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Argumenta is the official journal of the Italian Society for Analytic Philosophy (SIFA). It was founded in 2014 in response to a common demand for the creation of an Italian journal explicitly devoted to the publication of high quality research in analytic philosophy. From the beginning *Argumenta* was conceived as an international journal, and has benefitted from the cooperation of some of the most distinguished Italian and non-Italian scholars in all areas of analytic philosophy.

Contents

Editorial	173
Metaphysics at the Table Special Issue <i>Edited by Andrea Borghini, Donatella Donati, Nicola Piras</i>	175
Experiments in Visual Perspective: Size Experience <i>Brentyn J. Ramm</i>	263
Book Reviews	279

Editorial

The current issue of *Argumenta* opens with a Special Issue devoted to a topic that has been gaining an increasing appeal within the philosophical and non-philosophical audience—the philosophy of food. The Special Issue is entitled *Metaphysics at the Table* and is edited by three scholars who have in the recent past contributed in many ways to the analysis of the topic—Andrea Borghini, Donatella Donati and Nicola Piras.

As the three guest editors explain in the Introduction, philosophers have been approaching the subject of food from several disciplinary points of views—ethics, bioethics, political philosophy, epistemology, and aesthetics—but no collections of papers has been devoted so far to the investigation of food and its consumption from the perspective of analytic metaphysics. The Special Issue the reader will find in the following pages represents an important contribution to remedy this.

Together with the Special Issue comes an article by Brentyn J. Ramm entitled *Experiments in Visual Perspective: Size Experience*. Ramm's is a brilliant attempt to shed light on the long-standing debate between objectivist and subjectivists accounts of visual experiences. One of the merits of his article is that of discussing the question in light of a series of first-person experiments aimed at investigating size experience.

Finally, the section of Book Reviews rounds off the number. In this section, readers will find a careful assessment of three very interesting recent books—*Political Self-Deception* by Anna Elisabetta Galeotti, *Remembering from the Outside:*

Personal Memory and the Perspectival Mind by Christopher J. McCarroll, and *The Phenomenal Basis of Intentionality* by Angela Mendelovici.

In publishing this second issue of the fifth volume, it is my pleasure to thank the colleagues who have acted as external referees, the Assistant Editors, and the Editor of the Book Reviews.

All the articles appearing in *Argumenta* are freely accessible and freely downloadable, therefore it only remains to wish you:

Buona lettura!

Massimo Dell'Utri
Editor-in-Chief

Argumenta 5, 2 (2020)
Special Issue

Metaphysics at the Table

Edited by

Andrea Borghini
Donatella Donati
Nicola Piras

The Journal of the Italian Society for Analytic Philosophy

Contents

Metaphysics at the Table Introduction <i>Andrea Borghini, Donatella Donati, Nicola Piras</i>	179
Can Unmodified Food Be Culinary Art? <i>Sara Bernstein</i>	185
Unjust Food Systems and Applied Mereology <i>Shane Epting</i>	199
Local Food as Social Change: Food Sovereignty as a Radical New Ontology <i>Samantha Elaine Noll</i>	215
Toward a Particularistic Metaphysics of Recipes <i>Giulio Sciacca</i>	231
Food, Food Substitutes and Food Supplements <i>Helena Siipi</i>	247

Metaphysics at the Table: Introduction

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Contemporary philosophers have studied food and its consumption from several disciplinary perspectives, including normative ethics, bioethics, environmental ethics, political philosophy, epistemology, and aesthetics. Many questions remain, however, underexplored or unaddressed. It is in the spirit of contributing to fill in these scholarly gaps that we designed the current issue, which represents the first collection of papers dedicated to food from a perspective of analytic metaphysics.

Before presenting the five papers published in this issue, we shall briefly frame the current research on food linked to analytic metaphysics and point out future directions of research in this area. We begin with the most basic interrogative, namely *What is food?*, and then offer three illustrations of more specific research questions. We hope these examples suffice to demonstrate that food is a fertile terrain of inquiry for analytic metaphysics and that it deserves to be developed.

1. Overarching Research Question: What Is Food?

Food is so ingrained in our ordinary worldview that the question *What is food?* may seem a trivial one with a straightforward answer. Well, it isn't. When you start taking it seriously, the question opens a canister of tricky sub-questions. Here are some examples. Why is a banana a food while a raw olive is not? Are common medicines, such as aspirin pills, a food? Are chewing gums to be regarded as food, even though they are not ingested? Are beverages types of foods or is there a profound metaphysical distinction between foods and beverages?

Interrogatives like these multiply quickly. Jointly taken, they flag the existence of underlying theoretical issues that deserve investigation, as pointed out in some recent literature.¹ Metaphysics seems especially well-positioned to address them and provide a full framework of the nature of food insofar as it studies the nature of things and their mutual relations. To do so, we suggest, metaphysicians should draw on parallel attempts to study specific "regions" of reality, as for instance in the ongoing debates on race and gender (Asta 2018), species (Slater 2013), or social entities (Haslanger 2012).

¹ See especially Kaplan 2019: 19-27, and Borghini & Piras 2020.

As a way of illustration, in this introduction we shall point out two important sub-questions descending from *What is food?*:

- (1) Is *food* a natural kind term?
- (2) Which ontological category best captures the nature of food—concrete particular, sortal, predicate, process, or something else still?

We shall briefly present both questions.

(1) Generally speaking, it seems that, in order to be a food, an entity should have several natural properties apt to nourish a certain kind of being—in the case we are considering here, nourish humans. This suggests a *naturalistic conception* of food according to which being food is to be nourishment for a certain kind of living being. However, having this property is neither a sufficient nor a necessary condition for being food. It is not sufficient because there are plenty of things that could nourish a human being and that are, nevertheless, not regarded as foods in most contexts, such as human flesh, pets, insects, or disgusting items to eat (DeFoliart 1999). Moreover, having the property of nourishing human beings is not necessary for being food because human beings have been eating a large and assorted array of food during their history that do not seem nourishing, such as indigestible entities, e.g., many vegetal fibres (Lunn & Buttriss 2007), or chewing gums, or spices.

At this point, one may think that being nourishing for human beings is not the right sort of natural property that can prove that food is a natural kind. If so, which natural properties, if any, can fix the identity of human food *qua* natural kind? Should we rather think of food as a social or an institutional kind? This is the challenge that we wish to put on the table, leaving its analysis for another occasion.

(2) Which ontological category best captures the nature of food? To answer this question, we may begin by looking at specific food items. Going by our ordinary language, we may surmise that specific foods are concrete particulars. A rocket salad, a chocolate chip cookie, a piece of sourdough bread, a glass of Chi-anti all seem to be concoctions of edible stuff bearing specific properties (calories, nutrients, aesthetic qualities, site-specific links, etc.). Yet, one may rebut that any edible has a (not presumed, but effective) expiration date, past which it is no longer a food even though the stuff still continues to exist. This may suggest that food terms may function as some sort of predicates. Thus, for instance, “rocket salad” and “chocolate chip” may be regarded as sortal terms, while other food terms such as “salt” or “tomato” may be regarded as natural kind terms, and others still as generic predicates (e.g. “cocktail” or “carpaccio”). Alternative theoretical options may seem viable too, however. For instance, fermented foods like wine or yoghurt may be regarded as processes because they are dynamic complex systems. A process view would go well also with the complex manners in which foods are digested by our bodies, for one might argue that food lingers through the entire process, from tasting to nourishing.

Stepping back from the specificities of the dispute, we may wonder whether all food items should belong to one and the same ontological category. If they do, then food would presumably be identified with that category; if they do not, then what to do of the generic food category? These and cognate questions have been discussed (Borghini & Piras 2020), but more research still awaits to be done.

2. Three Specific Research Questions

Moving to specific food items, in this section we showcase three areas of research where analytic metaphysics contributes to food scholarship.

Hunger. Humans need to eat to survive. The first physiological and psychological state which signals this need is generically referred to as “hunger.” This state is far more shaped by psychological, social, and cultural conditions than one might think (Borghini 2014). If so, then, what kind of state is hunger? Is it a purely physiological state? Is it a mental state? Is it a feeling or an emotion? The way we address these and cognate questions has a bearing also on how we understand eating disorders and how we clinically and legally frame them (Giordano 2005). More broadly, a theory of hunger has a bearing for how we assess the politics of dieting and obesity (Borghini & Serpico 2020).

Identity of specific foods. Analytic metaphysics can help address questions of identity for specific foods. Such questions may be grouped into different clusters based on the types of food products under consideration. As a way of illustration, consider geographical indications, namely those products (foods, but not only) that bear their identity to an essential link with a geographical region. Why does Champagne hold a superb reputation? The standard refrain calls on a specific *terroir*—a mixture of soil, rainfall, climate, and human tender uniquely characterizing the grapes. Yet, as Earth’s climate is rapidly changing, it is arguably the case that *terroir* is also changing. Is the identity of Champagne wines shifting too? If climate would force a thorough rethinking of grapevine production in Champagne, is the identity of Champagne going to be compromised? A thorough metaphysical study can help point out the most sound answers to these and related questions, by investigating what makes the content of a bottle an authentic instance of a wine (Todd 2010, Smith 2016).

Besides geographical indications, analytic metaphysics can help address questions of identity for many other food items, such as recipes (Borghini Piras 2020a), genetically modified foods (Andrée 2008), or specific food categories—e.g. local food, organic food, natural food (Siipi 2015).

Food and language. Language plays a central role in human relation to food. The list of examples is too long to be exhausted here and we shall only point at a few of them. First, experimental studies in computational linguistics on food show that the descriptors of a food, including its price, can make it more or less attractive (Jurafsky 2014, Spence 2017). Second, naming enters into the identity of recipes too: are pasta and noodle the same? Third, Adams (1990) amply demonstrates that the ways in which we talk about meat—such as the use of the neutral pronoun “it”—is crucial in shaping the sexual politics of meat.

As the latter example attests, research in this area can fruitfully be conjoined with the growing scholarship on the ethics and politics of language to foster multiculturalism, inclusivity, and diversity when it comes to (medical and institutional) dietary advice, marketing, and more broadly food communication.

As we hope these notes demonstrate, much work awaits to be done by analytic metaphysicians in the study of food. This issue can be fruitful in two directions: first, it contributes to complexify metaphysical theories of identity, persistence, properties, causation, and composition. It is also a fruitful angle to study the interplay between the ontology of natural and social entities. Besides, such a work would be beneficial not only to the field, but most importantly it would serve to provide a much needed grounding to food scholarship and to debates surrounding food in the public sphere (Bonotti & Barnhill 2019). Broadly speaking an analytic perspective on food brings new insights into the relationship between language, perceptions, and reality.

3. The Current Special Issue

Finally, we shall briefly present the five articles collected in this special issue, which nicely complement the existing literature. They address a well-assorted variety of topics in metaphysics: aesthetics properties; mereology and food systems; local food; recipes and the authenticity of dishes; “normal” food *vs.* food substitutes and supplements. Papers also come from scholars at different stages of their careers and specializing in diverse camps of philosophy. In the remaining, we outline the contribution of each paper.

Sara Bernstein’s paper “Can Unmodified Food Be Culinary Art?” explores an original question regarding the aesthetic of food. Bernstein wonders whether, in some circumstances, unmodified food, that is food that has not undergone any kind of alteration or enhancement, can be considered to be culinary art. Her answer is positive. Throughout the paper she constructs parallelisms between unmodified food and visual art objects (especially, readymades) and shows that there are several similarities between the two. According to Bernstein, in order to establish whether some unmodified food can count as culinary art there has to be an interplay between the artistic intentions of a chef, the attitude of the consumer, who must have certain expectations and pay careful attention to the culinary experience (this what Bernstein calls “aesthetic trust”). Bernstein argues that aesthetic trust is neither necessary nor sufficient for culinary art, nonetheless it plays a central role. What counts most in determining whether some unmodified food can count as culinary art are culinary settings and institutions. As well as in the artistic world museums, art critics, art magazines determine whether an object can count as art, the place where such food is being served, group of food critics, culinary magazines, and social media are influential in conferring culinary artistic status. Bernstein argues that what makes something culinary art is a matter of receiving attention from the right sort of institutions, embracing an institutionalist theory of art.

Shane Epting’s paper “Unjust Food Systems and Applied Mereology” proposes to employ an applied-mereological approach to solve some of the issues that originate from the complexity of conventional food systems. Such systems are composed of a huge number of parts located all around the globe, but an overabundance of these components generates what Epting calls “globalized opacity.” This opacity does not allow us to see how all these parts interact and, as a consequence, to understand how the entire system works. Not knowing the interactions between these components makes it difficult to identify the sources of problems connected to the system, especially when it comes to social injustices. In order to reduce such issues and improve food justice, Epting argues that it is necessary to investigate the relations among the parts that compose the system by adopting an “applied-mereological” method. This method not only can help to understand how to lower the number of parts (and so to reduce globalized opacity), but also how to replace those parts that generate injustices with alternative ones. In the last section of his paper, Epting identifies some areas which deserve further research (e.g., production, distribution, and consumption) and suggests that this research should be interdisciplinary.

In her paper “Local Food as Social Change: Food Sovereignty as a Radical New Ontology,” Samantha Noll discusses the importance of ontology in the analyses of local food movements. These analyses are usually made from an ethical or social and political perspective, giving the structure and the strategies of local

food projects. Noll argues that also an ontological analysis is fundamental in order to provide a good analysis of local food: ontology could provide valuable insights into the principles that guide local food movements, and it could help to understand the “revolutionary promise” of such movements. Noll then focuses on two different kinds of local food projects: food security (guided by distributive justice) and food sovereignty (guided by a more expansive justice). She provides an overview of the justice frameworks and ontological commitments that govern these two projects. Noll concludes by claiming that food sovereignty projects are “revolutionary,” since they could change industrial food practices, but also, since they are built on a new political ontology and a “co-constitutive food-focused orientation,” these projects could lead to the construction of new social and political structures.

In his paper “Towards a Particularist Metaphysics of Recipes,” Giulio Sciacca develops a novel metaphysical account of recipes and investigates the concept of authenticity of dishes in relation to recipes. Sciacca’s paper is structured in two main parts. In the first part, he argues against a Platonist account of recipes, rejecting the thesis that recipes are universals instantiated by dishes, and claiming that there are some grounding relations between recipes and dishes that are not those of instantiation. In the second part of the paper, by developing some aspects of Borghini (2015) constructivist account of recipes, Sciacca advances his novel account according to which recipes are “abstract cultural artifacts” that are traced through their “history and recordings”. In Sciacca’s view, which takes a cue from Kaplan’s theory of words, in order to preserve the authenticity of dishes, the mental or written stages through which recipes are handed to future generations must be appropriately connected to what he calls “the introductory stage” of the recipe and the dish they encode.

Helena Siipi’s aim in her paper “Food, Food Substitutes and Food Supplements” is to understand what is food by exploring its relation with food substitutes and food supplements, and she explores such relations by focusing on their functions. She argues that food substitutes (such as almond milk instead of dairy milk) and food supplements (such as proteins or multivitamin) can fulfill some but not all the functions fulfilled by what she calls “real food.” Indeed, in her view, “real food” has social, cultural, aesthetic, culinary, nutritional and other functions that food substitutes and supplements lack. Siipi then raises an interesting issue regarding some kinds of food substitutes, such as in vitro meat, that apparently share most of real food’s functions. According to Siipi, some distinctions between real food and food substitutes are determined only by social customs and habits. Food substitutes, which could instead be seen just as alternatives, are considered to be novel and uncustomary, only because of individuals’ experiences (what comes first looks more real and authentic than what comes next).

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Can Unmodified Food Be Culinary Art?

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Abstract

You are sitting in a fancy restaurant. After an extensively prepared, multi-course meal, out comes the dessert course: an unmodified but perfectly juicy, fresh peach. Many restaurants serve such unmodified or barely-modified foods, intending them to count as culinary art. This paper takes up the question of whether such unmodified foods, served in the relevant institutional settings, do count as culinary art. Drawing on debates about the metaphysics of art, I compare and contrast the case of unmodified food to Duchamp's "Fountain" (1917), pointing out relevant similarities and differences between the cases. I propose that there is a distinctive form of aesthetic trust involved in formal culinary settings, and it plays a central role in many instances of culinary art. Culinary institutions summon aesthetic trust, which helps to explain why a dish of unmodified food served in an appropriate institutional setting can count as culinary art.

Keywords: Culinary art, Food ontology, Readymades, Aesthetic trust, Aesthetic value.

You are sitting in Chez Panisse, Alice Waters' acclaimed restaurant in Berkeley, California. After an extensively prepared, multi-course meal, out comes the dessert course: an unmodified but perfectly juicy, fresh peach. Many chefs serve such unmodified or barely-modified foods with the intention that they count as culinary art. This paper takes up the question of whether unmodified foods, served in the relevant institutional settings, can count as culinary art.¹

Here's the plan. In section 1, I propose and discuss the idea that at least some food counts as culinary art. Along the way, I address some underattended-to questions about the nature of culinary art more generally, and I reveal some of its distinguishing features. In section 2, I analyze what it is for a food to be unmodified, and distinguish modification from several nearby concepts such as preparation and selection. I use sashimi as a case study for these categories. I compare and contrast the case of unmodified food to Duchamp's "Fountain" (1917), highlighting relevant similarities between the cases. In Section 3, I propose that there is a distinctive form of aesthetic trust involved in formal culinary settings, and it plays a central role in many instances of culinary art. Culinary

¹ Plakias (2018: 45) also discusses the idea of unmodified food as culinary art in passing.

institutions summon aesthetic trust, which helps to explain why a dish of unmodified food served in an appropriate institutional setting can count as culinary art.

1. Culinary Art

My argument will depend on the premise that food can be art. *Culinary art*, roughly, art composed of food with taste as the primary sensory modality,² is an underexplored topic in philosophical aesthetics and philosophy of art.³ I cannot do justice to the entire topic of culinary art here. But I will propose that culinary art is in fact a form of art, by way of drawing illuminating parallels between culinary art and other forms of art. Ontological questions about the nature of visual art objects have fruitful parallels in culinary art. Just as we might ask what makes a particular object count as an art object, we might ask what makes a certain food or grouping of foods count as culinary art.

Lest one doubt that there can be culinary art (in the strongest possible sense of “art”), consider that aesthetic values of visual art have direct analogues in culinary art. Just as we might ask what makes a certain piece of visual art beautiful, and in what beauty consists, we might ask what makes a culinary experience gustatorily valuable, and in what gustatory value consists. Just as a quality painting has aesthetic values such as balance, complexity, unity, and harmony, an artful meal or dish can possess the same aesthetic values.

A meal can be a vehicle for artistic intention. Just as a visual artist intends to portray a scene with a particular feeling, mood, or memory, a chef might intend to portray a particular feeling, mood, or memory in her food. As Michelangelo intended to portray David’s strength and determination, a chef might intend to portray cheerfulness or aggression in a particular dish. Chefs intend certain combinations of flavors to be gustatorily aggressive like visual artists intend combinations of colors to be visually aggressive: a dish of house-cured salami and mustard is a forceful set of flavors like Rothko’s red and black “Composition” (1959) is visually forceful. A scene from Monet’s waterlilies can be serene just as a particular combination of flavors such as lavender and vanilla can be calming and delicate. And a painting can be composed in faded tones in order to evoke memory just as a dish can be composed to evoke the idea of familiar childhood foods. (“Elevated comfort cooking”, the tradition of elaborate restaurant-created versions of American home-served classics like grilled cheese and Sunday casserole, is a ubiquitous example of the focus on nostalgic culinary memory.)⁴

As visual art has representational power, food also has representational power. The Impossible Burger, a vegan burger made out of genetically modified soy, gustatorily represents cow-derived burger meat; sesame is sometimes used in dishes to gustatorily represent the taste of peanut. With both visual and culinary art, representation runs the gamut from direct to indirect. Van Gogh’s self-portrait impressionistically represents his visage but doesn’t exactly capture it; the Impossible Burger represents real meat, but doesn’t precisely duplicate it. A

² Much culinary art has more than one sensory modality, including smell and vision. Though my discussion will focus on taste, these other aspects of food arguably contribute to culinary artistic status.

³ Exceptions include Plakias 2018, Kaplan 2012, Furrow 2016, Sweeney 2017, Andina and Barbero 2018 and Telfer 1996.

⁴ <https://www.newsweek.com/cutting-edge-chefs-serve-food-tells-story-249512>

famous dessert at Le Bernardin called “Deconstructed Pineapple” consists of a hollowed-out real pineapple, impressively reconstituted as three different flavor profiles of the original pineapple. Like Van Gogh’s self-portrait and other impressionistic art, the artfulness lies in the difference between the representation and reality.⁵

Culinary art, like visual art, can also be symbolic: a common offering in Australian restaurants is an attempt at the American burger and fries (so labeled and explicitly conceived), intended not just to mimic the original version, but to represent American flavors, values, and generous quantities. Dishes and meals often symbolize an entire food culture, tradition, and history, like Rome’s famous *cacio e pepe*. And there are meal *homages* to other famous meals, like NeXT chef Grant Achatz’ *homages* to famous dishes from French Laundry and El Bulli.⁶

Culinary art, like visual art, is also open to interpretation. As we sometimes sense that there is a *point* to a piece of visual art, but we cannot immediately discern what it is, we sometimes sense that there is a point to a certain dish, and are charged with its interpretation. As we are left to decipher the Mona Lisa’s mysterious expression, for example, we are sometimes charged with interpreting a creatively composed combination of flavors, like chef Janos Wilder’s chocolate jalapeño ice cream. Food, like visual art, can be a conceptual challenge.

Some art works, particularly musical works, are repeatable. Generally, meals are also repeatable art works: prominent chefs frequently serve different tokens of the same type of meal. Recipes are to meals like orchestral compositions are to performed symphonies.⁷ Nonrepeatable culinary art works do exist, however: arguably, pop-up meal collaborations and one-off creative culinary experiments amount to nonrepeatable culinary art.

Some works of visual art are individually complete, whereas others are to be evaluated in the context of an entire show or series. Similarly, some individual dishes are considered complete works by chefs, whereas others work in the medium of the full twelve-course meal. Though I intend my foregoing discussion to apply to instances of unmodified food served in a particular dish, some of my remarks will apply to instances of unmodified food served in the context of a full meal.

Both visual and culinary art stem from a process of artistic labor and creation. Visual artists paint and sculpt; chefs prepare a recipe or a menu, prepare the ingredients, and cook. The process of artistic creation distinguishes art from naturally occurring visual and culinary beauty, like a beautiful mountain vista or a delicious wild berry. Consumption of art by viewers or eaters also plays a central role in establishing status as an art object.

Culinary art is subject to what Wollheim (1980: 43) called the *bricoleur problem*: “why certain apparently arbitrarily identified stuffs or processes should be the vehicles of art”, while others are not. Most theories of art draw a distinction between a scribble drawn by a toddler displayed on Dad’s refrigerator and a

⁵ Whether these examples count as representation rather than, e.g., mere reference or resemblance is a matter of debate. Thanks to two referees for drawing my attention to this point. See Korsmeyer (2002: 128-31) for the view that food can be referential via property exemplification.

⁶ NeXT, French Laundry, El Bulli, and Le Barnardin are prominent, widely acclaimed contemporary restaurants to which I will periodically refer throughout the paper.

⁷ For a theory of recipes, see Borghini 2015.

scribble drawn by a major artist displayed in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Similarly, a theory of culinary art might draw a distinction between a grilled cheese sandwich prepared for a quick take-away lunch and a grilled cheese sandwich served as the fourth movement of a multicourse high-concept meal at Alinea.⁸ As museums and marketplaces play a role in influencing what counts as art and particularly as “high art”, restaurants and culinary marketplaces play a role in influencing what counts as high culinary art.⁹

This list of parallels is not exhaustive. Where we look for parallels between culinary art and other forms of art, we will find them. At the very least, the numerous parallels between culinary art and other well-established forms of art give culinary art a seat at the table (as it were): some food can be art.

