Preferable practices in gastronomic consumption have a variety of distinctive characteristics: as opposed to nondescript fast food, numerous forms of individual dietary strategies are becoming popular. Modern food horrors are predominantly related to the elimination of the basic gastronomic standards that fixed boundaries of acceptable bodily experiences. The food industry has destroyed a link, guaranteed by traditional ethnic cuisines, between original ingredients in a food product and its final representation in a dish. The bodily standard established by fast food creates an obese body, while the dominating model in mass society is thinness. If the traditional culture associated thinness with minimum gastronomic consumption, today it is a body of power as it represents the person's independence from the food. Hence, it is essential both to remain thin and enjoy gastronomic consumption. A thin body is also a sign of a high social status. Enticement is becoming a new power technique in the

gastronomic sphere, representing anonymous feed that proves to be more effective if compared with earlier brutal feeding practices. Thus, one may even speak of a new type of totalitarianism.

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