Now, assuming that food can count as art, it is natural to wonder where the boundaries are between artistic and non-artistic food objects. It cannot be the case that everything we eat counts as culinary art, from our daily multivitamins to our hastily-consumed packaged granola bars. I turn now to a specific question about such boundaries: whether unmodified food, such as the perfectly juicy peach, can count as culinary art. Just as we might wonder whether and why an otherwise unmodified object placed in a renowned museum counts as art (“Hey, I could have done that!”), we might also wonder whether and why an unmodified food object is a candidate for counting as culinary art.

The investigation will reveal interesting insights into the nature of culinary art more generally. I will suggest that, along with the distinguishing features in the previous discussion, culinary art often involves a complex interplay between the artistic intentions of the chef, the attitudes of the eaters, and the influence of culinary institutions. Such a view accords with our intuitions about the boundaries between culinary art and non-art.

2. Unmodified Food

To begin, it will be helpful to understand what sort of food counts as unmodified.

I take *modification* to involve changing food with the purpose of altering or enhancing its flavor, smell, or texture. Heating and all forms of cooking (including braising, roasting, frying, grilling, steaming, and sous vide treatment) count as modification. The addition of spices or flavors counts as modification, as does curing or pickling. Combining foods with other foods counts as modification, as when a fresh fruit salad is composed by chopping various fruits together.

Modification is different than *preparation*. Preparation includes slicing, cutting, dividing, or washing. Unmodified food might nonetheless be prepared, as in some cases involving uncooked fish and meat (frozen for food safety reasons, then sliced), fresh fruit (washed), or fresh vegetables (chopped).

Modification is also different than *selection*. A chef might carefully source and select perfectly juicy raspberries as the crowning grace of a meal. Or she might select the best raw fish directly from a seafood market, deciding that it among all the fresh fish will produce the most complex flavor. Selecting a fresh fruit or vegetable at exactly the right time of ripening, or the perfect fresh fish

⁸ For further discussion of this problem, see Lopes 2014.

⁹ Low concept culinary art, including well-executed food served from food trucks, also deserves consideration as a form of culinary art.

from a market, are both skills of culinary artistic discernment. But they do not count as canonical physical modification. (Both preparation and selection, I will suggest, do contribute to the aesthetic values of a particular dish or meal.)

For the purposes of this investigation, creation counts as a form of modification. Many chefs grow, and thus create, their own vegetables and fruit. The food resulting from this labor does not count as unmodified, since a chef might manipulate conditions in order to change the taste of the vegetables and fruit. (That a food is created by a chef does not detract at all from its artistic merit—quite the contrary—but it does put these instances out of the domain of my central question of interest.) Food selected from a carefully chosen farmer, however, does count as unmodified: the chef neither creates it nor changes it, but merely sources and selects it.

The distinction between unmodified and modified food is best understood as an intuitive distinction rather than a stable metaphysical one, for several reasons. First, there is a difference in significance between sorts of changes in temperature: intuitively, heating counts as modification whereas freezing counts as mere preparation or preservation. Second, there are incidental causal changes in food preparation (loss of particles, demoiurization, and so on) that do not generally count as intentional, substantive modification. Incidental changes might nonetheless be intentional, as when a chef leaves cheese out of the fridge for a certain amount of time in order to achieve the desired softness, letting natural environmental factors do the job of modification for her.

Third, artistic intention plays a key intuitive role in what foods count as modified. Here I will remain as neutral as possible on how big a role artistic intention plays in categorizing a particular culinary intervention as modification, because I do not think the role is straightforward. One might be tempted by the simple view: “if the chef intends to influence the taste of the food by x-ing, then x counts as modification, whereas if she does not intend to influence the food by x-ing, then x does not count as modification.” But a perfectly juicy peach can be imbued with artistic intent and meaning without being physically modified, and a heavily manipulated dish might not be the product of careful artistic intention. Artistic intention is not sufficient for a particular activity to count as modification, though it is clearly important to the concept of culinary art more generally.

Fourth, some preparation counts as modification, if the preparation is intended to alter the flavor. Sashimi, a category of food that I take to encompass fresh raw fish, crustaceans, and shellfish served in a variety of culinary settings, is a paradigm case of this overlap in categories. One might think that sashimi counts as an unmodified food: it is neither heated nor cooked. No spices are added to it for the purpose of adjusting its flavor. It is not combined with other food for a combination of flavors. And it is not substantively changed from its original form before being served.

But sashimi is carefully and artfully prepared insofar as it is sliced and served in ways conducive to bringing out its texture and taste. In serious culinary settings, it is also served at exactly the right temperature in order to manipulate its flavor. Fresh fish is carefully selected for the potential flavor it will produce when sliced as sashimi. On the skills of selection and preparation required for serving high-quality sashimi, sushi chef Kaz Matsune writes:

Each fish tastes different. Male salmon tastes different from female salmon. [...] Generally speaking, tuna tastes good when cut thick around 1cm-2cm or 1/2-

linch for sashimi. When cut into paper thin, tuna loses its flavor. However when it comes to Toro/Tuna Belly, you need to cut it thin due to its fat content. If you cut Toro into 2cm thickness, it may be too overwhelming, thus killing the delicate flavor the belly meat has.

[How] you cut determines how the sashimi tastes. You need to be able to determine just by looking at the fish. This takes years of experience—looking at fish every day for many years. Let's just say even if you mastered sashimi knife skills but you know nothing about fish, then you are unable to make the great tasting sashimi because you have no idea how to slice it for great taste.¹⁰

Paradigmatically unmodified food, in contrast, is not sliced, cut, or changed in order to alter its taste.

Fifth, some selection might also count as modification. Consider a chef who places one raspberry with four cranberries rather than four cranberries with one raspberry. (Suppose that she prefers the dessert to be tart rather than sweet, and uses the contrast between the berry flavors to achieve this effect.) In selecting one balance of berries over another, the chef intentionally modifies the overall taste of the dish, as well as the gustatory contrast between the berries. Even though the chef merely chooses the combination of berries, this sort of selection meets some criteria for modification, since it is performed with the goal of manipulating the taste of the dish.

Even if the distinction between unmodified and modified food is largely intuitive, it is a useful framework for understanding the role of physical intervention in the creation of culinary art. It is fruitful, for example, to view chef-composed dishes as existing on a continuum from unmodified to modified, with the untouched peach on one end and a highly manipulated *coq au vin* on the other. This framework can help us to understand why we might count both dishes as culinary art, despite their differences. I turn now to this topic.

3. Unmodified Food as Culinary Art

Thus far, I have highlighted the parallels between culinary art and other forms of art, and discussed what counts as unmodified food. In order to bring these threads together—to begin exploring the circumstances under which unmodified food can count as culinary art—it will be helpful to have a general idea of the distinguishing features of culinary art more generally. Instances of culinary art, I will suggest, generally involve a complex interplay between the artistic intentions of the chef, the attitude of the eater, and the influence of culinary artistic culture. Since some unmodified foods involve these aspects as well, they can count as culinary art.

Reconsider the perfectly juicy peach served at the end of a long, well-thought-out restaurant meal. Note that the peach has many of the hallmarks of art noted in section 1. A peach can have aesthetic values like complexity and balance. A peach can be a vehicle for sophisticated culinary artistic intention: it might serve as a fresh palate-cleanser after a particularly heavy or spicy dish, or might have intrinsic qualities that the chef wishes to share with the consumer. It can have representational and symbolic power, as when it is used in a seasonal-

¹⁰ <https://www.quora.com/Does-a-sashimi-chef-really-need-that-much-skill-Pure-sashimi-is-just-nicely-cut-fresh-fish-The-fresher-the-fish-the-better-the-taste-So-what-exactly-is-the-top-sushi-chef-in-the-world-really-doing>

ly-themed meal to represent the freshness of spring. A peach can be a product of artistic labor and skill, as when a chef chooses one at precisely the right stage of freshness to serve. And a fresh peach can be served in formal contexts such as restaurants, and thus be recognized by the culinary marketplace as an object worthy of artistic praise.

Culinary art often involves a chef who wishes to impart a particular sort of culinary experience to an eater.¹¹ While this is paradigmatically done through complex combinations of foods and flavors, it can also presumably be done through a single piece of unmodified food. Combining or changing food isn't necessary for imparting sophisticated artistic intention. Sometimes a chef simply wishes to call attention to certain aspects of the food that might otherwise go unnoticed.¹² Alice Waters serves the peach for dessert at *Chez Panisse* because she takes it to be "perfect and impossible to improve upon".¹³

Artistic intention alone cannot be sufficient for creating culinary art, however. If the artistic intentions of the chef are enough to create culinary art, the ontological powers of the chef are too great. As Zimmerman (2002) notes about such a theory of visual art:

Baker thinks we sometimes bring things into existence by thinking about them—at least, this follows from her view if objects can become artifacts (tools and works of art and monuments, for instance) simply by our thinking of them as such. A piece of conveniently shaped driftwood becomes a coffee table by being brushed off and brought into the house, a urinal becomes a sculpture when hung on a wall in a museum and given a title [...] But do we really believe that anything new comes into existence when we do such things? (2002: 333).

If mere artistic intention were enough to create art, then an artist could create a piece of art merely by thinking certain thoughts about it. Similarly with culinary art: if artistic intentions were enough to change a piece of food from non-art to art, then many more things would count as culinary art than are intuitively so.¹⁴

In addition to the artist's intentions, art paradigmatically involves interaction between artist and viewer. One distinguishing feature of art is that it is often interpreted as such by the viewer. In a museum, the viewer interprets the paintings, but not the lit up exit sign, as art. When one enters a museum, one is primed to view certain objects as art in addition to viewing them as mere ob-

¹¹ Barbero (2018) holds that food can be a "semantic vehicle" for a chef. In the case of a well-created Bloody Mary, for example, the drink functions "as a vehicle for the mental representations of the person making the Bloody Mary and for the appreciation of those who drink it" (358).

¹² For more relevant discussion of artistic intent, see Irvin's (2005) discussion of artistic sanctions. Sanctions, roughly, are acts and communications by the artist that are intended to draw attention to features of the work. Sanctions can be part of the process of creation, or they can be extra-procedural (e.g. discussing the work in an interview or giving the work a title). According to Irvin, sanctions are to be taken into consideration in the interpretation of artwork.

¹³ <https://www.washingtonian.com/2012/01/31/a-qa-with-alice-waters/>

¹⁴ There is a background issue about the metaphysics of art objects to which I cannot do justice in this paper: what metaphysical relationship the art object bears to the material that makes it up. A special version of this issue arises for readymades and unmodified food. Evinne (2013) takes up the specific question of the ontology of readymades.

jects. This propensity to view certain objects as art upon entering a museum points to a more general phenomenon: *aesthetic trust*.

This sort of trust engenders a type of hopeful expectation about a particular aesthetic situation. As Jones writes of trust more generally, “Trust is optimism about the goodwill and competence of another” (1996: 7). Aesthetic trust is a positive attitude borne from an artistic consumer to a particular aesthetic experience that disposes her to see certain objects *as* art. Trust also involves the belief that thought and sophistication have gone into the creation of a particular aesthetic experience. Examples of aesthetic trust abound across aesthetic categories. We are often inclined to view the objects we see in museums as art. We are inclined to view the music we hear at a concert as aural art. And we are disposed to identify perfume as a kind of olfactory art. Viewing something as art produces an inclination to give it a close sort of aesthetic attention—to be open to its aesthetic qualities, and to more closely and thoughtfully examine them than we otherwise might.

There is a distinctive form of aesthetic trust adopted by those who eat in certain formal culinary settings. Trust involves a hopeful expectation had by an eater, directed towards a particular culinary experience. The attitude is based on optimism about the experience that the food will generate, and a disposition to attend to food in a particularly close way. In the case of the peach at Chez Panisse, one is inclined to pay particularly close attention to the flavors and subtleties of the fruit *because* one believes the chef is intending to communicate something through it.¹⁵ As the placement of a painting in the right sort of museum disposes it to be attended to as art, so, too does the serving of a dish in a restaurant dispose it to be evaluated and attended to as a form of culinary art. When one enters a restaurant, one places a certain amount of trust in the chef’s vision, and the culinary experience resulting from that vision. One is inclined to treat the peach as culinary art, I suggest, because one has a sort of artistic faith in the chef and in the restaurant.¹⁶ Aesthetic trust also encompasses a kind of interpretive charity about what a chef is trying to accomplish. The presence or absence of aesthetic trust helps to explain why food served in restaurants is often treated and attended-to differently than food served at book clubs in private homes—even great food.¹⁷

Aesthetic trust does not create culinary art on its own. Aesthetic trust is neither necessary nor sufficient for a particular dish to count as art. A meal can be

¹⁵ My main example involves a prominent high-concept restaurant, but it need not: many eaters exhibit similar forms of aesthetic trust in diners, food trucks, and even Starbucks. The trust creates an expectation that what one is about to experience is the product of an artistic vision from some sort of culinary artist, whether that be a highly praised expert in molecular gastronomy, a long-serving chef at a greasy spoon diner, or a corporate scientist designing a highly replicable cup of coffee.

¹⁶ There are at least two possible *explananda* in the peach case: the aesthetic qualities of the peach itself, and the aesthetic qualities of the peach-in-relation-to-other-dishes, e.g., as a palate cleanser. My discussion of aesthetic trust is intended to target the former, though some of my remarks apply to the latter case as well.

¹⁷ Lopes (2014: 138-39) proposes a two-pronged approach to explain why some instances of artistic media count as art, while others do not. Particular kinds of art have different “medium profiles”, or processes by which objects are transformed into art objects via artistic intentions. Medium profiles have associated “appreciative practices”, or contexts that ground aesthetic norms and values ascribed to various artistic media.

culinary art even with a distrustful eater. One can imagine a particularly grumpy, distrustful food critic with low expectations who is nonetheless blown away by an outstanding meal. A meal can fail to count as culinary art even with a trusting eater: trust can be violated by a particularly poor meal. Many foodies have had the unfortunate experience of paying for an expensive meal for which one has high expectations, only to be disappointed by the result. In these ways, culinary aesthetic trust mirrors other forms of misplaced aesthetic expectations, such as the dashed hopes after a poor musical concert, or the surprisingly beautiful and sophisticated sculpture created by the seven-year-old. Aesthetic expectations often exceed or fall short of expectations, but it is the presence of expectations that are the evidence of aesthetic trust in the first place.

Though aesthetic trust is neither necessary nor sufficient for culinary art, it plays an important role in the art/ non-art distinction. We have many excellent culinary experiences that do not, intuitively, count as art. The spot-hitting cold beer on a hot day, the juicy hamburger after avoiding meat for a stretch, and the (otherwise undistinguished) glass of wine with dinner are all extremely pleasurable gustatory experiences. But these sorts of experiences are not paradigmatically accompanied by the sort of careful attention that is the hallmark of aesthetic trust. Aesthetic trust is an attitude held in certain situations that disposes the eater to pay careful attention to the qualities of the experience and the artistic intention behind it, rather than just its pleasantness.

Aesthetic trust is explanatorily important because it helps distinguish unmodified food objects that count as art from those that do not. Think, for example, of all of the peaches growing on the tree that a farmer will eventually pluck in order to hand over to Alice Waters. At time t , they are on the tree. At time $t+1$, they are washed and placed on plates in order to be served to customers. At time $t+2$, the courses appear on tables in Chez Panisse. At what times do the peaches count as culinary art? Intuitively, not all of the times: they are not culinary art when they are on the tree. Nor are they culinary art, arguably, when they are simply sitting in the restaurant kitchen on plates ready to serve, after having been given the go-ahead by the chef. Rather, they become culinary art when they are served to customers who have culinary expectations about the food—when they are objects of culinary attention. The chef intends to convey artistic meaning through the food, and the customers expect to discern this meaning. Customers in Chez Panisse, for example, expect a particular sort of culinary experience backed by sophisticated artistic intention. They are primed to give the juicy peach a particular sort of aesthetic attention that they would not otherwise give fruit at home—even the very best fruit.

Now, what else makes the juicy peach at Chez Panisse different from a similarly perfect peach served in other settings? Suppose that a friend hosting a book group at her home dispenses some similarly perfect peaches as a mid-discussion snack. Not much, if anything, distinguishes the Chez Panisse peach from the book group peach. Their tastes and textures may be almost identical. Perhaps the book group host even procures the peach from the same farmer as the professional chef. Similarly with a perfect peach served as a sample at a farmer's market booth. Here, too, the peaches are not intrinsically different.

Rather, extrinsic differences make the peaches importantly unlike each other. They are different *because* they are served in dissimilar culinary settings, each with different extrinsic relations and culinary expectations. There are the surface differences of the surroundings: the coarse formality of the restaurants, the wait-

ers, and the chef's kitchen differ from the environs of the book discussion group or the farmer's market. There are the economic and transactional differences involving the peach: one pays for a restaurant meal, whereas one does not usually pay for a book group. There are institutional differences: a restaurant is a different sort of social entity than a book group. There are differences in quantity and type of media attention: Chez Panisse is bound to garner the attention of food critics, whereas book groups and farmer's market booths generally do not. A book group, a farmer's market booth, and a restaurant are all treated very differently by culinary marketplaces and food critics.

Exactly how much of a role culinary marketplaces and critics play in determining what counts as culinary art is an important question for our purposes. As museums and galleries play a large role in determining what conventionally counts as art, so, too, do chefs, professional restaurants, and food critics.

Defining their exact roles in the creation of culinary art, however, is tricky. Being served in a restaurant isn't a sufficient condition for being culinary art, since not every meal in a restaurant should count as such. An Egg McMuffin served in a run-of-the-mill McDonald's probably doesn't count as a work of culinary art. Nor does every dish or meal in a high-concept restaurant count as art, due to the possibility of failed art.¹⁸ Perhaps the otherwise extremely skilled sous chef burns the rice in a way that deviates from the head chef's intention for the dish, or the meal is flat-out disgusting. Or perhaps an avant garde restaurant chef serves human fecal matter on a plate, so labeled, so that no one can or will eat it. Culinary art requires more than being served in a restaurant: the surroundings do not alone make the art.

Nor is it the restaurant's existence *qua* restaurant that makes food count as art. One can imagine a famous restaurant that undergoes extensive flood damage, after which its chef decides to serve meals in an open-air preschool playground rather than waste the food and squander the audience.¹⁹ Here, the intentions of the chef play a role in communicating culinary artistic content, and a more central role in demarcating the food as art. What counts as a restaurant is also not as straightforward as it seems. In 2015, a Columbia University undergraduate operated a one-table "restaurant" called Pith out of his dorm room, garnering widespread culinary acclaim. He denied that what he was doing counted as a restaurant.²⁰

Even if restaurants influence what counts as culinary art in many of the same ways that museums influence what counts as visual art, the boundaries of such influence are easily interrogated. A famous boundary-testing example is Duchamp's (1917) "Fountain", an unmodified²¹ mass-manufactured urinal chosen by Duchamp to be displayed in several prominent museums. As such, "Fountain" is widely considered to be one of the most influential visual art objects of the twentieth century. Obvious issues raised by Fountain include whether something becomes art just because it is displayed in a museum, the extent to which attention from art critics plays a role in its being considered art, and how

¹⁸ For a theory of failed art, see Mag Uidher 2010.

¹⁹ Korman (2019) argues that restaurants can exist without being constituted by anything.

²⁰ <https://www.grubstreet.com/2015/10/columbia-tasting-restaurant.html>

²¹ Here I set aside the fact that "Fountain" is slightly modified by the addition of the signature "R. Mutt 1917".

important artistic intent is to the meaning and interpretation of the final creation.

There are some key differences between “Fountain” and a chef’s juicy peach. “Fountain” involves an object that commonly elicits a reaction of repulsion or disgust, and Duchamp’s other “readymades” were similarly selected because they were not beautiful or pleasing. (“Aesthetic delectation is the danger to be avoided,” Duchamp claimed.) Consumption of a juicy peach, in contrast, is intended to be a gustatorily pleasant experience. Alice Waters presumably intended to draw our attention to the purity of the ingredient and the taste, whereas Duchamp did not intend to draw our attention to aesthetic purity of the urinal. Duchamp chose objects that were already ordinary artifacts presented as artworks, whereas Waters presented the peach as art from the outset.²² Duchamp is widely considered to have intended provocation with his choice of object to place in the exhibition, whereas a chef usually does not have such an ideological agenda behind a dish.

There are, of course, exceptions to the latter point: it has become quite trendy to push the bounds of what is paradigmatically edible within and across culinary cultures. Prominent Noma chef Rene Redzepi commonly serves live ants, mold, and moss in his dishes, for example. Alice Waters serves her peach partly because she wishes to prove a point about the gustatory bounty that nature has to offer without heavy modification and manipulation of flavors. But chefs generally do not intend a cooking ideology to supersede the gustatory pleasure of the meal. I do not know of any chef who wants her meal to be gross, even if she wants it to be very interesting or to push the consumer’s gustatory boundaries. Even Rene Redzepi, the ant-and-mold-utilizing chef, takes his primary artistic goal to be the creation of deliciousness.²³

The similarities between “Fountain” and the juicy peach are also illuminating. Neither object is created by its artist, though each is selected by the artist as the final product. Both the urinal and the peach are functionally interchangeable with suitably similar copies. Any other similar urinal from the production line would have had nearly identical artistic influence; any other similarly juicy peach would have had nearly the same culinary effect. Each is granted a sort of artistic credibility in virtue of its selection. Each provokes reflection about the fundamental nature of art more generally. On “Fountain”, an anonymous editorial commented:

Whether Mr Mutt with his own hands made the fountain has no importance. He CHOSE it. He took an ordinary article of life, placed it so that its useful significance disappeared under the new title and point of view—created a new thought for that object (Anon., “The Richard Mutt Case”, *Blind Man*, New York, no.2, May 1917: 5).

Unmodified food and unmodified everyday art objects both call on us to consider why the particular work counts as art. In both cases, artistic intent, plus a particular sort of formal artistic setting, play roles in their apparent status as art objects. Chefs who serve unmodified food objects in formal restaurant settings im-

²² Thanks to a referee for pointing out this difference.

²³ <https://www.ft.com/content/5af296e4-df26-11e9-9743-db5a370481bc>

bue those objects with culinary meaning in much the same way that Duchamp imbues the urinal with meaning.

It is not just each artist's intention that imbues the objects with meaning, however. In both cases, there is a wider social phenomenon at work in treating the object as art. Danto (1964) famously identified the network of critics, producers, marketers, distributors, and consumers of art as "the artworld". Roughly, the artworld is the artistic cultural milieu that creates social conventions which designate objects as art. Certain objects count as art at least partially in virtue of their belonging to the artworld. On this sort of view, part of what makes something an object of art is that it is treated as such by an artistic community. Theories of art and the history of art play a large role in what the artworld takes to be art. Dickie's (1969) expansion of the theory takes artistic institutions to be central to artistic status, with institutions conferring artistic status on objects worthy of artistic appreciation. An institutionalist view easily explains why Duchamp's urinal counts as art: it is treated as art by the relevant cultural institutions. Dickie wrote, "I am not claiming that Duchamp and friends invented the conferring of the status of art; they simply used an existing institutional device in an unusual way" (Dickie 1974: 33).

There is an equivalent view to be developed about culinary art. Call "the foodworld" the network of critics, producers, farmers, marketers, distributors, and consumers of food in formal culinary settings.²⁴ The foodworld clearly plays a significant role in what is to be considered culinary art. Institutions such as groups of food critics, culinary magazines, and more recently, social media, are influential in conferring culinary artistic status. The foodworld also connects and intertwines culinary culture to its own theory and history, so that they inform what counts as culinary art. According to an institutionalist theory of culinary art, what makes something culinary art is a matter of receiving attention from the right sort of institutions. A particular dish or food is culinary art because the right food critics say it is, or because it is served in the right sort of restaurant, or it has the right sort of foodie following, or some combination thereof. This view captures the extension of things considered to be culinary art by the foodworld, a sociological fact Skidelsky (2007) notes about visual art. There is a further question about whether it is the correct metaphysical account of culinary art.

Institutionalist theories provide indispensable theoretical resources for accounting for differences between culinary art and non-art. In appealing to the explanatory power of culinary institutions in the art/ non-art distinction, one need not endorse all of the claims of institutionalism about art. If what we seek is a descriptive rather than a revisionary metaphysics of culinary art, the foodworld clearly plays some sort of key role in deciding what counts as art. The foodworld need not play the *only* role in this designation, but omitting the role of the foodworld would result in a loss of significant predictive and explanatory power with respect to the art/ non-art distinction. It is an intuitive data point, for example, that a bowl of berries served at home for a mid-afternoon snack is somehow different than a bowl of berries served as a palate-cleanser at El Bulli. Aesthetic trust explains some of these differences, but culinary institutions often play a central role in generating the trust in the first place.

What is most important for our purposes is that the foodworld clearly *does* treat a perfect peach served at an appropriate restaurant as art. The foodworld

²⁴ Plakias (2018: 44) also discusses parallels between the foodworld and the artworld.

influences what counts as art in the case of the peach like the museum influences what counts as art in the case of the urinal. Even if normal consumers and food critics alike are induced to ask themselves why and whether the peach counts as culinary art, the discussion itself is an indication that the food is the subject of serious consideration as a form of art. The peach has the hallmarks of culinary art: it is a vehicle for artistic intention, it is the object of aesthetic trust of the eater in an appropriate culinary setting; and it is treated as art by the art-world. Similar examples of unmodified food will yield similar results.

4. Conclusion

This paper has argued that unmodified food can, in some circumstances, count as culinary art. Culinary art, I have suggested, constitutes a robust category of art, and it has many parallels in canonical forms of visual art. Culinary art can be philosophically interrogated in similar ways. As Duchamp's readymades pose questions about the nature and boundaries of art, so, too, do instances of unmodified food served in the right culinary settings. The example of unmodified food teaches important lessons about the boundaries of culinary art more generally. Such boundaries are ripe for further investigation.²⁵

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Unjust Food Systems and Applied Mereology

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Abstract

Conventional food systems are highly complex entities with numerous components that span the globe. Having an overabundance of parts creates ‘globalized opacity’, a condition wherein the sheer number of parts makes it incredibly challenging to see how these parts fit together. In turn, people cannot see how these systems help create and perpetuate social injustices in select instances. With this notion in mind, it should be no surprise that numerous issues require mitigation. Gaining a clear view of the nature of such problems could improve how food-justice researchers understand the complexity involved in the issues that plague food systems, which could alleviate harm. One way to assist in such efforts is to employ an applied-mereological approach to identify ways to reduce the number of parts and replace parts that are commonly associated with injustices. This paper moves in that direction, revealing how an applied-mereological approach can help us address these issues and support alternative parts that could help produce desired outcomes.

Keywords: Food systems, Globalized opacity, Alternative food systems, Food transparency.

1. Introduction

Although a worldwide network connects multiple parts of conventional food systems to facilitate international commerce, this process produces ‘globalized opacity’. This term means that there is an overabundance of components and that there are often long distances between many of them. Due to this situation, most people are unable to fully see and know about the composition of a conventional food system. Somewhat paradoxically, the parts that make it feasible for these components to be noticeably disconnected, namely transportation and logistics—are also pieces of the food-system puzzle.

Moreover, these parts are indispensable for today’s food systems. Yet, when it comes to traditional views of farming, these elements remain mostly unknown. This condition makes it exceedingly difficult to know about many of the issues connected to conventional food systems, which is paramount when considering that there are several injustices associated with them. Attending to such matters

could help us see such issues more clearly, which would bolster efforts to understand the part-to-part and part-to-whole relations within a food system.

Gaining a clear view of the nature of this issue could improve how food-justice researchers understand the intricacy involved in these affairs, which could assist struggles to alleviate harm. One way to support their efforts is to employ an ‘applied-mereological’ approach, a method that helps us examine the relations of a food system’s parts, locating the parts that we cannot readily know about. This kind of investigation provides a new measure that can help us understand how conventional food systems are problematic. In turn, the purpose of this paper is to move in that direction. The goal is to identify part-to-part relations that favor social and environmental justice, and a significant step to advance that goal is to show how the problem of globalized opacity plays a role in such affairs.

To make this case, I begin by reviewing how we can employ the basic structure or idea behind mereology to help us understand the composition of conventional food systems. Specifically, I argue that we can better understand that food systems adhere to ‘unrestricted mereological composition’, meaning that any kind of part, concrete or abstract, can qualify as a part of a food system.¹ After establishing this view, I examine the broad scope of such parts, zeroing in on the problem of globalized opacity that is associated with such arrangements. Through employing this term as a theoretical device, we gain a novel technique for conceptualizing a specific condition that we find with these systems. With an understanding of the magnitude of their effects, I explore some of the reasons why activists, philosophers, and food scholars challenge and want to change the status quo, advocating for alternatives that have fewer parts and less globalized opacity. In closing, I identify some vital areas that would benefit from additional study.

2. The Benefit of ‘Applied Mereology’ for Understanding Conventional Food Systems

In a basic sense of the theory and its study, mereology deals with the interplay of parts, along with how parts relate to wholes (Varzi 2015). Within the traditional literature, philosophers who engage in this research address highly abstract relations of parts (Hovda 2009). While the nature of these undertakings might not interest scholars outside of this field, this view is shortsighted. That is, one benefit of employing this approach is that it helps us understand how objects that are composed of smaller and frequently overlapping parts fit together, forming a cohesive unit (Paul 2002). Due to the composition of food systems that involve numerous parts, interdisciplinary researchers can benefit from mereology, and the study of the conventional food system supports this claim.²

From the outset, one could argue that the necessary and sufficient conditions for thinking about a food system’s parts in such a manner requires that for parts, they must be parts in and of themselves, and they must also be a part of the food system. One notion that complicates matters even further is that some parts are

¹ To gain an in-depth look at some of the issues pertaining to the thesis behind unrestricted mereological composition that are beyond the scope of this paper, see McCarthy 2015.

² Frederique de Vignemont *et al.* (2005) exhibit how we can use mereology to account for how we experience parts of our bodies, and they stack this account against how we experience the body itself. For more information, see de Vignemont, Tsakiris and Haggard 2005. Peter Simons examines mereology of engineering and AI. See Simons 2013.

parts of themselves, while also being parts of greater wholes, which are also parts of food systems. Consider this brief example. Land, farm equipment, and people are parts themselves. They help to compose a farm, and that farm is part of a food system. However, considering that I am denying any restrictions on composition, I will not offer the necessary and sufficient conditions for how parts come together to make a food system. Instead, I will discuss part-to-part and part-to-whole relations to help guide how we think about food systems, for instance as they are expressed in the illustration above.³

For example, highly detailed illustrated maps show how the numerous parts of a conventional food system fit together and interact with each other, revealing the dynamic character of how food supplies crisscross the globe.⁴ Although these maps appear stable, Jo Goossens, the person who created one of the most intricate maps to date that lays out the vital exchanges within global food systems, points out that micro-level aspects of the food trade remain in constant flux (Cereals & Grains Association 2020). This notion suggests that literal parts of conventional food systems are continuously adapting to abstract parts such as market forces and labor, along with other literal parts such as new technologies, advances in logistics, and the nature of business (Regmi and Gehlhar 2005). These systems are historically situated, meaning that entities such as the multinational food conglomerates that control conventional food systems are entrenched deeply in the processes and exchanges that produce most of the world's food supply (Howard 2016). In turn, going from the farm to the table is not a simple matter, and accounting for and explaining the process is not much easier. Further, it should not come as a surprise that most consumers in countries such as the United States have only a vague idea of the direct origins of their food (Blatt 2011). While this notion might sound trivial, it should be significant, considering that people can shape food systems through supporting legislative efforts (Mars and Ball 2016). Consider, for instance, that the outline of a food system is quite encompassing, consisting of numerous concrete parts, often crossing national and cultural boundaries (Metcalf 2019). At present, ten companies control over half of the food supply in the United States, extending to about fifteen percent of the global market (Stuckler and Nestle 2012; Lyson and Raymer 2000).⁵ Considering that the worldwide food exchange accounts for ten percent of the world's total economy, estimates show that the global food supply is worth at least 8 trillion dollars annually (Van Nieuwkoop 2019). Although, as indicated above, the parts change due to several considerations and the control of the parts remains competitive, extending into numerous areas such as economics and international political affairs. Due to such conditions, when considering food systems and the kind of parts that they can have, this reason shows why it is imperative

³ While there are other issues with unrestricted mereological composition, I am only applying it to the context of food systems in this paper.

⁴ For a highly detailed food map of the global food system, see "Jo Goossens and the shiftN Global Food Systems Map", available online: <https://www.cerealsgrains.org/publications/cfw/2019/jan-feb/Pages/CFW-64-1-0010.aspx>

⁵ Due to the influence of multinational food companies that now have significant control in all aspects of food production, I am going to use the terms 'conventional food system' and 'global food system' interchangeably, even though one could argue that they are not entirely mutually exclusive. Yet, they share enough common ground that substituting one for the other does not obfuscate anything and preserves the meaning of the message that I am conveying.

to think about food systems as having an unrestricted mereological composition.⁶ In turn, the way that a food system is presented here is one wherein some parts are strict, while others are metaphoric, yielding an idealization with different concrete instantiations.⁷

To illustrate the ramifications of conventional food systems with these notions in mind, we must consider the range of their inventory and the scope of their impact as elements that require highlighting due to the array of effects that they produce in concert. The point here worth underscoring is that any change in a food system's parts must bring financial realities into view. While it is evident that such alterations have epistemic values, one could hold that they also have a metaphysical correlate. That is, if such changes stem from financial realities, then finances, as abstract parts, can dictate a principle of composition for a food system.

Here is an example. If a nation were to accept a loan from an international bank, on the condition that it was to produce tea instead of soybeans, then the abstract part of financial pressure would alter the composition of the food system by forcing concrete parts such as seeds and the necessary agricultural equipment to change. In such instances, parts are stuck together due to economic considerations. In turn, differing economic reasons can generate different principles of composition. This notion suggests that the ontology of such systems requires that researchers who examine its parts should pay attention to their backstories (Howard 2016). The reason to emphasize this idea is that it is unreasonable to weigh the relationships between parts without bringing these vital dimensions into view, especially considering that numerous components require investigation.

This area is one that would benefit from thinking about food systems in terms of unrestricted mereological composition. For instance, we can break their inventory down into several categories of non-overlapping or disjoint parts, meaning the part is not counted more than once when accounting for them in the whole food system (Varzi 2000; Varzi 2014; Lando 2017). These parts include but are not limited to concrete parts such as land, water, natural resources for production, petroleum resources, and chemical fertilizers. Yet, they also include abstract parts such as labor forces, federal, state, and municipal regulations. There are also communication networks to facilitate the logistics and distribution, which include parts such as transportation systems and storage facilities, marketplaces, and restaurants (Ruben, Verhagen, and Plaisier 2019; Pitt and Jones 2016; Morley and Marsden 2014; Goodman, DuPuis, Goodman, 2012; Erikson 2008). Considered together, these parts (along with several other parts if that is the case) can compose a greater part, which then becomes part of the larger whole—a food system. For example, parts such as a farmer, her land, the water, and various agricultural products can compose a farm. This farm can be a part of a food system. Depending on the character of the 'farm', (e.g., small, organic family farm or massive conventional agricultural operation) can have significant real-world impacts. By

⁶ It is worth mentioning that making such identity claims could be controversial if one holds that such an identity is impossible. However, engaging in this discussion is beyond the scope of this paper. For more information, see McCarthy 2015.

⁷ Some philosophers, such as Giorgio Lando, maintain that it is incredibly challenging at times to differentiate literal and metaphorical parts. Due to this condition, the claims in this paper avoid engaging in such detailed discussion for the most part. This notion entails that, unless explicitly stated, I am talking about strict parts. For more information, see Lando 2017.

putting these aspects into real numbers, we see the requirements and impacts of conventional food systems. For instance, Gladek *et al.* hold:

Agriculture now occupies roughly half of the plant-habitable surface of the planet, uses 69% of extracted fresh water and, together with the rest of the food system, is responsible for 25-30% of greenhouse gas emissions. The expansion of industrial fishing fleets and a higher demand for seafood globally have led to the collapse or total exploitation of over 90% of the world's marine fisheries. A growing demand for land-based animal products is the primary driver of tropical deforestation. Through its direct and intermediate impacts, the food system is the largest contributor to the depletion of biodiversity (Gladek *et al.* 2017: 4).

While this passage exhibits the scope of the impacts that conventional food systems have on the planet, they also reveal the effects that some people might not consider, such as how food systems affect marine ecology. One could argue that the view of the oceans often remains secondary when stacked against land-based concerns, bearing in mind that most people do not have experiences with those environments. For instance, Paul Wolf (2003) argues that because most people do not typically engage with oceans, they do not have the necessary perspective to grasp their complex character. Yet, when examining the numbers above, the accumulating effects on aquatic systems remind us that considering humankind's involvement with food systems remains paramount.⁸ Due to this condition, we cannot dismiss the reality that such environs are significant macro-parts of the food system, which include numerous smaller parts that compose the fishing industry.

This notion reveals that, in addition to how specific parts of the food system affect the non-human world, they also play a dominant role in the socioeconomic parts of food systems. For instance, continuing with the insights from Eva Gladek *et al.* (2017: 4) above, such considerations contribute to a panorama of conventional food systems, exhibiting the significance of such dimensions:

The agri-food sector is the world's largest economic sector and is therefore deeply entwined with poverty. Half the global workforce is employed in agriculture. A majority of the world's poorest people are subsistence farmers and fishermen. Small farmers and fishers around the world are caught in cycles of poverty, without access to education, employment, economic and social infrastructure, and political representation. Many do not receive adequate compensation, work in unacceptable conditions, or do not have access to sufficient, affordable, or proper-quality food. Poverty is the largest threat to producers of food globally and the largest driver of food insecurity.

The passage above shows that while we can separate concerns about food systems from considerations for other social systems, food systems require additional study due to numerous kinds of effects that they can help produce. Philosophers of food and interdisciplinary scholars have documented these outcomes, analyzing the many ways that conventional food systems affect farmers and indigenous people on almost every continent by focusing heavily on the concept of 'food sovereignty' (Jarosz 2014; Navin 2014; Menser 2014; Werkheiser and Noll 2014; Grey and Patel 2015; Epting 2018). Viewing the food sovereignty literature as a

⁸ This claim does not imply the oceans are merely food systems. However, the intention is to draw attention to the idea that people could view them in such a manner.

compilation, the theme that emerges shows that numerous people in the agricultural industry seek to gain control over the parts that impact their lives, a notion that pushes against the multinational food conglomerates, as mentioned earlier. In turn, if they were able to control the parts, then they would gain more control over the sum, a notion that appears to be consistent with the stated aims of some of the people who champion food sovereignty.

A recent embodiment of this sentiment has emerged from the labor force that works in food production, *La Via Campesina*. This organization of farmers spans the globe, consisting of almost two hundred smaller organizations from over eighty countries in Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Europe (La Via Campesina 2007). Their concerted efforts promote smaller family farming practices, geared toward agricultural sustainability and justice. This group employs the term ‘food sovereignty’ as a central tenet to their approach to address how groups express autonomy over their involvement with all aspects of the food trade. They use it in a manner that brings numerous related concerns into view, including but not limited to social justice, safety, control, and human rights.

One can argue that within their conception of the term, ‘food sovereignty’, they illustrate that several concerns are indirectly connected to conventional food systems. Yet, many of these issues are not directly linked to the food industry, such as concern for future people (La Via Campesina 2007). The scope of this conception challenges the totality of the effects that conventional food systems help produce. In turn, *La Via Campesina* positions itself against the status quo, advocating for a means of agricultural production that can remedy the ill effects of globalized agriculture.

For example, during the world’s first conference on food sovereignty, they formulated the “Declaration of Nye’le’ni” (La Via Campesina 2007). It is a comprehensive statement that provides a panorama of the kinds of issues that we find in conventional food systems, along with several indirect concerns that also require attention:

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations. It defends the interests and inclusion of the next generation. It offers a strategy to resist and dismantle the current corporate trade and food regime, and directions for food, farming, pastoral and fisheries systems determined by local producers and users. Food sovereignty prioritises local and national economies and markets and empowers peasant and family farmer-driven agriculture, artisanal-fishing, pastoralist-led grazing, and food production, distribution and consumption based on environmental, social and economic sustainability.

The image that emerges from bringing the above dimensions into view is daunting in the best case, and overwhelming in the worst case. They mention several points of concern, bringing current issues such as production and distribution into view. They also extend into future-oriented matters that involve future generations within a sustainability matrix. If we keep in mind that such areas involve numerous parts that serve as ‘actors’, it is challenging to know the limits as to what counts as a part. One could argue that the description above reveals how

the condition of globalized opacity that comes from the composition of conventional food systems can manifest through the felt impacts on the people who have been treated as only 'parts', in the same manner as if they were another piece of farm equipment, a mere means to an end.⁹ It could be the case that the declaration above exhibits that food workers do not feel respected in several ways. Bearing this point in mind, one could hold that they are responding accordingly, striving for measures that would rearrange or exchange parts so that they could control them, expressed as a call for food sovereignty. Considering that they would gain control over more parts, this power would show that they are not merely parts such as farming equipment, which, of course, cannot control other parts.¹⁰

Although the declaration above draws attention to injustices that arise due to 'Big Food' having power over the parts, such situations remain challenging to identify—due to the problem of globalized opacity. That is, people are unaware that the parts of conventional food systems are arranged and managed in a fashion that makes it exceedingly difficult to know. For instance, it is common for people in countries such as the United States to lack basic knowledge about food production (Flatt 2008). If they lack this essential knowledge, then it seems plausible to hold that they also do not know about injustices that emerge from it, a situation that feeds globalized opacity. One could easily object to the condition above. One could hold that there is an overabundance of parts and farmers and food workers on the frontlines experience problems, but there is no way to prove that such issues are a result of lacking this essential knowledge. While this concern is formidable, we should have at least two reservations about it. One, the primary claim in this paper holds that a mereologically-informed approach aims to improve the situation so that we can see all of the parts to analyze them adequately. If there is no connection, as the objection above maintains, then employing this approach would be unsound. If the opposite view emerges, then we gain a method for developing a solution to such problems.

When examining these choices, it does seem entirely plausible that the overabundance of parts, spread across the globe, makes it incredibly challenging to know about the parts and how they are part of a food system, which creates possibilities for harm and injustice. If we take this condition and consider it alongside the claims that people do not know about their food, and the reality that food workers want to change food systems, then the claim above makes sense. Yet, even though we cannot locate the 'smoking gun', there is a substantial reason why this condition does not matter significantly.

That is, the idea of 'disparate impacts' holds that, for dealing with issues that concern historically marginalized groups (e.g., members of La Vía Campesina), they are often victims of systemic discrimination. This notion entails that issues such as intentionality do not weigh heavily in such affairs.¹¹ This condition holds that we do not need to find a direct link. The outcome wherein they are subject to harmful treatment is sufficient. The task then becomes to identify precisely how

⁹ This point raises numerous ethical issues that are beyond the aim of this paper. However, for more information, see Kant 2002.

¹⁰ This point introduces the idea that changing or rearranging parts could produce a new food system or help the old food system become more just. Although this point is extremely relevant, giving it the attention that it deserves falls outside of this paper's limits.

¹¹ The United States Supreme Court introduced the term 'disparate impacts' in *Griggs v. Duke Power Co.*, 401 U.S. 424, 91 S.Ct. 849, 28 L.Ed.2d 158 (1971).

the system creates injustice. For the case of conventional food systems and applied mereology, that endeavor is the motivation that underpins this exploration, to deliver a way to identify how the relations between food parts and the whole food system yields bad fruits.

Without tending to the epistemological conditions for knowing about food injustices, one could argue that the projected reality for the future for food justice remains grim, offering little hope for creating a meaningful alternative that can remedy the situation described earlier. This notion implies that motivation for further identifying the interplay between parts will require advanced study. The goal of such an undertaking is to determine appropriate actions to rearrange them, hopefully leading to outcomes that are consistent with the people who are arguably treated as merely and only as ‘parts’ by the multinational food conglomerates that own and or control the majority of the parts that belong to conventional food systems.

Within various geopolitical regions, along with traditionally grown foods, the scope of such a call would require specific and or hyperspecialized concrete and abstract parts, including but not limited to safety regulations, farm equipment, and distribution schemes that could redistribute parts justly. In both the broad view and the site-specific instances mentioned above, the numerous parts have a role in the unjust outcomes that scholars criticize. The question here is not to ask about how to find the link between ‘parts A-Z’ and ‘outcome X’. The idea is that because numerous parts remain in play, determining how different parts relate *is* possible, but the daunting nature of such a task is a significant deterrent. In turn, the condition of having numerous parts facilitates globalized opacity. In the section below, I examine the roots and status of the situation, followed by an investigation into alternate models that inherently avoid globalized opacity. Although more work needs to be done on this front, mereologically as well as practically, addressing such dimensions can better position that problem so that we can better grasp several of its troubling intricacies.

3. The Problem of Globalized Opacity

Globalized opacity of conventional food systems is not a condition that simply comes from only having multifaceted operations. It arises from such processes due to an overabundance of parts that come from scattered locations, primarily connected through advanced logistics and transport. Framing this issue in such a manner reveals why using a mereologically informed approach is beneficial for gaining a clearer understanding of the relations that pertain to how the parts of a food system are part of the composite object, ‘food system’. It also shows why developing mitigatory steps to food issues remains challenging. It focuses on the relations between parts, along with how the parts of a food system impact the food system itself. That is to say, as food scholars such as Metcalfe (2019) exhibit, the conventional food industry is inherently global, suggesting that the very nature of food requires an encompassing lens to see its expansive character. In turn, the ways that we think about today’s food are complicated from the outset, yet we must develop conceptual devices that are highly efficient without producing superfluous information.

For instance, when talking about the globalized opacity of conventional food systems, each word is itself a smaller ‘part’ of a more extensive theoretical device—

the ‘globalized opacity of conventional food systems’.¹² Each word in this phrase, as a conceptual device, plays a role in how we understand the reality of the situation, the conditions that come from having an overabundance of concrete and abstract parts. The precise nature of the mechanics of the phrase, as a theoretical device, reveals the pattern that we are ultimately addressing. If we have too few words (or theoretical parts that make up the larger theoretical device), then we would not be properly emphasizing the exact area of study.

For instance, if we were to say that we are only dealing with ‘food system complexity’, then we would only be highlighting the notion that the food system has a relationship status that reads: ‘it is complicated’. Yet, such a scenario does not show that it is convoluted because there are simply too many parts involved in a multifaceted process. Being highly sophisticated is a separate issue from having an overabundance of parts. Although there are similarities between ‘food system complexity’ and ‘globalized opacity of conventional food systems’—as theoretical devices that help us understand the issues that they represent—the primary difference is that each tool does different tasks. The former focuses heavily on the processes as they affect the interrelations between parts. The former pays much more attention to parts in terms of how they affect others as components of the food system and the food system itself.

Consider, for instance, that Gonzalo Gamboa *et al.* (2016: 2-3) in their research on the complexity of food systems make this notion appear:

Owing to the many domains involved and the different scales on which different processes take place (from households to the global market), food systems are inherently highly complex systems: That is, their relevant aspects cannot be captured from a single perspective, and therefore different stakeholders may have different perceptions of what a food system is and how it performs.

When examining the passage above, we see that the operational relations that pertain to food systems are at the forefront of their approach, revealing the prominent position that processes have in food systems. Namely, within the short description above, two instances show action. The first exhibits that it is the *processes* of scale that help define a food system’s complexity. The second notion concerns how we cannot rely on a single perspective of a food system’s definition and *performance*. While the passage above does not represent all accounts that address food-system complexity, one could argue that it is typical of such approaches.

This point does not discount the notion that parts interact in specific and numerous ways, as such approaches can illustrate. Still, it exclusively highlights the inventory that pertains to the problems that we find with conventional food systems, highlighting the role of parts only in a limited capacity. While one can use different tools for the same task, say a crescent wrench or a socket wrench, specialized tools provide a way to handle specific tasks more efficiently and or effectively. For dealing with an overabundance of parts, a mereologically-inspired theoretical device helps us frame the issue in a way that reveals globalized opacity and its problems, a condition associated with having too many abstract and concrete parts.

¹² To avoid confusion, it is worth mentioning that in the use of the term ‘part’ in this sentence, I am not making a mereological claim per se, but I am dealing with the term in a more ordinary sense of it.

During the outset, I mentioned that appealing to mereology can benefit how we deal with such concerns. This manner of focusing on part-to-part and part-to-whole relations is a quality that is inherent to the mereological enterprise. It is one that thinking in terms of complexity cannot deliver due to lacking mereology's unique orientation. By examining the composition of food systems through employing a mereological approach, we can exhibit that conventional food systems require expansive infrastructures to exist in their current states. In turn, we can connect this view with other disciplines to advance our knowledge of food systems.¹³

Consider, for instance, that 'food narratives' exist to show the elaborate path for foods (and food-like products) to reach consumers. In her intense study of food system routes in, *Food Routes: Growing Bananas in Iceland and Other Tales from the Logistics of Eating*, Robyn Metcalfe (2019), explores the numerous parts and their geographical confluence that delivers foods to us. Using a slice of New York Pizza as an example, she exhibits the highly involved process that brings all of the ingredients together to that are required to produce a single slice (Metcalfe 2019).

While this dish is only one item, Metcalfe's (*ibid.*) research shows that today's foods are the results of a highly sophisticated distribution system, one that demands intense study to understand (which underscores the importance of her book and other works in the field of food studies). Along with her examination, Metcalfe (*ibid.*) acknowledges that ethical issues emerge that require a separate area of investigation. Yet, with so many parts from across the globe, we cannot see exactly where the problems arise. Due to these conditions, globalized opacity becomes an issue, making it challenging to see the connection between foods and injustice. To gain a better perspective on how this situation manifests, in the following section, I examine how alternative food systems inherently reduce the number of parts that food activists argue is necessary for alleviating food-related harms and injustice.

4. Alternative Food Systems: Towards Reducing Globalized Opacity

In the last few decades, alternatives to conventional food systems have emerged and progressed, which are viewed as a means to transform food production, distribution, and consumption. Philosophers and scholars have examined several completing and complementary models, making strong cases for how such systems can mitigate the harms mentioned earlier (Werkheiser and Noll 2014; Epting 2016). Although advocating for particular approaches is beyond this paper's scope, the shared grounds often include smaller-scale operations that eliminate several of the actors between the food producers and food consumers.¹⁴ While it would be overly ambitious to argue that these alternative systems could replace

¹³ This notion gestures towards Carlo Cellucci's concept of a 'heuristic view', which seeks to establish criteria for what counts as a fruitful enterprise in philosophy. Namely, to fit such a description, philosophy must be continuous with the sciences, making use of the results that come from scientific discovery, and striving to obtain a perspective that is global. For more information, see Cellucci 2014.

¹⁴ This point does not suggest that removing 'food miles' is a solution. It only indicates that reducing the number of actors within a food system could reduce globalized opacity. These issues are connected, but they are not mutually exclusive. Addressing such affairs is far beyond the scope of this paper. For more information, see McWilliams 2009.

conventional models entirely in the immediate future, supporting such measures count as steps in that direction in terms of dealing with the problem of globalized opacity.¹⁵

In a more realistic sense, utilizing alternative systems exhibits how possibilities exist to eliminate some of the global parts of conventional food systems, along with the extreme distances that help yield globalized opacity.¹⁶ Although each replacement part will require advanced study and remain site-specific, examples include food outlets such as farmers' markets (Vignali *et al.* 2006). They also include community sustainable agriculture initiatives (Vasquez *et al.* 2017). Community and shared gardens also qualify as smaller cases (Barron 2017). For places that face seasonal and weather-related challenges, vertical agriculture holds promise (Epting 2016). In addition to these measures, researchers show how aquaponic operations can ease the demands of marine ecosystems (Goddek 2019). Culinary-challenged individuals can visit farm-to-table restaurants. Although none of these approaches can eliminate dependence on conventional food systems, if consumers were to access them in concert, they would be able to learn how their food systems fit together, one part at a time.

By bringing the parts of a food system closer together, we can eliminate components such as storage, refrigeration, and long-distance transport, which are inherent to conventional food systems. One could argue that alternative food systems reduce the need for several such parts, which are also the components that consumers lack knowledge of their existence and how they fit into food systems. The point here is that while consumers are probably aware that foods require transportation, they could be unaware of the expansive transport network needed to move food vast distances, one that is increasingly becoming more global (Ahumada and Villalobos 2009).

This condition suggests that replacing them with local actors such as community farmers means that the parts are knowable, a condition that increases food transparency. For instance, Harvey Blatt (2008: vii) argues:

Most urban shoppers know that food is produced on farms. But most of them do not know what farms, or what kind of farms, or where the farms are, what knowledge or skills are needed in farming, or how farming today bears little resemblance to farming as practiced a hundred years ago.

Through subtracting unknowable and inaccessible parts while adding parts wherein people can learn about the intimate details of food production and distribution, concerns about globalized opacity diminish. Bearing this point in mind, one can argue that improved transparency could yield more knowledge about the

¹⁵ While the primary concern here rests with globalized opacity, this situation raises concerns about the identity and morality of a food system. That is, would it have a new whole food system or a food system with new parts? While either response requires significant dedication to provide a robust answer, neither of them does away with globalized opacity, meaning that this topic must be dealt with at another time. Secondly, one could argue that eliminating certain actors in the world of global food production might not be fair, considering that doing so could discount the importance of food exportation for developing nations. For more information on this topic, see Navin 2014.

¹⁶ This point does dismiss the possibility that local actors could engage in harmful practices, but such affairs could be addressed at the local level when applicable.

social and environmental justice issues that turn people against conventional food systems.

Aside from this issue, one could argue that when consumers substitute distant parts with local parts, aiming to develop an alternative system, they are merely replacing parts that will not have a significant impact on conventional food systems. This notion implies that such changes are only ‘cosmetic’ and that meaningful improvements will require steps such as working with the system and advocating change through policy initiatives. Over time, such measures will improve consumer knowledge of food systems, inherently reducing the problem of globalized opacity.

This challenge is formidable. The problem with such an objection is that it does not consider the possibility that replacing parts, even by using a piece-meal approach over an extended duration, could have a cumulating impact on conventional food systems. This aspect suggests that changing a food system is possible, even though undertaking such a task could take several decades, and there are elements of power and control, as mentioned earlier.

Although the approaches above merely sketch a possible avenue for reducing globalized opacity, they do exhibit that eliminating parts or replacing opaque parts—with ones that we could know—could make food systems align with calls for food justice under the appropriate conditions. However, considering that alternative food systems remain embryonic, further research is required. Such efforts not only include the disciplines that could facilitate such realities such as engineering, design, architecture, and policy, philosophical undertakings, and ‘applied mereology’ in particular, also deserve additional study to determine the appropriate pathways forward for such systems. In the section below, I examine some of the immediate areas that would benefit from further research.

5. Areas for Future Research

While the exposition above reveals the problematic nature that results from the globalized opacity of conventional food systems, the next steps coming from applied mereology should be to narrow the focus. This idea includes paying attention to specific part-to-part relations, especially in terms of interactions that affect entire food systems. Developing particular research strands is one direction that such efforts could follow. For instance, specific relationships could benefit from further investigation, focusing on significant areas such as production, distribution, and consumption.

On the one hand, issues that pertain to how parts interact with other parts in these three areas deserve attention. Regarding production, we could examine how agricultural technologies, as parts within the sphere of food production, work with other parts that could lead to outcomes that do not raise concerns for social and environmental justice. For example, studying how energy usage plays a role in agriculture could lead to improvements that have outcomes that result in less anthropogenic environmental degradation, an issue that has a history of causing harm.

On the other hand, there is a need to investigate how parts within areas such as production impact distribution could benefit from additional exploration. The problem of ‘food miles’ is an exemplar. That is to say, proponents of local food frequently champion the consumption and production of food that share proximity, holding that long-range distribution is the primary area of concern (McWilliams 2009). However, researchers argue that growing food in certain regions requires

more energy, suggesting that local food preferences would exacerbate climate change (*ibid.*). Yet, by analyzing these macro-parts (production) to macro-parts (distribution) to macro-part (consumption) relationships, researchers can identify how they relate to whole food systems. In turn, they can determine which relationships will yield socially and environmentally just outputs.

This point suggests that considering the practical nature of this work, philosophers will have to engage in interdisciplinary research or work with researchers who are external to the discipline. For instance, philosophers could join researchers from outside their training to assess how food systems fit together ontologically. In this regard, we see the benefits of how philosophers working in areas such as analytic metaphysics could employ the skills of the trade to provide new avenues for exploring the realities behind foods, which is a branch of inquiry that remains neglected. However, as the articles in this special issue exhibit, that trend could end soon.

6. Conclusion

This paper shows how globalized opacity makes it difficult to comprehend the full scope and impacts of conventional food systems, considering that people cannot readily see the sheer number of parts that are involved. Due to this situation, people cannot understand how food systems play a role in several kinds of social and environmental injustices. Although this situation is problematic, by using an applied mereological approach, we can analyze conventional food systems to identify ways to reduce the number of parts that obscure our view of their composition. In turn, researchers searching for ways to eliminate or minimize globalized opacity can work towards developing alternative parts that provide ‘food transparency’.

Although this approach helps us see some of the problematic elements associated with how food systems fit together, numerous areas of research on the production, distribution, and consumption of food will require attention. Bearing in mind that the nature of this work is inherently interdisciplinary, philosophers should collaborate with other scholars and activists, revealing how the tools of the philosophic enterprise can provide insights into these affairs. Although such concerted efforts show that issues of food systems demand practical solutions, they also require a palate for the love of wisdom.¹⁷

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Local Food as Social Change: Food Sovereignty as a Radical New Ontology

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Abstract

Local food projects are steadily becoming a part of contemporary food systems and take on many forms. They are typically analyzed using an ethical, or socio-political, lens. Food focused initiatives can be understood as strategies to achieve ethical change in food systems and, as such, ethics play a guiding role. But local food is also a social movement and, thus social and political theories provide unique insights during analysis. This paper begins with the position that ontology should play a more prominent part in the analysis of local food movements, as this lens could provide unique insights into basic commitments guiding such initiatives. The paper presents the argument that ontological analyses are imperative for fully understanding local food movements. It then provides an overview of the justice frameworks and ontological orientations that guide two dominant types of initiatives: Those committed to increasing food security and those committed to food sovereignty. The paper ends with the argument that food sovereignty projects are revolutionary, not only because they challenge us to change industrial food practices, but also because they are built on a radical new political ontology, and co-constitutive food-focused orientation, that forms the foundation for alternative social and political structures.

Keywords: Philosophy of food, Food metaphysics, Local food, Food sovereignty, Food movements.

1. Introduction

Local food initiatives are steadily becoming a part of contemporary food systems and take on many forms, from school gardens to farmers markets (Holt-Gimenez *et al.* 2011; DeLind 2011; Martinez *et al.* 2010). This flexibility is due in part to the fact that local food projects can differ from region to region, as communities have a multiplicity of needs, food cultures vary, and environmental factors (such as climates, soil types, etc.) fluctuate. However, most researchers accept the following broad understanding of what constitutes local food: Local food is the attempt to minimize the distance between production, processing, and consumption of products in food systems, especially in relation to current industrial agricultural systems (Brain 2012; Peters *et al.* 2008). There are several

reasons to shorten the distance between food production and consumption, from increasing the range of food products available to reducing the environmental impacts of agriculture (Jungbluth *et al.* 2012). In addition, the push to limit distance is often accompanied by related goals, such as providing consumers with fresh produce, improving food security of the region, and increasing the food sovereignty of local populations (DeLind 2011). Within this broader local food landscape, a) justice frameworks (Noll and Murdock 2020) and b) conceptions of people, place, and food (Werkheiser and Noll 2014) play key roles in guiding local food strategies.

This paper begins by placing scholarship on local food in context, arguing that ontological analyses are imperative for fully understanding the revolutionary promise of these movements. It then provides an overview of the justice frameworks and ontological orientations that guide two dominant types of local food projects. Specifically, food security focused projects are guided by distributive justice frameworks, while food sovereignty groups accept more expansive justice frameworks. In addition, each of these justice frameworks are guided by specific ontological presuppositions. The paper ends with the argument that food sovereignty movements are revolutionary, not only because they challenge us to change industrial food practices, but because they are built on a radical new a) political ontology and b) food-focused orientation that forms the foundation for alternative social and political structures. In short, they push us to re-think our very relationship with food, society, and ourselves.

This paper adds to the literature on local food movements, as it highlights the importance that ontological commitments play guiding both food security and food sovereignty paradigms; separates these commitments for analytical clarity; and highlights potential strengths and weaknesses of each. Ontological analyses are not well represented in the philosophy of food literature but, as will be discussed, provide key insights. It should also be noted that this paper is not meant to be read as an endorsement of food sovereignty projects over food security initiatives, as both pursue important food-related goals, but to illustrate the strengths of each orientation. However, food sovereignty is given a more detailed analysis to highlight the transformative potential of its ontological framework. With this being said, this paper begins by situating the project in the wider food focused literature, as drawing connections between work in ethics, social and political philosophy, and ontology is important for the argument.¹

2. Why Ontology Is Important

Local food movements are typically analyzed from an ethical or a social and political standpoint. This focus is largely due to the structure and strategies of these initiatives. As DeLind (2011: 273) argues, “[local food] is at once a social movement, a diet, and an economic strategy—a popular solution—to a global

¹ Concerning terminology, this paper uses local food “movements,” “sub-movements,” “initiatives,” and “projects” throughout the paper to discuss different understandings of the local food phenomena. This is due to the fact that local food can be understood as a moment (DeLind 2011), a set of sub-movements (Werkheiser and Noll 2014), a type of project or operation (Gray 2014), a food-system sector (Clendenning *et al.* 2016), and an ethical strategy (Gray 2014; Singer and Mason 2007), etc. For this reason, I struggled to determine the best terminology to use and ultimately decided on a set of signifiers that attempt to capture the diverse manifestations of local food.

food system in great distress”. Ethical frameworks help researchers tease out the various normative concerns guiding the development and goals of these organizations, as well as a person’s choice to eat locally. Food-focused actors (be they individuals or groups) are often committed to addressing some perceived wrong, such as the animal welfare (Rollin 1990; Singer and Mason 2007) and environmental harms associated with the industrial production of meat and dairy products (DeLind 2011; Thompson 2010). Additionally, ethicists have spilled a large amount of ink developing arguments that are designed to persuade eaters to adopt a more local or less ethically problematic diet (Gray 2014; Singer and Mason 2007).

But local food is more than an ethically motivated strategy. It is also a social movement and, as such, social and political theory play an important role in the analysis of these projects. Individuals who opt into eating locally, as well as movements, more generally, are often guided by wider socially focused concerns and goals. For example, programs aimed at improving food security in communities tend to accept a limited concept of justice, grounded in distributive justice (Noll and Murdock 2020). Here justice can be broadly understood as “what we owe to each other” (Miller 2017; Scanlon 1998) and distributive justice concerns focus on rectifying some wrong associated with the distribution of benefits (such as access to foodstuffs) and harms (such as the placement of industrial facilities near neighborhoods) at a societal level. In contrast, food sovereignty movements are driven by a more holistic justice framework that acknowledges the importance of recognition, participation, and restorative justice concerns (DeLind 2011; Noll and Murdock 2020). As illustrated, social and political analyses help researchers better understand the structure, social and political components of these projects, and the justice claims that guide their goals (Bernstein 2014; Schanbacher 2010).

Metaphysics and ontology also play an important role in the analysis of local food, as these fields help to clarify concepts (Noll 2015; Werkheiser and Noll 2014) and descriptors (Griffiths *et al.* 2016); determine what food is and how to distinguish between artificial and “natural” foodstuffs (Kaplan 2012); and to explore if types of modifications of seeds and breeds negatively impact “what it is” to be that being (Rollin 2015). While the term “ontology” will be primarily used in this paper, it is important to note that ontology is an incredibly rich sub-field of metaphysics.² Historically metaphysics was understood as a science that ex-

² It should be noted here that metaphysics, as a discipline, includes a rich and robust literature, with important contributions dating back to the birth of philosophy and continuing throughout the history of the discipline. Diverse philosophers, from René Descartes to Martin Heidegger, grapple with metaphysical questions that increasingly transcend ridged philosophical boundaries. The richness of contemporary literature is difficult to communicate. In recent feminist literature, for example, work in metaphysics has been expanding since Simone de Beauvoir’s classic work *The Second Sex* (Beauvoir 1949). Susan Bordo and Iris Marion Young offer analyses of the mind and body, Judith Butler focuses on concepts of sex and sexuality, Donna Haraway and Karen Warren push back against ridged concepts of nature, while Maria Lugones and Linda Alcoff tarry with concepts of identity (Haslanger & Asta 2018). Due to the expansive nature of metaphysics, this paper intentionally utilizes a limited notion of metaphysics to ground the paper. This was intentionally done, as the essay’s aim is to illustrate how metaphysics and ontology can provide key insights in philosophy of food. As such, the essay is meant to be the beginning of a robust metaphysical conversation on food movements.

amined “the first causes of things” or “things that do not change” (Van Inwagen and Sullivan 2020). It also grappled with explaining the world through “transcendental features” (Rose 2004) but, more recently, the field turned its attention to identifying basic conceptions of what something “is,” delineating “categories of being,” exploring how the mind is structured, and determining the relationship between concepts (van Inwagen and Sullivan 2020; Noll 2015). Similarly, ontology can roughly be understood as a branch of philosophy “which deals with the nature and structure of ‘reality’ [...] or the study of attributes that belong to things” (Guarino *et al.* 2009: 1). Later thinkers, such as Pettit (2005) and Rawls (1999) expanded this analysis to social and political structures, agents, and the social and political sphere. As such, ontology and metaphysics are deeply intertwined, with Quine arguing that “ontology is concerned with the question of what entities exist (a task that is often identified with that of drafting a ‘complete inventory’ of the universe) whereas metaphysics seeks to explain, of those entities, what they are” (Varzi 2011: 407). Drawing from the above definitions, the work presented in this paper falls within the realm of both ontology and metaphysics, as it identifies basic presuppositions or governing features of social life (Rose 2004), or specifically local food movements, and explains what those entities are. For clarity, however, this paper will be using the term “ontology” to signify both projects, as this terminology is currently accepted in the wider social and political literature (Pettit 2005; Rosenthal 2019; Rose 2014).

When compared to the monumental amount of work done in ethics and social and political philosophy, ontological analyses are currently underrepresented in the literature on food movements. While the ontological void is being addressed in contemporary journals, historically, this lack could be attributed to the deep divide concerning the role that ontology should play in political philosophy (Rosenthal 2019). The political theorist John Rawls famously contributed to this disagreement when he supported the position that “ontological claims, that is, presuppositions about the constitution of agents and the social world, need to be avoided in political thought” (Rosenthal 2019: 238). If one holds this view, then theoretical work concerning the workings of the polis and analyses of political and/or social institutions should not appeal to ontological claims. However, several theorists pushed back against this view, arguing that the ontological claims help to develop alternative “orientations” (Marchart 2007; Rosenthal 2019; White 2000), or alternative notions of social roles, the goals of systems, and the ends of our institutions, that form the foundation for radical change. As Rosenthal (2019) so eloquently writes, “the purpose of the ‘ontological turn’ is not to separate political thinking [or social movements] from ontological controversies altogether, but, rather, to develop alternative ontologies to more conventional political ontologies” (239). When applied to local food, as a social movement, the expanded ontological frameworks employed by a portion of these movements (Werkheiser and Noll 2014) gain increasing importance, as they could supply alternative ontological orientations—Ontologies that could form a foundation from which to build alternative food systems.

It is important to note here that the “ontological turn” in political thought also pushes back against the assumed separation between social change and ontological commitments, such as meanings that we ascribe to features of the world around us. Peoples’ desire to bring about change is often guided by lived experience and specific perspectives concerning features of this lived experience (Frye 1983; Hartsock 1983; Hill-Collins 2002). For example, according to Rose

(2014: 253), “the lived experiences of individuals facing homelessness [pushed these individuals] to explicitly and empirically question meanings of ‘nature’ and the regularly unquestioned systems of knowledge that produce(d) these meanings”. Feminist thinkers have also recognized the importance that standpoints play in helping traditionally marginalized communities gain knowledge of the social structures that enforce their marginalization and/or recognize features of these structures that are hidden from the privileged (Hill-Collins 2002; Hartsoc 1983).

In this vein, environmental justice advocates have long recognized the connection between individual’s concepts of what constitutes personal identity, a community, a zoning ordinance or legal regulation, a state, a corporation and the relationships between these entities, and that these connections form a key component of justice claims (Taylor 2014; Walker 2012). To put it more succinctly, particular ontologies, developed through daily interactions, help to critically align social justice movements (Rose 2014). It is only by recognizing the inter-connections of these components, and the resulting impacts (such as systemic poverty, exclusion from decision-making, lack of access to social goods, etc.), that we can begin to formulate larger normative arguments concerning these interconnections.

Thus, movements working to bring about change, such as local food movements, rely on particular ontologies to support their justice claims and to align their goals. However, while these are connected, ontological commitments need to be separated from justice claims for analytical clarity. The next section of this paper focuses on this task. Specifically, it consists of a brief overview of the justice frameworks and ontological commitments that guide food security focused initiatives and food sovereignty projects. If food issues are framed as a distributive justice problem, then these projects are guided by a conventional political ontology and b) a narrow food-focused orientation. Those that accept an expansive justice framework, however, are guided by more inclusive political ontologies and food-focused orientations. The final section highlights the radical potential of these alternative ontological orientations and the role that they can play revolutionizing food systems.

3. Local Food as Food Security

While local food projects are guided by various goals, two distinct justice paradigms have been identified in the current literature: a) distributive justice and b) food sovereignty, which includes a holistic or expanded justice framework (Noll and Murdock 2020). Initiatives aimed at increasing food security are largely guided by distributive justice frameworks, or those that support the claim that we have a duty to address problematic distributions of foodstuffs. Conversely, food sovereignty pushes for local control over food-systems and accepts a more holistic framework that connects food systems to a wide range of social goals, from supporting local farmers to mitigating the environmental impacts of food production. Additionally, it should be noted here that food sovereignty frameworks developed at least partially as a critique of industrial food-systems and thus tend to be committed to alternative methods of food production and processing (DeLind 2011; Dalhberg 1993; Schanbacher 2010). In contrast, focusing on improving the distribution of foodstuffs may push movements to make use of highly industrialized food systems, as local production systems are often less ef-

ficient than conventional large-scale agriculture. Local food programs guided by distributive justice do not push back against current industrial practices or, at least, do not support them. Each of these justice orientations will be discussed below.

With approximately 793 million people undernourished worldwide (Food and Agriculture Organization 2015), it is easy to understand how increasing food security became a priority for some local food projects. Community gardens and CSAs (community supported agriculture) typically focus on increasing local access to healthy and nutritious foodstuffs (Ostrom 2008). It is this focus that provides justification for the claim that some local food movements are guided by distributive justice commitments. The term “food security” was coined after World War II and originally signified the ability of nations to provide adequate food reserves and/or access to food related resource bundles (Sen 1987), though this term now also signifies reserves/access at the local community level, as well (Schanbacher 2010). According to the Food Agricultural Organization (FAO), a nation is food secure when “all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (Food and Agriculture Organization 1996: n.p.). More generally, food security is often used as an umbrella term to describe the international push to eliminate malnutrition and hunger worldwide—a push partially justified by the recognition of a normative duty to help those in need, irrespective of distance (Singer 1972).

According to Noll and Murdock (2020: 3), “the initial push to create and run food security programs is guided by egalitarian conceptions of justice, or basic human rights claims where individuals are recognized to have what is often called a ‘positive right’ to food (or an entitlement strong enough to compel others to act on one’s behalf)”. The recognition of this positive right to foodstuffs is clearly supported by the FAO definition above. As such, food security related projects are driven by the goal of increasing access, as well as a host of other social goals designed to remove various distribution barriers, such as improving infrastructure, increasing public and private investments, and the creation of stable environments (Collier 2008; Sachs 2006). Similarly, three of the four determinate factors of food security, used by WHO (the World Health Organization) and UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund), concern access, while the fourth concerns increasing supply through the better utilization of foodstuffs. These factors or “pillars” of food security include: The pillar of economic access, food availability, stability of supply, and food utilization (Food and Agriculture Organization 2008).

I argue that conceiving hunger as an access issue is guided by two specific ontological orientations: a) A conventional political ontology (described below) and b) a narrow food-focused orientation. Pettit (2005) argues that every political theory aimed at bringing about larger political and social change, presupposes a specific ontology. These typically include “an account of the relationships and structure in virtue of which individuals in a polity constitute a people, a nation, and a state [or] a political ontology” (Pettit 2005: 157). In other words, commitments concerning the definitions of individuals and the relationships between individuals in society form the basic commitments necessary for identifying key changes and visioning a new future. Distributive justice frameworks, at their most basic level, conceive of the State as an entity that recognizes certain basic rights of citizens (dependent of the national context), as well as certain re-

sponsibilities or duties to perform some action for citizens, such as the duty to protect personal property or the body of the citizen from harm. In the context of food-focused programs, providing a safety-net or ensuring that aid is provided during a famine or another emergency fall within this category. Recognizing basic human rights can be included here, as well (Wonicki *et al.* 2016). Although, it should be noted that various other entities recognize the right to food, from individuals to community organizations. With this being said, concerning the state, the above ontological orientation can be understood as a conventional political ontology, as defined by Rosenthal (2019) above.

Additionally, there is a food-focused ontological orientation that holds for local food movements guided by distributive justice frameworks. Werkheiser and Noll (2014) separated local movements into three distinct sub-movements, each with unique ontological commitments. The most common sub-movement, the locavore trend, is built on the idea that individuals can change food systems primarily by altering personal behavior. In other words, we can change larger social structures one meal and one choice at a time. This sub-movement is built on specific ontological commitments, including the following: (1) food is a product that is purchased or that can be replaced by other products with similar nutritional content (i.e. canned salmon can substitute for another protein); (2) people are individual consumers of food; and (3) social change happens at the individual level. Here food is conceived as a product separate from the production methods that produced it, the environment, the communities that developed this foodstuff, and the personal identity of the growers and eaters. It is simply a commodity that can be exchanged for another commodity in the larger market. Similarly, in this orientation, the rich and complex understandings of what it means to be human is also distilled down into a single understanding—People are consumers of food.

Local food programs that adopt a distributive justice framework tend to accept at least two of these three commitments. For example, conceptualizing hunger as largely an issue of access to foodstuffs presupposes key ontological commitments concerning the concepts of food and people. In this view, food is a commodity that can be interchanged with other similar projects. Thus, a failure of rice crops in Indonesia, for example, could be replaced with emergency aid in the form of another grain, such as wheat, oats, corn, or barley. Access, availability, stability of supply, and utilization all presuppose the view that food is interchangeable and can be replaced by other similar products. Additionally, this framing conceptualizes people as individual consumers of these products who need to meet their minimum caloric intake. The point of increasing access to foodstuffs is to provide “food,” an exchangeable commodity, to people who consume food to survive. When connected to the distributive justice framework above, the “right” to food requires that food be provided—no more and no less. This constitutes a narrow food-focused ontology.

4. Local Food as Food Sovereignty

However, food movements are diverse and are concerned with several issues beyond the just distribution of foodstuffs. Local food is often conceptualized as providing “an alternative and challenge to the corporate-led, industrialized, global food system by reconnecting food with environmental health and sustainability, social justice concerns, and the importance of place” (Noll and

Werkheiser 2014: 112-13; Levoke 2011). Industrial food-systems enable corporations and governments to exercise increasing control over food choices, as they influence what food is available and reduce the wide range of choices down to shallow choices concerning brands on the supermarket shelves (DeLind2011). This removal of communities from the daily tasks associated with the production and processing of foodstuffs helps to ensure that people lose agriculture and food related knowledge. It also masks the larger environmental (Dalberg 1993), animal welfare (Rollin 1990), and social impacts of these systems (DeLind 2011; Singer and Mason 2007). Some local food initiatives are actively pushing back against this trend, as it “has been suggested [that one way] to address these issues is creating alternative food systems, such as those that focus on local production and distribution, those that utilize a shorter supply chain, or those that emphasize community control” (Noll and Werkheiser 2014: 113). In this way, local food is driven by critiques of corporate control and market-based strategies and connects food with other socially-relevant concerns.

While some local food programs focus on increasing “food security,” others embrace the above critique. These typically recognize a broader suite of rights claims, such as increasing local control of agricultural production, improving long-term sustainability, and providing for future generations. This variety is not surprising, as local food movements can be placed into various categories, each guided by distinct justice frameworks (Noll and Murdock 2020) and ontological commitments (Werkheiser and Noll 2014). In addition to the “locavore” trend, another prominent orientation for local food projects is food sovereignty or food justice. According to Clendenning *et al.* (2016: 166), “while many organizations do not use the language of food sovereignty explicitly, the motives behind urban food activism are similar across movements as local actors draw on elements of each in practice”. Initiatives guided by food sovereignty frameworks largely accept a more holistic justice paradigm that includes a plethora of social concerns. For example, the Declaration of Nyéléni (drafted by over 182 organizations from 81 countries) defines “food sovereignty” in the following way:

Food sovereignty is the right of peoples to healthy and culturally appropriate food produced through ecologically sound and sustainable methods, and their right to define their own food and agriculture systems. It puts the aspirations and needs of those who produce, distribute and consume food at the heart of food systems and policies rather than the demands of markets and corporations [...] It ensures that the rights to use and manage our lands, territories, waters, seeds, livestock and biodiversity are in the hands of those of us who produce food. Food sovereignty implies new social relations free of oppression and inequality between men and women, peoples, racial groups, social classes and generations (Via Campesina 2006: n.p.).

This definition connects food systems to a plethora of human rights and justice concerns (Noll and Werkheiser 2017; Flora 2011). Here defining agricultural policy and food systems is reframed as a *right* of local communities. Organizing food production according to the needs of specific communities, rather than global markets, is given priority (Schanbacher 2010). While access and distribution concerns are still recognized, a host of other issues beyond these are included, such as environmental sustainability, equal participation, land access, and gender equality. In short, food sovereignty attempts to capture the many ways

that food systems and eating are connected to human identity and the self-actualization of communities.

Like local food projects grounded in distributive justice, food sovereignty focused initiatives are also guided by two specific ontological orientations: a) An expansive political ontology and b) a co-constitutive food-focused orientation. The expansive nature of the above justice concerns can at least partially be attributed to food sovereignty's broadened conception of "ethical patient" to include ecosystems, future generations, and biotic communities. According to Noll and Murdock (2020: 5) "in contrast to food security initiatives, that are careful to limit positive rights claims to food access, food sovereignty places a wide range of social justice concerns under the umbrella of food justice *and* mandates that change be made at both the local and systems level". The political ontology accepted by food sovereignty is more expansive and thus the rights claims have expanded to align with the different presuppositions guiding justice claims.

This orientation also presupposes an account of the relationship between individuals and a polity (Pettit 2005). While conventional orientations conceive of the state as an entity that recognizes certain basic rights of citizens and duties to these citizens, food sovereignty places more emphasis on community responsibility. This framework also empowers local communities to make key decisions that determine the structure and goals of food systems. As such, while the state is still called to recognize certain rights, food sovereignty pushes a) individual communities to help ensure that these rights are met and b) demands that communities be a part of food-related decision-making processes. In short, they recognize the importance of improving a community's ability to make food choices and to determine the structure of their food systems, and such decisions are necessarily connected to the personal, social, and community levels (Werkeheiser and Noll 2014; Pimbert 2008; Desmarais *et al.* 2010). This ontological orientation demands that political structures be expanded to accommodate this process, if they do not already have the necessary infrastructure in place. As will be argued below, the ontological commitments guiding food sovereignty require that communities push back against institutions.

Due to this focus on community, one could argue that the political orientation guiding food sovereignty is at least partially communitarian, as it emphasizes the important role that community plays when determining what should be valued (Etzioni 2003). This makes sense, as communitarian ideals have a robust history, as they are found in diverse civilizations around the world and constitute elements of many historical and modern political systems (Etzioni 2014). As food sovereignty has grown out of peasant movements around the world, it is not surprising that these elements could have been incorporated into this orientation. For communitarian scholars, such as Michael Sandel and Charles Taylor, the liberal emphasis on the individual undermines the important role that social context and tradition play in political and ethical reasoning, the creation of the self, and how we value communities (Bell 2020). To this end, Sandel argues the following:

To imagine a person incapable of constitutive attachments [...] is not to conceive an ideally free and rational agent, but to imagine a person wholly without character, without moral depth. For to have character is to know that I move in a history that I neither summon nor command, which carries consequences nonetheless for my choices and conduct (Sandel 1984: 90-91).

Food sovereignty projects are committed to a robust conception of community that emphasizes the important role that they play in the social orientation of individuals, the formation and reinforcement of food-ways, and in determining goals what should be pursued. As such, communitarian ideals form part of this framework's account of the relationship between individuals and a polity. However, with this being said, it is important to note that food sovereignty movements are not fully communitarian. Food sovereignty projects emphasize the importance of local control of food systems but do not necessarily accept the wholesale adoption of communitarian political commitments and structures beyond this limited scope. As food sovereignty initiatives are diverse and emphasize democratic self-governance, it is entirely possible for communities to adopt non-communitarian frameworks (Bonotti 2018). For example, Bonotti (2018) argues that we should adopt a republican conception of food sovereignty, where it is understood as "the freedom of people to make choices related to food production, distribution and consumption in a non-dominated way, that is, without being subject to the arbitrary or uncontrolled interference of governments, international bodies and multinational corporations" (Bonotti 2018: 390). Thus, while some commitments are community focused, conceiving of food sovereignty as a type of communitarianism would be a mistake.

With this being said, similarly to communitarianism, food sovereignty largely accepts a conception of the self that is connected to social context. The acceptance of such expanded ontological commitments critically aligns these projects (Rose 2014) and expand their justice commitments. While those guided by distributive justice largely conceptualize food as an interchangeable commodity and people as autonomous consumers who either do or do not have access to these foodstuffs, food sovereignty paradigms are directly critical of myopic definitions of foodstuffs, as interchangeable products, and individuals, as entities that are distinct from the social contexts and communities. In contrast to the locavore trend, food sovereignty guided local food programs accept the following basic conceptions:

- (1) food is an essential part of culture and is co-constitutive of community and personal identity; (2) people are members of their community, co-constituted with their community and its practices, particularly those around food; and (3) change happens when communities resist larger institutions oppressing them and build alternatives to those institutions through solidarity and mutual aid with other individuals and communities (Noll and Werkheiser 2014: 127).

In contrast to local food programs driven by a distributive justice framework, the above basic commitments expand conceptions of food and people. Rather than viewing food as an interchangeable product, it is a concept that is interconnected with communities and the personal identities of eaters. Likewise, people are connected to their communities and food-practices. In this context, local food programs committed to supporting local food traditions and passing these on to future generations gain special significance. Connecting food-ways to personal identity and cultural histories also come to the forefront. When faced with food scarcities, different products with similar nutritional value cannot be equally substituted. Something important is lost when traditional foods are replaced by those not connected to the local community practices and traditions. This position pushes back against the view that food is interchangeable and can be re-

placed by other similar products and that access, availability, stability of supply, and utilization should drive food-related projects. It also runs counter to the myopic understanding of people as consumers of food.

5. Co-Constitutive Food Ontologies as Transformation

If you accept this ontological orientation, the rich and complex understandings of what it means to be human and the role that food plays reinforcing personal and community identity come to the forefront. Here food is more than just a commodity that we need to increase access to—food is intertwined with identity, culture, place, and political action. In addition, these concepts are not static or independent, but are co-constitutive. This means that personal identity, food-ways, and community are essential to the existence of each other. They mutually constitute each other, and change in one can influence the others in fundamental ways. The above expansive political ontology coupled with a food-focused ontological orientation that is co-constitutive requires a more holistic justice paradigm. First, this orientation pushes communities to recognize a broadened conception of “ethical patient” to include ecosystems, future generations, and human communities (Noll and Murdock 2020). When personal identity is bound up with culture, place, and food-ways, this expanded definition of what constitutes an ethical patient makes sense. Individuals will be irreconcilably changed by impacts to community, place, and food-ways. If food co-constitutes identity and community, it is not something that can be separated from environmental sustainability, participation and recognition, land access, and even racial and gender equality.

Turning again to the Declaration of Nyéléni (Via Campesina 2006), food sovereignty rights claims include the following: The right to healthy and culturally appropriate food; ecologically safe & sustainable agriculture; a healthy and biodiverse environment; participation in food decision-making; the right to use & manage lands, waters, seeds, livestock, and biodiversity; and social relations free of oppression and inequality, based on gender, race, class, and age. According to Miller (2017), justice at the most basic level can be understood as “the constant and perpetual will to render to each [their] due” (n.p.). As such, the ontological orientation guiding food sovereignty requires us to recognize what is due to ourselves and others in a multiplicity of ways. Specifically, the above rights claims utilize several justice frameworks: a) distributive justice, b) environmental justice; c) social justice; d) participatory or justice as recognition, e) intergenerational justice, and f) restorative justice.

In this way the expanded ontological frameworks employed by food sovereignty projects supply an alternative ontological orientation—one that is designed to form the foundation from which to build alternative food systems. These commitments not only help to critically align social justice movements (Rose 2014), but they constitute a new ontological framework that pushes back against the conventional political ontology and food-focused orientation guiding food security. However, it should be noted that food security is also not without its strengths. Food security’s ontological orientation enables these projects to easily work within industrial food-systems and liberal governmental structures. In contrast, however, food sovereignty’s framework runs counterpoint to dominant paradigms and thus may have difficulty working within current systems.

A common critique of food sovereignty movements highlights this weakness, as well as the strengths of food security. Specifically, one could argue that this ontological orientation is problematic precisely because it pushes us to accept an expanded justice framework—one that is too inclusive. Framing a multiplicity of social issues as justice concerns makes it difficult to identify specific issues that should be addressed or to determine which should be prioritized. It also asks more of those involved and, by pushing back against established social structures, makes these goals more difficult to achieve. As Werkheiser and Noll (2017: 130) argue, “including such a wide array of issues under the umbrella of food sovereignty often make it difficult to determine exactly what specific changes need to be made to the existing food structure beyond its dismantling”. This is a concern, especially when food sovereignty frameworks are compared to food security projects, which are grounded in conventional political ontologies. If this critique is accepted, then one could argue that local food movements should adopt food security orientations, as the potential weaknesses of food sovereignty could harm initiatives on the ground.

However, in defense of this approach, one could argue that the point of developing alternative ontologies is to help critically align social justice movements (Rose 2014) and to form the foundation for alternative social and political structures. Due to its expansive ontological orientation, food sovereignty pushes eaters to re-conceive food systems, reconceptualize the connection between place and citizens, and fundamentally change a community’s ability to shape itself and its future. In short, this framework pushes us to rethink our relationship with food, society, and ourselves. Pushing back against established social and political structures can be understood as a strength, as food sovereignty provides us with a vision of new possibilities for the future. Additionally, as food sovereignty is also an international movement made up of organizations around the world, one could argue that it has a track-record of successfully critically aligning social justice movements. The Us Food Sovereignty Alliance alone includes more than 600 organizations in 90 countries (USFSA.org). However, depending on their goals and commitments, local food projects may be guided by either food security or food sovereignty orientations, as they work to bring about different social visions.

However, there is still the question of how policymakers should proceed when there are different approaches available. The answer to this question largely depends on the individual context and needs of the community, as well as the model of change adopted by the project—i.e. whether the food project is committed to top-down or bottom-up change. However, very broadly, local ordinance and policy changes in the United States could be used as a potential blueprint for answering this question. Urban based local food initiatives in the U.S. largely emerged in a policy vacuum that resulted in their unlawful operation (Meenar *et al.* 2017), as several state and municipal regulations made food production illegal in cities (Heckler 2012). This issue is being addressed by local governments, as they utilize their broad powers to create new laws (Witt 2013) that sets parameters for land to be used for agricultural purposes. These changes have made it easier for a wide range of local food initiatives, committed to different goals, to take root in neighborhoods. Here policy makers are not remaining neutral on the question of whether local food production is valuable or good. The reason why they are creating new laws and changing ordinances is to nurture food production in cities. However, they are often careful to not endorse

particular types of operations. In this way, the changes create spaces for local communities to democratically determine the structure, goals, and operation of the individual projects. In short, self-governance has been made acceptable within specific parameters. These changes have been beneficial for both food security and food sovereignty grounded operations. With this being said, more research needs to be done on the policy and governmental implications of food movements guided by different ontological assumptions.

6. Conclusion

Local food movements are steadily becoming a part of contemporary food systems and take on many forms. These projects are typically analyzed from an ethical or a social and political standpoint. This stance is largely due to the structure and strategies of these initiatives. Local food can be understood as a strategy for bringing about ethical change in food systems and, as such, ethics play an important role. But local food is also a social movement and, thus social and political theories provide unique insights during analysis. This paper argued that ontology should play a more prominent role in the analysis of local food movements, as it could provide unique insights into basic commitments guiding these initiatives. In this vein, the paper presented the argument that ontological analyses are imperative for fully understanding the revolutionary promise of local food movements. It went on to provide a detailed overview of the justice frameworks and ontological orientations that guide two dominant types of local food projects. In particular, food security focused projects tend to be guided by distributive justice frameworks, while food sovereignty groups accept more expansive justice frameworks. And each of these justice frameworks are guided by specific ontological presuppositions. When placed in this context, the revolutionary nature of food sovereignty become clear. This is not only because they challenge us to change industrial food practices, but because they are built on a radical new a) political ontology and b) co-constitutive food-focused orientation—orientations that form the foundation for alternative social and political structures. In short, they push us to rethink our very relationship with food, society, and ourselves.

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Towards a Particularistic Metaphysics of Recipes

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Abstract

In this paper, I attempt to offer a new metaphysical account of recipes and to make sense of their relations with the authenticity of dishes. In doing so, I first show the untenability of any Platonistic characterisation of recipes, according to which recipes are universals instantiated by dishes. I do this by showing that recipes play a critical explanatory role for the sharing of culinary properties between dishes. That is, there are certain grounding relations between recipes and dishes that would not hold if recipes were Platonic universals. Then, by developing some of Andrea Borghini's constructivist insights, I offer a different account that identifies recipes with abstract cultural artefacts, which are tracked down through their history and recordings. According to this view, which draws on Kaplan's account of the metaphysics of words, recipes come into existence through a mental or written down introductory stage. Recipes are then shared and handed to future generations through new, mental or written down, stages. Recordings are stages of a particular recipe when they are historically connected to the introductory stage of the recipe in a proper way, and the dish they encode satisfies the authenticity judgment, as well as certain other underlying conditions. Finally, I discuss whether recipes should be identified with documents or artefacts and suggest that they are better suited to the latter.

Keywords: Recipes, Universals, Stage/continuant, Artefacts.

Introduction

When talking about food, we use many culinary terms, and largely interchangeably. Of course, because the goal of the present paper is to settle a precise metaphysical characterisation of recipes, the language must be regimented in order to avoid ambiguities and adequately show the relations between recipes and other entities. Following Borghini we can distinguish between dishes and recipes:

In a nutshell, a dish is the stuff, a recipe is the idea. More precisely, a dish is a specific concoction of (typically perishable) edible stuff, such as those specific actions that led to this slice of pizza sitting on my kitchen counter. On the other hand, a recipe—in first approximation—comprises the array of repeatable aspects

of a dish whose replication would deliver a dish of the same sort (Borghini 2015: 721).

As well as stating what recipes consist of, Borghini states that recipes are ideas, yet the notion of ‘idea’ remains utterly ambiguous. An idea can be identified with either a psychological entity or, more generally, with some sort of abstract entity. In the first case, an idea would be identical with a mental state or a kind of mental state. However, this cannot be the meaning we require, since it is evident that a recipe can be written on a book or a website. Hence, recipes must be identified with some sort of abstract entity. When it comes to the nature of recipes and the relation between them and dishes, there are different theories in the literature (Borghini 2015: 723 ff.). In what follows, I will restrict the discussion to Platonism and constructivism. While the former will be my polemical target, the latter provides many insights that can be developed and integrated into the new theoretical position I defend.

As an account of recipes, Platonism can be inferred from Boorstin’s (1964: ch. 3) work, which regards cultures, and bits thereof, as essentially static, and thus definable in terms of universal properties.¹ Recipes are characterised as eternal types, essentially defined by a list of ingredients and procedures, and they are considered to exist independently of the corresponding dishes.² Given their static and abstract nature, recipes are identified with universals,³ that is, entities having instances (van Inwagen 2014: 30) and thus being repeatable (Loux & Crisp 2017). Platonism is a *prima facie* compelling theoretical position in accounting for recipes with an ‘algorithmic’ structure, such as cocktails, pastries, and some industrial foods. Moreover, the Platonistic identification of recipes with universals is consistent with the fact that one and the same recipe can be followed more than once, at different times and places, in the same way in which a book can be printed more than once, at different times and places. In other words, Platonism straightforwardly accounts for recipes being wholly present in distinct dishes. Lastly, it is associated with a strong form of instantiation-realism, in that a dish *D* instantiates a recipe *R* if and only if *D* has been prepared with the (kinds of) ingredients and procedures specified by *R*. That is, no entity distinct from those ingredients and procedures plays a role in the relation of instantiation.

¹ For a critical discussion of Boorstin’s understanding of cultures and their authenticity, see (Sims 2009: 324-26).

² Actually, Platonism also comes in a milder version, according to which, despite the possibility for a recipe to change all of its ingredients and procedures through time, there is still an essential core of ingredients and procedures for every version of the recipe (Borghini 2015: 724). I do not need to discuss the two strains of Platonism separately, since the argument I bring in the next section aims to undermine their shared trait of considering recipes, fine-grained as they like, as Platonic universals.

³ I do not need to endorse any metaphysical view about the distinction between properties and universals. I will state that (i) there are perfectly natural properties (Lewis 1986a, 1986b), (ii) naturalness comes in degree, so that a property *F* is more natural than a property *G* iff the definition of *F* in terms of perfectly natural properties is simpler than the definition of *G* (Lewis 1986b: 61), (iii) natural kinds are universals identical with perfectly natural properties and some relatively natural property. Specifically, the relatively natural properties that are identical with natural kinds are all those whose naturalness is useful to the sciences which study and make use of them. I will thus use the terms interchangeably if not otherwise specified.

A competing approach is constructivism, according to which recipes are “the outcome of a selection process ultimately guided by human fiat” (Borghini 2015: 724). Although there are different sketches of it in the literature (e.g. Heldke 2012, Jackson 1999, Sims 2009), constructivism, as a metaphysical account of recipes, has been mainly developed by Borghini (2015). According to Borghini’s constructivism, recipes are socially-dependent entities, constitutively dependent on speech acts for their existence (2015: 727). In this respect, then, constructivism critically differs from Platonism. A further difference concerns the relation of instantiation: according to Borghini’s constructivism, a necessary condition for a dish to instantiate a recipe is that the author performs a speech act, consisting in a declaration of intention to replicate that recipe. Hence, not only recipes but also dishes are understood as socially-dependent entities. Moreover, recipes are characterised, in an Aristotelian fashion, as ontologically dependent on dishes: recipes do not existentially precede dishes, as in the Platonist framework, but they come into existence, and evolve, together with them (2015: 731). Lastly, the instantiation of the same recipe by any two distinct dishes depends on appropriate relations of imitation. The ‘felicity conditions’ of these relations of imitation require a cook’s expertise, the (contextual) authenticity of dishes, and also the open-endedness of the recipe (2015: 732-36).

There are at least three *desiderata* for a proper metaphysical account of recipes. First, it should characterise recipes in such a way as to allow them to be kinds of entities which can bear the appropriate relation to dishes in order to perform specific theoretical tasks. Second, it should make sense of recipes as human cultural products, thus ontologically dependent on human minds. Third, it should be compatible with the persistence of recipes through time, change, and variations.

In what follows, I aim to fulfil these theoretical *desiderata* by developing a metaphysical account which sides with Borghini’s constructivism, but, at the same time, seriously considers inscriptions of recipes and their role in accounting for the production of dishes. The result is a nominalistic view of recipes which, by foregoing any instantiation relation, qualifies as anti-Platonistic in the most robust sense. To this end, I first develop a case against Platonism arguing, in section 1, that, insofar as they are considered as Platonic universals, recipes cannot be characterised as performing the specific theoretical tasks they should be capable of carrying out. Moreover, Platonism would undermine the explanatory role of imitation for the sharing of properties between dishes. In section 2, I argue for a metaphysical account which does without universals by claiming that recipes are continuants made up of concrete recordings that encode dishes. As will become clear, such an account sides with Borghini’s constructivism, since it characterises recipes as cultural items: more precisely, as abstract artefacts. Lastly, in section 3, I consider and reject a characterisation of recipes as social documents in favour of artifactualism.

1. Recipes Are Not Platonic Universals

A first difficulty with the identification of recipes with universals concerns the feature of open-endedness. The concept of open-endedness has its pedigree in the philosophy of art:

A concept is open if its conditions of application are emendable and corrigible; i.e. if a situation or case can be imagined or secured which would call for some sort of

decision on our part to extend the use of the concept to cover this, or to close the concept and invent a new one to deal with the new case and its new property (Weitz 1956: 31).

It depends on a social decision for the concept PIZZA to cover pineapple pizza dishes. To say that recipes are open-ended means that extending them to cover some dish variation or not is dependent on a social decision. However, this characterisation does not entirely capture the open-endedness of recipes. Borghini also characterises recipes by their evolvability through time: “for each recipe, the possible trajectories of evolution are countless” (2015: 736). All in all, then, recipes are open-ended in that they admit variation, both horizontally and vertically.

However, it is not clear how to characterise universals in such a way as to account for the right kind of evolvability. Universals are generally considered to be abstract entities, while evolution seems to imply variation across time and space. Consider the analogous problem of the evolution of biological species. Biological species are natural kinds, thus abstract entities, but they undergo evolution.⁴ One of the main solutions to this conundrum has been the development of a weaker conception of natural kinds, namely homeostatic property cluster kinds (Boyd 1991, 1999), according to which biological species are natural kinds whose associated clusters of properties are robustly instantiated by the respective instances due to causal homeostatic mechanisms.⁵ Such a solution, however, does not seem to be available in the case of recipes. The main problem is that, differently from the case of biological species, the choice of the homeostatically clustered properties is fatally subjected to arbitrariness.⁶ Consider the recipe for pesto: a property it necessarily seems to have is the prescription of the use of basil leaves in preparation. However, there are many varieties of basil, whose leaves significantly differ with respect to flavour, scent, and also colour (e.g. there are purple cultivars of basil). Hence, the property ‘prescribing to prepare the corresponding dish with basil leaves’ is too coarse-grained for being one of the properties among the supposed cluster associated with the recipe for pesto. Which property should be chosen? There is a bewildering variety: for example, ‘being prepared with leaves of *Ocimum basilicum* cultivar ‘Classic Italian’’, ‘being prepared with leaves of *Ocimum basilicum* grown up in Genoa Pra’’, ‘being prepared with leaves of *Ocimum basilicum* picked when the plant has just four little leaves’, and so forth. The choice among one of the candidate properties would be utterly arbitrary: in a slogan, there is no non-conventional way to carve the culinary world at its joint.

However, there is a more significant flaw in any proposal of identifying recipes with Platonic universals, i.e. eternal types. The main problem with Platonism lies in its incompatibility with a tenet of any metaphysical characterisation of universals. Such an incompatibility arises given the existence of certain relations

⁴ To be sure, “evolution” has different meanings in culinary and biological usage. Anyway, what is at stake philosophically is that a universal admits instances that can vary relevantly (sometimes in a directional way) through time.

⁵ Causal homeostatic mechanisms are mechanisms underlying a kind and such that they causally maintain the co-occurrence of the properties typically instantiated by the members of the kind.

⁶ Another difficulty with such an account, on which I do not want to expand here, consists in identifying the proper homeostatic mechanism and explaining how such homeostasis works.

between recipes and dishes, and it relies only on the commitment to two generally accepted features of universals. The first is mind-independency: universals can not only be predicated of distinct objects, but such a predication is independent of the existence of minds (Carmichael 2010). In other words, it is legitimate to talk about dishes instantiating universals-recipes without further qualifications. The second is their metaphysical role: since Plato, universals have been used to account for the commonality of properties between distinct objects. Armstrong puts this nicely:

The problem of universals is the problem of how different particulars can nevertheless have the very same properties and relations. It is the problem of generic identity. The Platonic Theory of Forms is intended to solve this problem (Armstrong 1978: 64).

Any Platonistic account should recognise and accept both of these trivial features of universals.

A further, metatheoretical, notion I need is the difference between accounting for a fact and metaphysically explaining it. Metaphysical explanation, as a kind of explanation, must exhibit different formal properties, such as irreflexivity, non-monotonicity, transitivity, asymmetry, and relevance constraints (see, e.g., Baron & Norton forthcoming, Schaffer 2017, Thompson 2016). Accountability, as I conceive it, must not. Consider the following example: there is a chair *C* in the room at time t_1 . Suppose now the truth of composition as identity, namely the thesis stating that mereologically complex objects are plurally identical to their composing objects.⁷ The fact that each of the proper parts at time t_1 of *C* is in the room will thus *account* for the fact that a chair *C* is in the room at t_1 , but it will not *explain* it. This is because it would otherwise be a case of symmetric metaphysical explanation, given the truth of composition as identity.⁸ Suppose, instead, that composition as identity is false: that a chair *C* is in the room at t_1 is now *explained* by the fact that each of the proper parts of *C* are in the room at time t_1 , since, at the very least, the fact of the former is grounded in the fact of the latter (Cameron 2014). Note that grounding, inasmuch as it is an hyperintensional notion, is sufficient to furnish a metaphysical explanation of this kind.

Given this distinction, universals are such that they can account for, but not explain, the commonality of properties between entities. The reason, as given by van Inwagen (2016), is the following. Universals are supposed to explain facts such that both Fido and Lucky instantiate the property 'being a dog'. However, what would explain such a fact is the conjunction of (i) a theoretical identity or a conceptual analysis of 'being a dog', furnishing necessary and sufficient conditions to instantiate such a property, and (ii) the fact that both Fido and Lucky satisfy those conditions. Suppose that the natural kind property 'being a member of *Canis familiaris*' is theoretically identified with 'belonging to the clade having as last common ancestor the particular organism O': the fact that both Fido and Lucky belong to such a clade explain why they are dogs. The problem with

⁷ I will not discuss composition as identity further. The thesis enjoys both supporters and critics. Among the first, there are, e.g., Bohn (2019), Lewis (1991, ch. 3.6), Loss (2019); among the second, Calosi (2018), Carrara & Lando (2017), Yi (2018).

⁸ This does not mean that identity statements cannot furnish any information at all: it suffices to consider Frege's case of the Morning Star and the Evening Star.

universals here is that (i) can never be an ontological analysis of properties such as ‘being a dog’ and, thus, universals simply cannot play a role in the supposed explanation. Hence, universals can *account* for the sharing (and not sharing) of properties between entities, but they can never *explain* it. Of course, a particular theory of universals should also be motivated by arguments and be consistent with other theories that could potentially be endorsed.

However, it is the case that recipes have not only an accountability role but also an explanatory role with regard to the sharing of properties between dishes. This role can be shown by employing the notion of grounding, which is very intimately bound to the notion of metaphysical explanation. Consider the case of a dish D_I prepared by an author A_I :

- (i) The fact that a particular dish D_I made by an author A_I has certain culinary features is (at least partially) grounded in the fact that A_I acted in specific ways to prepare it.
- (ii) The fact that A_I acted in specific ways to prepare D_I is (at least partially) grounded in the fact that the recipe R requires to act in specific ways.

These two statements are trivial. However, since the relation of grounding is transitive (Fine 2012, Schnieder 2011), from (i) and (ii) it follows that

- (iii) The fact that a particular dish D_I made by an author A_I has certain culinary features is (at least partially) grounded in the fact that the recipe R requires to act in specific ways.

Since pointing to what grounds a particular fact provides an excellent metaphysical explanation for its subsistence, it follows, by generalisation, that recipes explain certain culinary features of dishes. This conclusion is enough to undermine standard Platonism: recipes perform a theoretical task that would be precluded to them if they were eternal types. Moreover, through the same pattern of grounding relations between facts, it is possible to show that recipes also explain the sharing of culinary properties between dishes.

A related problem concerns the inconsistency of Platonism with the possibility of explaining the sharing of certain culinary features of dishes through a relation of imitation, as often seems to be the case. The most appropriate way to characterise imitation here is as a relation involving two agents, e.g. a cook and an apprentice, and that it results in the resemblance between the dishes. Hence, correctly, imitation implies resemblance (Armstrong 1978: 66). Let us suppose that A_2 imitated A_1 and produced a dish D_2 resembling D_1 with respect to the salient culinary features. In any case of imitation, the following facts hold:

- (iv) The fact that D_1 and D_2 , made respectively by A_1 and A_2 , share certain culinary features f_1, f_2, \dots, f_n is grounded in the facts that (i) D_1 has f_1, f_2, \dots, f_n , and (ii) D_2 has f_1, f_2, \dots, f_n .
- (v) The fact that D_2 made by A_2 has certain culinary features is (partially) grounded in the fact that A_1 acted in specific ways.

The first statement can be considered as a straightforward conceptual analysis of what property sharing is meant to be. The second statement establishes a grounding relation between the instantiation of culinary properties by the imitator’s dish and specific actions of the master. From (ii), (v), and the transitivity of grounding, it follows that

- (vi) The fact that D_2 made by A_2 has certain culinary features is partially grounded in the fact that the recipe R prescribed to act in specific ways.

Lastly, from (iv), (vi), and the transitivity of ground, it follows that

- (vii) The fact that D_1 and D_2 , made respectively by A_1 and A_2 , share certain culinary features is grounded in the facts that (i) D_1 has certain culinary features, and (ii) R requires to act in specific ways.

Hence, by (vii) and subsumption of grounding (Fine 2012),

- (viii) The fact that D_1 and D_2 , made respectively by A_1 and A_2 , share certain culinary features is partially grounded in the fact that R requires to act in specific ways.

From the grounding relation between these facts, we get a metaphysical explanation. As we saw above, however, facts concerning universals cannot provide any metaphysical explanation of the sharing of properties between entities. However, (viii), by establishing a partial grounding relation between the sharing of culinary features between dishes and a fact concerning a recipe, furnishes exactly such an explanation, although partial. Again, it follows that, since they have some explanatory role for the sharing of properties between dishes, recipes are not Platonic universals.⁹

If this argument succeeds, the Platonistic account of recipes cannot be correct. Recipes are not eternal types or repeatable universals having dishes as instances. What are they, then? In what follows, I suggest that recipes should be considered as particulars. It seems in fact that any Platonistic characterisation of recipes as universals instantiated by dishes relies on a categorical error: recipes are *followed* by the author of a dish, not instantiated by the dish. Dishes do not instantiate recipes, in the same way that model aeroplanes do not instantiate the instructions for their construction. If recipes are accurately followed, the result of a plurality of events involving the cook and the proper kind of ingredients is the dish the recipe encodes. Thus, recipes are particular entities, which somehow enter into causal relations with other particular entities, namely agents and dishes. Consider that people systematically memorise recipes, modify them following their own tastes, pass them through generations, present them in tv shows, and often misinterpret them, too.

If recipes are particulars, are they abstract or concrete? If they are concrete, where are they? A first idea suggests looking at the physical supports of their inscriptions: sheets of papers, cookbooks, digital documents. In the next section, I offer a metaphysical account which can straightforwardly explain many of these features of recipes.

2. Recipes as Abstract Particulars

There is a metaphysical account to which we can appeal that does not identify recipes with universals and is compatible with their social nature. This is the stage/continuant account, which was famously proposed by Kaplan as the correct metaphysical account of words (Kaplan 1990, 2011).¹⁰ According to this account,

⁹ A rejoinder: recipes have no explanatory role in such cases because they are not that relevant. Maybe what is more relevant in the former scenario is how accurately the apprentice imitates its master. However, relevance comes in degree. So maybe recipes are not totally relevant in the former scenario. However, universals can never be relevant, neither partially, in such cases.

¹⁰ I will not say anything more on the topic of the metaphysics of words. For a valuable entry on it, see Balletta 2018. Of course, recipes differ from words in many respects. For

a recipe is a continuant made up¹¹ of the proper stages recorded in, for example, cookbooks, grandmothers' minds, on scraps of paper and so forth.¹² Recipes are thus cultural objects, extended through space and time. Hence, from a metaphysical point of view, they are very similar to words: "They live in the world, not in Plato's heaven. They are cultural artefacts, created by us, transmitted by us, stored by us" (Kaplan 1990: 111).

The stage/continuant account delivers straightforward explanations of some of the most notable features of foods and recordings of recipes. Consider two independently invented, yet procedurally identical recipes:¹³ the intuition is that they are two distinct recipes. It suffices to consider a world in which the first recipe is invented, but its doppelganger is not: this is a clearly metaphysically possible scenario, but it would not be if the two recipes were one and the same recipe. Anyway, since they have different introductory stages and are made up of unrelated, distinct stages, the stage/continuant account can easily explain the distinctness of the two recipes in historical and compositional terms.¹⁴ For the same historical reasons, it is possible to distinguish virtually identical recipes such as *cecina* and *farinata*, on the grounds of having developed in distinct Italian *milieus* (Borghini 2019: 240). Alternatively, consider two dishes resulting from different interpretations or versions of the same recipe, such as tiramisu made with mascarpone cheese and tiramisu made with cream. According to the stage/continuant account, there is in principle no problem in stating that the two dishes are different

example, words are clustered in languages and are made up of letters from an alphabet. The claim here is just that recipes and words have a remarkably similar metaphysics.

¹¹ I am agnostic about the proper notion of composition (e.g., mereological or non-mereological) in this case.

¹² The content of such supports consists of sets of propositions. However, according to Borghini (2015: 729 ff.), such sets of propositions would merely be incomplete representations of recipes. For example, recordings do not express the implicit residual of recipes. As it will get clear, a necessary condition for a recording to be a stage of a recipe is that it is recognized as such by an authenticity judgment, whose accuracy requires the expertise of the cook following the content of the recording. Hence, according to the present account, stages are complete representations as they are, but their status as such ultimately depends on a social decision.

¹³ Although it is more of a philosophical case, Krondl suggests that something similar could have happened to the recipe for the strudel dough, which would have been developed independently in Turkey and central Europe (Krondl 2011: 82).

¹⁴ I assume the existence of an introductory stage of recipes, and thus the existence of its inventor. However, this is a controversial assumption: "Indeed, most times recipes do not have an inventor—who invented *prosciutto*, or *mozzarella*, or *jambalaja*?" (Borghini 2011: 96). I agree that recipes can have no single inventor: of course, a plurality of persons may introduce the first stage of a recipe. However, this does not imply that recipes do not have an origin, that is, an introductory stage. Recipes are cultural items, and as such, they have a temporal location: hence, a beginning in time for their existence. In the ideal case, the introductory stage of a recipe is intentionally produced and, at the same time, recognized as such by its inventor. In the vast majority of cases, though, the introductory stage should be identified with the first recording followed by an agent having the intention to produce a specific final food. Different cultural products seem to enjoy the same introductory pattern. Consider a musical genre, e.g., rockabilly. Its birth should be temporally located at the instant in which someone held certain propositional attitudes towards particular sound patterns. Among the propositional attitudes, there is the recognition that a specific kind of music is produced by reproducing those sound patterns. To be sure, it will be called 'rockabilly' and recognized as such only later.

interpretations of the same recipe since they are dishes resulting from the execution of two different stages of the same continuant.¹⁵ Recipes admit ‘forks’, that is, stages remarkably different one from the other. In this respect, recipes are like words, which admit inscriptions and utterances that deviate far from the standard.¹⁶

Another feature of recipes that is captured by the stage/continuant account is their existence in space and time. Recipes have a history, and people modify some of their procedures or ingredients through time. Some modifications are brought about by technological progress (e.g., many cookbooks now prescribe to whisk eggs and sugar with the help of a kitchen aid), but many are introduced by people so that dishes are best suited for their own tastes. Consider that, on the one hand, it is quite evident that an expression such as ‘the recipe for strawberry ice cream’ is just an improper definite description, since there are countless different recipes for strawberry ice cream. However, on the other hand, there must be something in common between two different recipes for strawberry ice cream. Both facts have an elegant explanation when the focus is shifted from particular recipes to their stages, that is, physical objects which record them. Different recordings of the same recipe will often encode different dishes belonging, nevertheless, to the same kind of dishes.

The stage/continuant account, though, relies on the answer to the following crucial question: when are different recordings of recipes stages of the same recipe? To be sure, a simple vertical model, according to which it is necessary and sufficient for two recordings of recipes to share a common origin to be stages of the same recipe, cannot be adequate. It suffices to consider the following case in the history of desserts. The sponge cake that is known in Italy as *Pan di Spagna* was initially invented by the Ligurian pastry chef Giovan Battista Cabona at the Spanish court, around the 16th century (Coxall 2018: 48). Later, the recipe was substantially modified by French pastry cooks, who added butter to the preparation and increased the amount of sugar and eggs. The resulting dessert is now known as *génoise* (Kronl 2011: 152). *Génoise* and *Pan di Spagna* are certainly different dishes, even if the former was born as a slight alteration of the latter. Nevertheless, the corresponding recipes are now certainly distinct: a fork in the metaphysical structure of *Pan di Spagna* as it became a new entity. Recipes can change: subsequent recordings can encode quite distinct resulting dishes, but they cannot persist through any kind of change. As it is the case with biological species, a criterion must be found for segmenting lineages through time.

In this respect, however, recipes are very different from other kinds of entities that typically persist through change, namely organisms. The difference lies in the naturalness of the entities. Limits to the kinds and degree of change organisms can bear without ceasing to exist as their biological nature determines them.¹⁷

¹⁵ As I stated above, stages can be simply recorded in one’s mind.

¹⁶ Within limits, of course: “recipes are not infinitely flexible” (Heldke 1988: 24). The concept of tolerance has already been investigated in the debate on the metaphysics of words. Consider: how much can two utterances or inscriptions of the same word vary? (see, e.g., Hawthorne & Lepore 2011, Kaplan 2011).

¹⁷ In the usual cases, an organism persists as such through all the changes that do not cause its death. However, there are more exotic cases in which an organism x can persist through change as numerically the same entity x , but not as an organism. Consider the males of many seadevil species, which parasitize a female by sticking to her belly thanks to modified teeth. Through complex processes of histological transformations, males turn, thus, from

Recipes, though, are cultural artefacts rather than natural objects. According to the stage/continuant account, recipes persist through time by having stages at different times. Their persistence conditions are thus identified with the necessary and sufficient conditions that a recording must satisfy to be the stage of a particular recipe. These conditions are largely socially determined:¹⁸ which recordings should be considered stages of a particular recipe is up to a social, and often collective, judgement. Such a judgement declares the authenticity of recordings.

When it comes to dishes, Borghini offers two notions to capture the conditions for their authenticity: fit and approval rating. The fit of a dish is defined as “the ratio of two factors: resemblance and context” (Borghini 2015: 733). A poorly risen pizza easily fits a college party, but not *Gino Sorbillo’s pizzeria*. The approval rating, on the other hand, points to the fact that “it is typically up to a collectivity of people to assess whether a dish authentically produces a recipe” (734). These two notions capture the authenticity of dishes given the satisfaction of two conditions, namely the *implicit residual* of a recipe and the *expertise*. The implicit residual of a recipe is the set of (kinds of) procedures that are not encoded by the recipe but that the cook must know to prepare the corresponding dish adequately (732). How and how much to knead dough is an implicit residual of a recipe for focaccia. On implicit residual, Borghini builds up the notion of expertise: “in order to deliver a dish that instantiates a given recipe, then, a cook must possess *expertise* in the relevant abilities required to prepare the dish” (732).

Borghini’s remarks on the authenticity of dishes can be mostly maintained in the stage/continuant account of recipes and used as criteria for their persistence through time. Recipe-recordings are stages of a particular recipe that depend on authenticity judgments, and the positivity of authenticity judgments depends on the fit and the approval rating of the encoded dish. Some form of expertise is necessary in order to respect the instructions encoded on a stage of a recipe and produce the corresponding dish.¹⁹ The implicit residual and expertise are, thus, necessary in order to guarantee the accuracy of authenticity judgments. If the cook is not an expert, she would not be able to follow the instructions on the recording adequately, and the authenticity judgments would perhaps be diverted. The relation between a recipe and an authentic dish, then, is indirect and grounded in the relation between a recipe-recording and the dish itself. Between a recipe-recording and the dish an expert can produce by following the content of the recipe-

freely swimming organisms into sperm-producing organs of the mate (Fairbairn 2013: 125-126).

¹⁸ I say ‘largely’ because a necessary condition for the persistence of recipes is some causal connection between the recorded stage. Such a connection does not imply that recipes admit no gaps, that is, periods in which there are no available recordings of it. Consider the case of a cook discovering an inscription and reviving a long-gone recipe (Borghini 2015: 736). Furthermore, it should be noticed that the causal condition follows from the nature of recipes, not from the stage/continuant account. There are kinds of entities, such as persons, which do not respect that condition (see Patrone 2017 on the problem of defining such a relation between stages of persons). Lastly, it is interesting that social factors play a considerable role in identity judgments concerning other culinary categories, e.g., wine (see Borghini 2012).

¹⁹ It should be noted that if respecting the instruction encoded on a stage of a recipe requires expertise, expertise cannot always require an apprenticeship, *contra* Borghini’s suggestion (2015: 732). Otherwise, any case of the introduction of a recipe is a counterexample to such a suggestion.

recording, there is a causal dependence relation, in which the intentional actions of an agent play an ineliminable role, as well as the satisfaction of a social authenticity judgement.

To be sure, there must be some tolerance in the evaluation of the authenticity of a dish and, thus, of a recording. Intuitively, recipes can be placed on a continuum between low-standard and high-standard recipes. Such a continuum can be superimposed on the tolerance spectrum, that is, the degree of variation tolerated in authentic dishes of a given kind. On the low-standard side, there are everyday recipes such as the recipe for pasta with tomato sauce or fruit salad. On the high-standard side, there are autographic recipes, for example Massimo Bottura's *Chicken chicken chicken... where are you?*, and traditional recipes associated with particular *milieus* (Borghini 2011: 96 ff.). There is a link between the tolerance for variation and the open-endedness of recipes: if a recipe has a high degree of open-endedness, it has a high degree of tolerance for variation too and vice versa. High-standard recipes typically have a low degree of open-endedness, and thus a low degree of tolerance for variation; whereas, low-standard recipes exhibit a higher degree of open-endedness and tolerance for variation. However, again, the degree of variation tolerated by a recipe is up to the social judgement of authorities. The difference between the persistence conditions of low-standard and high-standard recipes is not metaphysical, but only epistemic: as far as low-standard recipes are concerned, it is more likely that the judgements of experts and non-experts are in agreement.

To sum up, the role of experts in determining the persistence conditions of recipes characterises recipes as social objects in at least two different ways. First and foremost, it is up to the authenticity judgments of experts to cut segments of causally connected recordings into distinct recipes. Second, such authenticity judgements depend on the proper execution of a recording, which requires that the cook possesses the expertise and can satisfy the implicit residual of the recording. Hence, the construction of recipes from recordings is socially influenced in two ways: it is up to experts, whose judgement cannot be considered trustworthy unless the cook can guarantee proper execution of the instructions in the recording, that is, adequate production of the encoded dish.

All in all, then, according to the reasons presented in this section, a recipe-recording is a stage of a particular recipe if and only if (i) it is its introductory stage or it is historically connected to such a stage, and (ii) the encoded dish is appropriately evaluated as authentic. 'Appropriately evaluated' means that the implicit residual and the expertise are verified, and the evaluation has been given (or confirmed) by experts.

3. Recipes as Artefacts

One last issue requires attention. I have claimed that the existence of recipes depends on human activities in specific ways. Among the philosophically relevant categories of entities, there are two suitable candidates with which to identify recipes.

The first is documents, a category of social objects which have recently been pointed to as the very bricks of the social reality (Ferraris 2015, Ferraris & Torrenco 2014). According to the documentality view, documents are identified as the supports of the content of social acts, and which are considered the entities grounding the existence (and persistence) of social reality (Ferraris & Torrenco

2014: 18). Such supports can be external, such as sheets of paper and digital documents, but also ‘internal’, such as the shared witness of a social act, e.g. a promise.

These seem to be features of recipe-recordings too: as we said in the previous section, recipe-recordings partially ground the existence of particular dishes, and particular dishes are characteristic of human cultures and so *a fortiori* of social reality. Recipes are always recorded on external supports, such as cookbooks or sheets of paper, but also internal ‘mental supports’, such as grandmothers’ minds. However, two conditions must be satisfied for something to be a social object (Ferraris 2015: 425): (i) being the result of a social act, and (ii) being recorded on some external or internal support. Recipes satisfy (ii) since they are usually repeatedly recorded in such a way. Whether they satisfy (i) or not depends on our definition of social acts. Generally, social acts are considered as essentially linguistic acts, which must be addressed to someone and thus grasped in order to display their performative powers (Mulligan 2016: 19). But then, recipes are not the result of social acts. Consider that social acts, insofar as they are essentially linguistic, are different from individual intentional acts and, insofar as they are always directed to someone, require interactions among individuals (Ferraris & Torrenzo 2014: 12). Recipes differ in this respect. The establishment of a recipe’s persistence conditions requires interactions among individuals, that is, an agreement on the authenticity of a recording among experts. However, there seems to be no meaningful sense in which such an establishment can be characterised as essentially linguistic. Hence, recipes are not documents.

The second category of human-dependent objects I want to consider is the category of artefacts. Artefacts are usually identified with objects satisfying the following three conditions (Preston 2018): (i) being intentionally produced, (ii) involving modification of materials, (iii) being produced for a purpose. Recipes satisfy (iii): the purpose of a recipe is to encode a dish in an accurate manner (modulo its implicit residual). Concerning the satisfaction of (i), the following counterexample could be raised. The Negroni Sbagliato was invented in Milan in 1972 as a consequence of a mistake. The bartender Mirko Stocchetto was preparing a Negroni, but he confused prosecco with gin. Hence, the recipe for Negroni Sbagliato was not intentionally produced, and so recipes do not generally satisfy (i). However, such an objection misfires because it misidentifies the time of the introduction of the recipe. It is not the case that Negroni Sbagliato was invented the precise instant Stocchetto mixed prosecco instead that gin with the other proper ingredients: for a recipe to be invented, it is necessary that it is recognised as a particular procedure for a specific product. This is the rationale behind Borghini’s claim that recipes must contain a performative utterance: for something to be recognised as a (recording of a) recipe, it must contain an identifying speech act of the form ‘this is a (recording of a) recipe for Negroni Sbagliato’ (Borghini 2015: 727). The introductory stage of Negroni Sbagliato, then, is Stocchetto’s internal recording, which he purposely produced once he noticed the appreciation of his former error. The constitutive presence of such an identifying speech act into a recipe-recording implies it is intentionally produced. Therefore, recipes satisfy (i).

What about (ii)? The condition is intended to capture the idea that artefacts come into existence through human transformative actions, and merely using natural objects for specific purposes is not enough: to use the position of the North Star in the sky while navigating is not to create a compass. *Prima facie*, then, this

condition seems to imply the concreteness of artefacts, and objects such as statues, hammers, and smartphones easily fit the condition. Recipes are clearly not analogues to these standard artefacts in this respect. However, the condition of concreteness for artefacts is too strong. First, in order to avoid counterexamples such as the stone-hammer one, it is enough to state that for an object to be an artefact it must ontologically depend on human minds. This condition seems sufficient to imply that the hammer-stone, the very concrete object, is not an artefact. Second, many philosophers identify abstract, contingently existing objects of different cultural kinds with legitimate artefacts. In the words of Kaplan:

These are objects that are natural, that were *created in nature*, by a (perhaps) human creator, at a time, in a place, and that live their lives in nature and can change over time—as we do, though we are not abstract objects—and that can, under certain natural conditions, cease to exist. (Kaplan 2011: 506).

Abstract, contingently existing objects such as words (Kaplan 1990, 2011), fictional characters (Evnine 2016, Kripke 2013, Thomasson 1998), musical works (Evnine 2016, Levinson 2013, Friedell 2020), languages (Evnine 2016, Frigerio 2018) are now widely recognized as artefacts. Recipes should be regarded as objects of the same kind. They are abstract, at least more abstract than recipe-recordings, in the same way words are more abstract than mere morphological shapes (Kaplan 2011: 506). They exist contingently: if Mirko Stocchetto had been more careful, Negroni Sbagliato would have never seen the light. Any procedurally identical recipe with a different history would just be a doppelganger. Lastly, recipes extend through space and time and can bear a certain kind of change, via the concreteness and causal connectedness of their recordings.

4. Conclusion

Recipes are cultural objects which inhabit the world and causally interact with people through their recordings. A Platonistic metaphysics struggles with preserving the right grounding relations between facts concerning recipes and dishes, and, ultimately, it appears to rest on a categorical error. For these reasons, it should be rejected and replaced with a particularist metaphysics. According to the stage/continuant view, recipes come into existence through an introductory stage, that is, a mental or written down recording. Such a recording is pointed out as the introductory stage, spawned by a speech act. Recipes, then, extend through space and time and can be tracked down by their constituting recording. Which recordings constitute a recipe is ultimately a matter of expert judgement. It is, thus, clear that recipes are strongly social objects because their very persistence conditions are the result of social judgements. Therefore, the present stage/continuant account should be regarded as a constructivist theory of recipes.

Recipes are particular objects, extended through space and time, and dependent for their existence and persistence on human minds. Which kind of objects are they? Their identification with artefacts seems correct. Philosophers have recently broadened the notion of artefact in order to include entities such as words, languages, and musical compositions.

I have not focused much on the abstractness of recipes. I suspect the topic has not much to do with recipes as such, but with two different and more general metaphysical questions.

First, how should the line between abstractness and concreteness be drawn? This question has been around since its discussion by Lewis (1986b: 82 ff.). In a nutshell, there are many non-equivalent ways to draw the line. According to some of these, recipes turn out to be concrete; according to others, they turn out to be abstract. Without independent reasons supporting a specific way of drawing the line, the question of abstractness or concreteness of recipes is mostly a terminological issue.

The distinction between abstract and concrete entities is intimately connected with the second question, concerning the compositional nature of recipes. Throughout the paper, I have been careful in stating that recipes are “made up” of recipes-recordings, without further qualifying the compositional relation between them. Again, the choice of a compositional relation over another should be independently motivated and considered in the light of other principles and notions. Consider, for example., the principle of the location of the whole (Costa 2018: 113), according to which, if x is part of y and x occupies a spatiotemporal region, then y occupies a spatiotemporal region too. If the relation between recipe-recordings and recipes is the parthood relation, then the principle of the location of the whole implies that recipes occupy spatiotemporal regions. According to the Lewisian Negative Way, being abstract amounts to not having a spatiotemporal location (Lewis 1986b: 83). It would then follow that recipes are not abstract. Nevertheless, a fruitful discussion of these and similar topics needs much more space and argumentation.

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Food, Food Substitutes and Food Supplements

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Abstract

Distinguishing between food, food substitutes and supplements is common in everyday life and academic work. The aim of this paper is to analyze this distinction. The question is approached from the point of view of functions. The hypothesis reads as follows: "Food has several nutritional, culinary, social, cultural, aesthetic and other functions. These functions are necessary and sufficient for something to be food. Food substitutes and supplements, serve some, but not many, functions of food. Thus, food substitutes and supplements are not food". The contemplations of the paper speak against accepting the hypothesis. This negative view is reached by defining the central terms, discussing the differences between eating and swallowing, analyzing the different meanings of the term 'edible' and a throughout analysis of functions of food, substitutes and supplements. As a part of the discussion an idea of origin based functions is developed. If the hypothesis is false (as argued), then the distinction between food and other edible entities must be based on something else than differences in functions. Alternatively the distinction may lack metaphysical justification. The view following this latter alternative is developed for the purpose of further studies.

Keywords: Food, Substitutes, Supplements, Functions, Edible, Eating, Swallowing, Origin.

1. Introduction

Distinguishing between food, food substitutes and food supplements is common in everyday life and also in academic work (see e.g. Fox *et al.* 2016; Pajor *et al.* 2017; Siegrist and Harmann 2019). The aim of this paper is to analyze this distinction and, thus, also shed some light to the very fundamental question of philosophy of food: What distinguishes food from other edible substances, and vice versa? The question is philosophically fascinating. Understanding regarding the issue contributes, not only to philosophical theorizations, but also to food science, food product development and food policy related decision-making.

The question is approached from the point of view of functions. It is generally accepted in academic literature that food serves several functions in human life. It is a source of energy and nutrients. Food provides pleasure through culinary

experiences. Eating food also relieves uncomfortable sensations and feelings including, but not limited to, the sensation of hunger. Food has various social functions related to sharing, caring and hospitality but it is also used for showing off and expressing social status. Moreover, people communicate their culture, identity and group membership through food and eating. (Henschke 2014; Pascalev 2003; Murdock and Noll 2015; Ternikar 2014.) The hypothesis of this study was inspired by this kind of understanding of food. The hypothesis reads as follows:

Food has several nutritional, culinary, social, cultural, aesthetic and other functions. These functions are necessary and sufficient for something to be food. Food substitutes and supplements, serve some, but not many, functions of food. Thus, food substitutes and supplements are not food.

According to the hypothesis, *x* is food, if and only if *x* fulfills various functions of food. Edible substances that fulfill only few functions of food are not food. Thus, hamburgers, for example, are food. They are sources of nutrition and hamburger eating can be an occasion full of social, aesthetic and cultural functions. Vitamin D pills, on the other hand, do not count as food since they do not serve the numerous functions food has in human life.

Few clarifications need to be made. First, the hypothesis concerns types of food—not food tokens such a particular hamburger eaten by someone at some time. A case of someone eating a hamburger just in order to receive nutrition, thus, does not form a counter-example to the hypothesis. Neither does a case of a lousy tasting meal of a hermit. Second, the hypothesis does not imply that something can be food only if it fulfills all functions food can have. Certainly some types of food serve higher number of functions than others. Thanksgiving turkey, for example, has symbolic functions that a lunch sandwich lacks. Still both are food. Third, the hypothesis does not rest on the assumption that the status of edible substances is stable. Rather, the hypothesis allows that something that is not food today may become food in future. Vice versa, something that is food today, may not be taken as food in future.

A possible criticism towards the hypothesis is that it is far too unspecific. The hypothesis does not state how many functions an edible substance must fulfill in order to be food. Thus, it cannot offer a practical tool for distinguishing between food and other edible substances. However, for the purposes of this paper, the hypothesis is specific enough for the following reason: In what follows it will be argued that the hypothesis presented is false. Not just food but also food supplements and food substitutes serve multitude of functions. Moreover, they serve very similar types of functions than the ones that food is serving. Since the considerations presented in what follows will not support the hypothesis, the conclusion and results of the study can be described as negative ones. Negative results are often found less interesting and important than the positive ones (Matosin *et al.* 2014). Yet, these negative results raise some interesting questions. If supplements and substitutes do not differ from food with respect to their functions, how do they differ? Can the distinction between the three be philosophically justified in some other way? The study contributes to developing a new hypothesis (which may be studied in another paper in future) according to which the distinction between food, substitutes and supplements actually lacks metaphysical justification. Rather the common distinction between food, substitutes and supplements is quite arbitrary and reflects common habits and customs. From the point of view

of functions, it is appropriate to understand food substitutes and supplements to be food or one instance of food among many others.

The terms of the study will be described and defined in section two. Section three consists of a closer look on a similarity between food, substitutes and supplements: They are all edible. The functions of food, supplements and substitutes are compared in section four. Functions related to origin of edible entities are analyzed in section five. The conclusions are discussed at section six.

2. Central Terms

2.1. Food and Its Functions

In order to discuss the distinction between food, substitutes and supplements some understanding regarding the three have to be adopted. Philosophers have had very little interest in defining food supplements and substitutes. However, some discussion on understandings regarding food can be found (see e.g. Kaplan 2012; Borghini 2014; Szymanski 2017; Eskine 2017). Even though there is no consensus among philosophers about the conception of food, there is an agreement that a good philosophical understanding of food has to be in line with what people eat and identify as food. A simple account of metaphysics of food can be formed by relying on these lay understandings and by defining food to be what people eat. This simple understanding of food, however, is problematic as it ignores the cultural differences on what is taken as food as well as the multiple functions food plays in human life (Szymanski 2017). What is actually eaten and identified as food differs from one society to another. Moreover, in all societies, food plays multitude of functions. Multitude of functions of food means that it is used for various purposes. Food eaten for maintaining life and bodily function and enhancing well-being. It is also used for expressing our social status and identity. Food has symbolic and religious functions. It can also be an object of exchange (economic good) and source of pleasure. Sometimes food is a way of expressing artistic visions. (Kaplan 2012; Gold 2015; Eskine 2017.)

The term 'food' can be understood in a narrow and wide sense. In its narrow sense term 'food' refers merely to the physical stuff that is eaten (or meant to be eaten). In its wider sense 'food' refers also to events—such as cooking—that led to the existence of that stuff. These wider understandings can differ with respect to their extensions—that is with respect to what are the limits for the events that should be included in the understanding of food. This kind of wider understanding of food allows seeing food as a multidirectional network. (Borghini 2014; Szymanski 2017.) In this study, the term 'food' is understood quite widely as the focus is, following the hypothesis, on various functions of food. Food is understood teleologically through its intended use and goals of stakeholders involved. Food, then, becomes understandable by recognizing the reasons and outcomes of consumption (Henschke 2014). This is not to say that everyone involved is always actively aware of all functions that food is serving on that particular occasion. However, if asked, at least some of the stakeholders could identify some of them.

2.2. Supplements

Food supplements are products meant to deliver nutrients that an individual is not receiving adequate quantities from his or her food. Food supplements may contain, for example, vitamins, fatty acids, minerals and proteins in the forms of

pills, capsules, powders, drinks and bars. Examples include protein powders for body builders and other athletes, multi-nutrient drinks for elderly people, B12-vitamin pills for vegans and folic acid supplements for pregnant women. The food supplements may be necessary because of increased need (e.g. through pregnancy or extensive training) or inability for sufficient nutrient intake (e.g. through illness, inability or non-willingness regarding eating). However, it is not uncommon to consume food supplements without particular physical need. People eat, for example, multivitamin supplements out of habit or just in case. Yet, even when food supplements do not really benefit the person consuming them, the consumption is usually motivated by a possible benefit. (McCann 2005; Pajor 2017.) As a result, food supplements are tightly connected to nutritional functions of food. This does not imply that food supplements lack other functions or that they are eaten *merely* to gain the nutritional benefits.

Understanding the food supplements in the described sense has interesting implications regarding the hypothesis. Support for the hypothesis requires spelling out differences in functions of food and food supplements. This may be challenging as the motives behind food supplement usage may also explain many food choices (e.g. choice of a protein rich dish). If such differences cannot be found, there are two options. Either the distinction between the two have to be justified in some other way or one has to give up the distinction and accept that food supplements actually are instances of food.

2.3. Substitutes

Generally speaking the term ‘substitute’ refers to an entity that is used for certain function instead of an entity which is usually or normally serving that function (Ryall 2008). A historical example of a food substitute is an inner bark bread. Inner bark of pine was used as a substitute of flours in bread at Nordic countries during food shortages (such as the ones at Finland at 1860’s). The bread was beaked by replacing (part of) flours with inner bark of pine. The inner bark bread keeps hunger away, but the taste is poor and the bread is low in nutrients (although in contains a lot of fiber). When food is plenty, food substitutes are consumed instead of a type of food that someone is, for some reason, unwilling or unable to eat. One instance of food substitutes are meal replacement products used in energy-restricted diets for weight reduction. They provide little energy but contain many necessary nutrients and keep the unpleasant feeling of hunger away. Further examples include plant based substitutes for cheese, yoghurt, eggs and meat. These substitutes are usually made to taste and look like the substituted animal based product. They often differ nutritiously from the substituted products. They may, for example, contain less fat and protein but more fiber than the animal based product they are substituting. Yet, contrary to meal replacements used for weight control, they are not designed to be particularly low in energy or high on nutrients. Rather they provide desired food products and related aesthetic and culinary experiences to consumers who are willing to go vegan.

A philosophically interesting questions regarding substitutes concern their relation to the foods they are substituting. What are the criteria for something to be a substitute? How do substitutes of x differ from other stuffs one could choose instead of x? As consumers we are often in situations where there are plenty of alternatives available and we have to choose between them. Most restaurant, for example, have various dishes to choose from and there may be dozens of breads

available at a bakery. Usually there is no reason name some of these alternatives 'substitutes'. The issue of substitutes arises only when the entity that is usually or normally serving some function becomes unavailable or someone, for some reason, does not want to use it. When making a vegan pizza, for example, one needs to find substitutes for cheese and when making a gluten free pizza one needs a substitute for wheat flours. The vegan "cheese resembling product" and gluten free flours are substitutes, since cheese and wheat flours are customary components of pizza. However, not all cases of replacing x with y concern substitutes. My choice to top my pizza with mushrooms today does not render various other alternative pizza toppings as substitutes. Substitutes differ from mere alternatives and spare entities in ways which are described in what follows.

As the above examples indicate, nothing is a substitute as such but only in relation to something it is substituting. Substitutes are always substitutes of something and strongly dependent on the idea of something else being real or authentic something. (Siipi 2014: 92; on similar ideas regarding copies see Carrara and Soavi 2010: 421, 423.) An almond drink, for example, is not a milk substitute as such, but only after someone finds it possible to use it instead of milk or creates it to be used instead of milk. Because of this close connection between authentic entities and substitutes, understanding authenticity contributes to understanding substitutes. The term 'authentic' is ambiguous and it is possible to distinguish between the quality meaning and identity meaning of the term 'authentic'. The quality meaning of authenticity refers to value and typicality of entities. Authenticity in this sense is a matter of degree. Members of a class or type can be more or less perfect and, thus, more or less authentic members of that class or type. American cheese cakes, for example, can be more or less authentic American cheese cakes in this sense. According to quality meaning of authenticity, the claim that something is not authentic x means that it is lousy x—but x nevertheless. (Siipi 2014: 78.) The second sense of authenticity is called identity meaning:

According to the identity meaning, if something is not an authentic x, then it is not x at all, but merely something else that more or less resembles x. [...] The identity meaning of 'authentic' makes a distinction between being an not-being something. [...] Authenticity is then seen as an either-or distinction that corresponds to class membership: if something is not authentic x, then it fails to be x. (Siipi 2014: 77.)

Substitutes relate to the identity meaning of authenticity. Meat substitutes, for example, are not low quality meat but plant based products. In similar lines, meal replacements used for weight loss or to enhance efficiency in time-pressured life styles are not low quality meals but not meals at all (even though they are often marketed as ones). This is not to say that raw materials of substitutes always differ from the ones of the authentic product. Suppose someone is always having and would prefer to have a banana yoghurt of brand x for the breakfast. Sadly, it is not available and the person settles for a banana yoghurt of brand y. The yoghurt of brand y may then well be seen as a substitute for the yoghurt of brand x—even though their raw materials may be the same. Yet, also in this case authenticity and being a substitute are a matter of identity: brand y yoghurt cannot be fairly described as a low quality yoghurt of brand x but a different product which fails to be an instance of authentic brand x yoghurt.

In order for something *y* to be used instead of something *x*—more strictly speaking, in order for *y* to substitute of *x*—*y* must share some of its qualities with *x*. Yet, substitutes never share all of their qualities with the entities they are substituting. Otherwise, they would instances of it. Thus, in a sense, substitutes are imperfect in comparison to the authentic entities (Bergin 2009: 260). Even though an almond drink may be tasty, healthy and able to serve many functions milk is used for, it still lacks some qualities of milk and cannot be identified as milk. In similar lines, the banana yoghurt of brand *y* can be substitute of the yoghurt of brand *x* only because it differs from it at least in one respect: it lacks the desired brand. This is also a sense in which substitutes differ from spare entities. Contrary to substitutes spare entities may be qualitatively similar to the actual choice (e.g. when taking a spare sandwich to a picnic). Thus, spare entities also lack the above described connection to the authentic entities.

None of the above mentioned should be taken to imply that the distinction between substitutes and authentic entities is static and similar in all contexts. What is authentic food within a culinary domain can be considered a substitute in another, and vice versa. Different people may also have different views of whether something is an alternative product or a substitute. Furthermore, whether something is a substitute or alternative product may change over time. A perfect example of this are butter and margarine. Margarine was first developed as a substitute to butter as butter was expensive and challenging to store (Deelstra *et al.* 2014). Nowadays, some consumers still see margarine as a substitute for butter but many take them as alternative products.

The understanding presented should not be taken to mean that authentic entities should always be favored to their substitutes. Quite contrary, there are often many good reasons to favor meat substitutes to authentic meat, for example, and a busy person has good reasons for choosing a meal replacement product instead of a time consuming proper meal. Even though substitutes are somehow imperfect in comparison to authentic entities, they may also carry qualities that speak in their favor. In the modern western world of easily accessible food, the imperfection of food substitutes usually carries with it an extra value which may provide a reason for favoring a substitute to the authentic entity.

The above considerations regarding substitutes are relevant for discussing the hypothesis for two reasons. First, obviously, in order to analyze whether substitutes differ from food with respect to their functions, one needs to define what is meant by substitutes. The second reason is more complicated and relates to the understanding of substitutes presented. As stated earlier “substitutes are always substitutes of something and strongly dependent on the idea of something else being real or authentic something” (Siipi 2014: 92). This real or authentic something can be a type of food (e.g. meat or dairy) or food in general. In the first case, the term ‘food substitute’ refers to products that are used instead of some more traditional or more commonly used food stuff type. Examples include soy burgers as substitutes for meat burgers and oat yoghurt as a substitute for dairy based yoghurt. Soy burgers and oat yoghurt are commonly understood as food and, strictly speaking, they are not substitutes for *food*, but rather substitutes for *types of food* (e.g. meat or dairy). In the second case, the term ‘food substitute’ designates substances that are consumed instead of food—not just some kind of food, but food in general. Inner bark may be example of such food substitute. A modern example are medical nutrient solutions, which are given to patients who are unable obtain necessary nutrients otherwise. Medical nutrient solutions may be taken orally. To

seriously sick individuals who are unable to swallow they are given via nasogastric tube.¹ A meat or dairy substitute can sometimes be food substitute also in this second sense of the term. However, importantly, meat and dairy substitutes do not have to be *food* substitutes in this second sense. The two understandings imply it possible to judge that a particular product (e.g. a soy burger) is a meat substitute but not a food substitute. In other words, it is a substitute for meat, but not a substitute for food in general.

The distinction between substitutes of food in general and substitutes of a type of food is important for analyzing the hypothesis for the following reason. Suppose, it turns out that practically all substitutes discussed in the food context are actually substitutes for a type of food, but not substitutes for food in general. Then, it becomes possible that these products are food. And if that is the case, their functions, of course, would not (and by definition could not) differ from the functions of food. As a result, the hypothesis would be falsified.

3. Something in Common: Eating and Edibility?

At first sight it seems that food, supplements and substitutes have at least something in common. They are all edible and they are all eaten. One might then suggest, following the simple account of metaphysics of food (Kaplan 2012), that since food substitutes and supplements are edible and eaten, they are actually instances of food. But what does being edible mean? And how does eating differ from closely related terms such as swallowing? Can other entities besides food be eaten?

The term 'eat' is sometimes used as a synonym of the term 'swallowing'. However, the term 'eat' also seems to have a narrower meaning. Some instances of swallowing are not instances of eating in its narrow sense. Some drug smugglers, for example, swallow tiny balloons containing cocaine or heroin. Moreover, medical devices (e.g. capsule endoscopy devices) are swallowed by patients in medical care. Thus, a question arises: Does the distinction between eating and swallowing follow the distinction between food and other edible entities? Is only food eaten and other entities—including food supplements and substitutes—merely swallowed? Two issues are worth noting regarding this idea. First, the difference between eating and swallowing does not rest on chewing. Chewing is neither sufficient nor necessary for eating. A bubblegum is chewed but not eaten and many jellies, puddings and soups can be eaten without chewing. Second, the suggestion does not imply that food is always eaten. One may well merely swallow food for example in an extreme hurry or when one is taste deprived (e.g. due to a flu). The suggestion is that *only* food is eaten. In what follows the suggestion is evaluated by analyzing the term 'edible'.

Eating something presupposes that it is edible. There is no general agreement on what counts as edible (Fuster 2014). At least the following four senses can be distinguished. First, the expression 'x is non-edible' may be taken to indicate that swallowing x is physically impossible. Large stones, for example, are non-edible in this sense. Accordingly, anything one can swallow is edible for her in this sense—including medical devices, drug balloons, food supplements, food and

¹ Someone might argue that inner bark and nutrient solutions are food. That kind of wider understanding of food is compatible with the general argument of the paper, and thus, their status is not further discussed here.

small stones. Thus, this sense of ‘edible’ corresponds to eating widely understood and does shed any light on the distinction between eating and swallowing. As the examples indicate, not just food but also many other entities can be edible in this sense. Thus, edibility in this sense does not offer a tool for distinguishing between food and other entities. Yet, edibility in the presented sense is certainly necessary for something to be food, food supplement or a substitute.

Second, the term ‘non-edible’ is used of poisonous or otherwise harmful substances such as fungus *Amanita phalloides* (also known as death cap) or food that has gone bad (see e.g. Gjerris and Gaiani 2014). Drug balloons may come close to being non-edible in this sense as swallowing them is very risky. Peanuts and fish are edible to most people in this sense. However, they are non-edible for individuals who are seriously allergic to them. Thus, edibility in this sense is not only about properties of a substance but also a relation between a substance and its potential eater. Also this sense of ‘edible’ fails to distinguish between eating and mere swallowing. Food poisoning results from *eating* spoiled (non-edible) food. On the other side of the coin, capsule endoscopy devices are safe and, thus, edible in this respect. Analogously to the first sense of ‘edible’, also this second sense is useless for telling food apart from other entities. Many non-foods are edible in this sense. This kind of edibility is not even necessary for something to be food. Spoiled food (or food one is allergic to) is still food. As a result, food can be non-edible in this sense.

Third, the terms ‘edible’ and ‘non-edible’ refer to religious, ideological and moral restrictions regarding food (Fuster 2014; Grumett 2014). Pork, for example, is in this sense non-edible for vegans, Muslims and Jewish people. Edibility is then very much a question about cultural, moral and religious conventions. This sense of edibility is irrelevant to the distinction between eating and swallowing. Of course, the moral, cultural and religious restrictions concern also swallowing, not just eating. Moreover, substances may count as food when they are found non-edible (by some people) in this sense of the term. Vegan, Muslims and Jewish people may understand pork as food. It is just a kind of food that they should not eat—non-edible food, for short. Thus, this sense of edibility does not distinguish between food and other entities.

Finally, something may be non-edible for aesthetic reasons (Kaplan 2012). It is not rare that an individual dislikes some food stuff—such as mushrooms, mussels or onion—to the extent of refusing to eat them. Sometimes food stuffs are found yucky (or too bad tasting, spicy, rough or slimy) to the extent that eating them becomes impossible or at least very difficult. This sense of edibility does not distinguish between food and other entities. A person disliking the taste of cheese to the extent of not being able to eat it may still understand cheese as food. It is just the kind of food he or she does not want to eat. As an outcome, edibility in this fourth sense is not necessary for something to be food. Yet, this sense on ‘edible’ succeeds in pointing towards differences between eating and mere swallowing. Suppose someone dislike the taste of garlic to the extent of being unable to eat it or foods containing it. This individual still might be able to swallow a glove of garlic (very fast and with a lot of water) in order to win a bet, for example. Moreover, she may be happy to swallow garlic capsules for health reasons. If this is the case, then eating in its narrow consist of swallowing but also of something else. In short, eating is more than mere swallowing. Might it be, that the multitude functions of food also concern eating and distinguish it from mere swallowing?

Eating and swallowing share a goal of digesting something—that is placing something inside one’s stomach. Eating in its narrow differs from mere swallowing in serving numerous functions that go beyond nutritional or medical values of the substances digested. Eating gives pleasure and relieves unpleasant sensations. Eating has numerous social, cultural and religious functions. Moreover, eating is a complex and composed practice which involves many elements relating for example to places and tools used for eating. (Scruton 2012; Henschke 2014; Murdock and Noll 2015.) Are these differences between the functions and goals of mere swallowing and eating somehow analogical to differences between food, food substitutes and food supplements? Are food substitutes and supplement merely swallowed or also eaten?

4. Functions of Food, Substitutes and Supplements

If the above distinction between eating and mere swallowing is accepted, it seems that some food supplements are merely swallowed but others are eaten. Vitamin pills are usually merely swallowed, whereas supplements such as protein bars are eaten. Protein bars are usually quite tasty and many outdoor sport enthusiasts, for example, use them as provisions during or between their sport activities. In similar lines, some substitutes are eaten and others merely swallowed. A soya burgers and oat yoghurt, for example, are most certainly eaten. Medical nutrient solutions—which are not only substituting a type of food but food in general—are merely swallowed. However, one might still claim that functions of food are wider than the ones of supplements and substitutes. It will be shown in what follows that this is not the case.

A central function of food is to provide energy and important nutrients. Some substitutes, such as baby milk substitutes, are designed to fulfill these nutritional functions very similarly to the stuff they are substituting. The more nutritiously similar to mother’s milk a product is, the more suitable it is of being used as a baby milk substitute (even though in order to work as a substitute it also has to fulfill some requirements regarding taste and preservability). A stuff nutritiously very different to mother’s milk cannot be sensibly be taken as a baby milk substitute.

However, even though some substitutes have to be nutritiously similar to the entities they are substituting, this is not always the case. Nutritious similarity is not necessary for something *y* to be a substitute for something else *x*. Meat and dairy substitutes, for example, are often nutritiously quite different from meat and dairy. In their case, the focus is in substitute’s ability to serve the culinary and social functions of the authentic product. Meat and dairy substitutes enable vegans (and other unwilling to consume animal based products) to enjoy food that is overtly similar to more conventional food. With the help of these substitutes individuals can have culinary experiences, follow traditions of their culture (to some extent) and realize social functions of food. Becoming a vegan, thus, does not need to imply giving up cappuccino drinking or eating hamburgers both of which have various social, culinary and cultural functions. Sometimes, as in the case of low calorie meal replacements used for weight control, nutritious differences between a food item and its substitute are not only tolerated but actually required. Meal replacements are very low in calories but serve some functions of food they are substituting. They, for example, remove the unpleasant feeling of hunger.

The multitude of functions of substitutes relate to the criteria for good substitutes. Not any entity can be a good substitute for any other entity. A suggestion to use slices of cucumber as substitute of beef in a classical cheese burger is, at its best, humorous. In somehow similar lines, a restaurant that used to serve a single lettuce leaf as a substitute of bread to its gluten intolerant customers received a mass of negative attention at social media and had to change its practice.² What distinguishes a good substitute of *x* from all other entities that are not *x*, is that good (or at least decent) substitutes of *x* can serve several functions of *x*. A good substitute of something *x* is capable of fulfilling many functions of *x*. (Ryall 2008: 59; Siipi 2014: 92; on similar ideas regarding copies see Carrara and Soavi 2010: 423.) Since a lettuce leaf is unlikely to serve culinary, social and nutritious functions of bread, it is not a good substitute of it.

The functions of food supplements vary less than the functions of food substitutes. All food supplements are meant to enhance the well-being or performance of an individual through serving some nutritional needs. However, contrary to food and food substitutes they are not meant to cover all energy or nutrient intake of an individual. At first sight it may seem that supplements focus mostly on fulfilling some nutritional needs whereas substitutes can substitute any functions of food. Yet, the nutritious functions people give to food and food supplements are various. Food is not only about receiving right amount of calories and nutrients necessary for avoiding deficiencies and related sickness. Rather people believe the right nutrition to contribute to their general well-being, including their looks (O'Neill and Silver 2016) and harmony of mind (Siró *et al.* 2008: 457; Sirico *et al.* 2018). Certain ways of eating as well as usage of certain food supplements may be central for a life style chosen (Sirico *et al.* 2018). In similar lines avoiding food supplements may be important for other ways of living a good life—for example, following the ideal of being self-subsistent. Thus, food supplements may, in addition to providing nutrients and energy serve many social and cultural functions of food. By them people can, for example, communicate group membership (or non-membership). One obvious example is (hobby) athletes all leaving the gym while sipping their protein supplement drink from a similar plastic container. They fulfill their high need for protein but also sign of belonging to the group of “hard training ones”. In similar lines, usage of certain vitamin supplements may indicate belonging to the groups of “caring parents” or “committed students”, for example.

To conclude, food substitutes and supplements serve many of the functions food is serving including the social, cultural and symbolic functions of food. As a result, the hypothesis presented in the beginning seems false. Yet, one might still try to save a somehow modified version of it by stating that food has a specific function (or functions) that substitutes and supplements cannot serve. This suggestion is discussed in the next section. The idea behind the contemplation is the following. Substitutes and supplements differ from the authentic entities with respect to their origin. Dairy and meat have their origin in animals whereas their substitutes are plant based. The banana yoghurt of brand *x* comes from the factory of brand *x* whereas its substitute has a different history. Thus, we need to ask: Does food have functions related to its origin? If yes, can food substitutes and supplements serve also those functions?

² <https://www.iltalehti.fi/uutiset/a/2016030121199078>

5. Origin Related Functions

If substitutes and supplements serve many functions of the authentic food, why are they *substitutes* and supplements rather than alternatives or spare entities? A soya ice cream, for example, is nutritiously equal (or even superior) to ordinary dairy ice cream. From culinary perspective it may be just as delicious as the dairy ice cream (it may actually be difficult to tell them apart by the mere taste). The soya ice cream can fulfill the social functions of ice cream eating. Yet, most take it a substitute for authentic ice cream. Why is that?

One suggestion is that authenticity of a food item partly follows from its history—that is from where it originates and how it came into being. Some functions of food also relate to its origin. In other words, food has origin related functions. These functions and their connection to the relation between authentic entities and substitutes can be illustrated by an example of *in vitro* meat. *In vitro* meat is produced in a cell culture of animal cells. It is not on the sale for consumers yet, but serious development work is going on. It has basically same nutrients and amount of energy as ordinary meat originating from slaughtered animals. Moreover, in biological and physical sense, it is not only similar to ordinary meat, but consists of the exactly same matter and substance as it. When further developed it will be able to serve same culinary functions as ordinary meat. It will taste, feel and look like the ordinary meat. Yet, as it does not originate from slaughtered animals, some consumers omit to take it as authentic meat. Rather they describe it as a meat substitute or even as fake meat (Bryant and Barnett 2018: 12). The view is shared by some researchers. Jean-Francois Hocquette (2016), for example, describes *in vitro* meat as one of the meat substitutes and takes it to be “artificial meat”. He explicitly states several times that *in vitro* meat is not meat. (For similar views or terminology see also Stephens 2010: 400; Bryant and Barnett 2018.) Why is *in vitro* meat not accepted as (authentic) meat? Does meat serve some functions that depend on its originating from slaughtered animals?

Not only meat and dairy food offers but also their production at farms at countryside is something that matters to people in cultural, social and aesthetic respects. Dowsett *et al.* (2018), for example, point out that a meat lamb related agriculture has a special role in national identity at Australia. In similar lines, turkeys play an important cultural role in the American Thanksgiving Day and cows at a mountain pasture are an integral part of a Swiss cultural landscape. *In vitro* meat and the plant based meat substitutes are unable to fulfill these functions which are strongly connected to the living animals as sources of food. Dowsett *et al.* (2018) further point out that meat may have other functions related to its animal origin. According to them, meat is sometimes consumed as a sign of one’s dominance, power and superiority over animals (and other people). If that is the case, then, of course, plant based substitutes as well as *in vitro* meat necessarily fail to serve these functions of meat eating.

Is it fair to say that only authentic food serves origin related functions? Do substitutes fail to serve origin related functions? This does not seem to be the case. Quite contrary, meat substitutes, for example, have social functions that relate to their non-animal origin. By consuming plant based meat substitutes instead of meat individuals can signal their kindness (towards animals and other people) and environment friendly attitudes and life style. Moreover, they can communicate certain group memberships (or non-memberships). These origin based functions of meat substitutes, of course, are not the same than the ones of meat. As a matter

of fact, some of them may be quite contrary to the origin based functions of meat. Yet, they are still origin based functions and, thus, the difference between authentic food items and their substitutes does not rest on serving origin based functions.

To sum it up, food has functions related to its origin and history. However, food substitutes can also serve very similar kinds of functions. Thus, the hypothesis (even in its modified form) is false. Food does not differ from its substitutes and supplements with respect to its functions. Thus, either there the distinction between food, substitutes and supplements is based on something else, or the distinction is metaphysically unjustified.

6. Conclusion and Discussion

The above discussions indicate that the hypothesis presented in the beginning of the paper is false. Food substitutes and supplements serve the same (or almost same) functions as food. However, some food substitutes fail to serve origin related functions of the corresponding authentic products. Meat substitutes (including in vitro meat), for example, do not serve those origin related functions of meat which relate to meat coming from slaughtered animals. Yet, meat substitutes serve other origin related functions.

If the hypothesis is false (as argued above), then supplements and substitutes must differ from food in some other respect than their functions. Alternatively, it might be argued that the distinction between food, substitutes and supplements lacks metaphysical justification. If it lacks metaphysical justification, what is it all about? The question is pressing since the above considerations fail to answer a fundamental question: Why are substitutes and supplements taken as *substitutes* and *supplements* rather than alternative products?

One possible answer might be that the distinction between authentic food products and their substitutes reflects our cultural habits and customs. Since ice cream was first made of milk and the soya ice cream only become later, and since the two differ with respect to their main ingredients and origin, it is fair to say that the soya ice cream is a substitute. Dairy based ice cream is what people are used to. If consumers see milk as a fundamental ingredient of an authentic ice cream, and if this main ingredient is replaced by something else, the outcome can, at its best, be a substitute. Thus, the question about substitutes and supplements is not about functions. It is (at least partly) about consumer experiences regarding essences of food stuffs. It may well be that people see the right essences to pretty much depend on having the right raw materials and ingredients. Only when a product has right ingredients—the ones that people judge to belong to the type of food under discussion—it is an authentic instance of that food product.

The suggested understanding regarding distinction between food, substitutes and supplement requires further philosophical analysis. The central terms need to be clarified and illustrative examples and counter-examples developed. The suggested understanding might also be interesting from the point of view of empirical studies. There are numerous studies on what people see as authentic food (see e.g. Tsai and Lu 2012; Sukalakamala Boyce 2007), but much less on what reasons they give for their authenticity views (see Stiles *et al.* 2011).

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Experiments in Visual Perspective: Size Experience

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Abstract

Phenomenal objectivism explains perceptual phenomenal character by reducing it to an awareness of mind-independent objects, properties, and relations. A challenge for this view is that there is a sense in which a distant tree looks smaller than a closer tree even when they are the same objective size (perceptual size variation). The dual content view is a popular objectivist account in which such experiences are explained by my objective spatial relation to the tree, in particular visual angle (perspectival size). I describe a series of first-person experiments for investigating size experience. I use a ruler as a first-person method for operationalising perspectival size (Experiment 1). I use the corridor illusion (Experiment 2), outlining one's head in the mirror (Experiment 3), and outlining the size of objects on glass (Experiment 4) to show a phenomenal difference in size for items in different depth contexts, despite being identical in visual angle. These findings demonstrate that visual angle cannot account for these spatial experiences. Psychological evidence provides further support for the thesis that subjects do not experience visual angle when depth information is present. Together this evidence supports the hypothesis that perceptual size variation cannot be accounted for by visual angle, hence undermining a plausible version of the dual content theory. This outcome, combined with problems raised by alternative objectivist accounts of size variation, provides support for a subjectivist account of size experience.

Keywords: Size Experience, Perspective, Perceptual Relativity, Subjectivism, Objectivism, Direct Realism, Strong Representationalism, Experimental Phenomenology.

1. Introduction

There is something it is like for me to smell a vanilla scented candle, and to see a red door. The experiences have a unique phenomenal character. The bugbear to physicalism is providing a plausible explanation of the phenomenal character of experience within a physicalist framework (Chalmers 1996; Foster 1982; Jackson 1982; Levine 1983; Nagel 1974; Strawson 1994). Phenomenal objectivists' master move in this regard is in promising to close the phenomenal-non-phenomenal gap by "kicking the phenomenal character downstairs, into the external world"

(Shoemaker 2003: 256). When I smell vanilla, the phenomenal property I am aware of *is* a property of molecules given off by the candle. When I look at a red door the phenomenal character of redness *is* my awareness of the door's redness and the phenomenal character of rectangularity *is* my awareness of the door's rectangularity.

Phenomenal objectivism is the thesis that the phenomenal character of experience just is an awareness of mind-independent objects, properties, and relations.¹ Phenomenal subjectivism is the denial of this thesis.² Phenomenal objectivism has an intuitive appeal in that it is consistent with ordinary experience that smells, colours, and shapes are apparently properties of physical objects, not apparently mind-dependent properties or objects in the mind. This "transparency of experience" (Harman 1990; Moore 1903; Tye 1995)³ is the main the intuitive force behind the two main versions of phenomenal objectivism: for strong representationalists, phenomenal character is identical with represented mind-independent objects, properties, and relations (Dretske 1995; Lycan 1996, 2001; Tye 2000, 2014). For direct realists, phenomenal character is a non-representational relation between a subject and mind-independent objects, properties, and relations (Brewer 2008; Campbell in Campbell & Cassam 2014, chapters 1-4; Fish 2009; Kennedy 2009; Martin 2002; Smith 2002).

Of course, from the fact that I *seem* to experience mind-independent properties it does not follow that these properties *are* in fact mind-independent (Hatfield 2009: 328-29, 348-49). However, we can grant that the observation, if phenomenologically accurate, does at least provide a prima facie case for objectivism.⁴ This

¹ "Mind-independent" can be roughly understood as anything that does not metaphysically depend for its existence upon a subject's awareness, beliefs, concepts, and linguistic practices (Miller 2016; Tahko & Lowe 2016).

² The terms "internalism" and "externalism" are often used to indicate that certain properties such as meaning and phenomenal properties are located in the head (internalism) or outside of the head (externalism). However, Descartes who was a paradigm internalist is not included in this category. Since Descartes held that the mind was an unextended substance with no spatial location, phenomenal properties were not literally located inside the head. Where phenomenal qualities are spatially located is orthogonal to the question of whether the properties presented in experience are mind-independent or not (see Farkas 2003). As I use the term, Descartes and Berkeley would count as subjectivists. Phenomenal subjectivists may also hold that experience is relational in that it is the subject's awareness of mind-dependent properties or objects (i.e., sense data). Both phenomenal subjectivism and phenomenal objectivism are compatible with the view that phenomenal character is a property of an experiential state or a subject (Chalmers 2010: 342). Phenomenal subjectivism as I understand it is also compatible with weak representationalism, the thesis that all experiences have representational content (Chalmers 2010: 344). Peacocke (1983) is a phenomenal subjectivist about some experiences who rejects weak representationalism.

³ Perhaps the earliest statement of transparency comes from G.E. Moore (1903: 450): "the moment we try to fix our attention upon consciousness and to see what, distinctly, it is, it seems to vanish: it seems as if we had before us a mere emptiness. When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue: the other element is as if it were diaphanous. Yet it can be distinguished if we look attentively enough". This last sentence, from the historical source of transparency, is worth highlighting. That "consciousness" (which Moore uses interchangeably with "awareness") is distinguishable according to Moore, contradicts the contemporary usage of transparency to show that consciousness is totally inaccessible to introspection (Ramm 2019).

⁴ The claim that there is a property of "mind-independence" to visual experience has been challenged by Spener 2012. I agree with Spener that visual experience is silent on the

kind of argument does not provide an a priori argument for objectivism, rather it provides an empirical and hence defeasible motivation. If for example, we cannot identify plausible objective properties or relations to account for particular perceptual experiences, then this initial defeasible motivation for objectivism is undermined. My goal will be to show that this is the case for size perception.

A puzzle for objectivists is that the stars look smaller than the moon, even though according to scientists the stars are actually much vaster in size than the moon. A distant tree also looks smaller than a closer tree in some sense despite being the same objective size. These are examples of how the experience of size differs from the sizes that common sense and science says they actually have.⁵

Christopher Peacocke (1983) describes the visual experience of viewing an avenue of trees as follows:

Taking your experience at face value you would judge that the trees are roughly the same physical size [...] Yet there is also some sense in which the nearer tree occupies more of your visual field than the more distant tree. This is as much a feature of your experience itself as its representing the trees as being the same height (Peacocke 1983: 12).

Such size experiences have also been described in terms of the portion things take up in the visual field by Irvin Rock (1975: 36-39). Earlier still, Douglas Harding observed that:

As children, some of us used to play the game of guessing how large the moon is—how large, that is to say, in terms of a halfpenny held at various distances from the eye—but we gave up the game before we had learned its astonishing lesson. My objects are presented in what I call my field of view, and their ‘size’ is primarily the proportion which they fill of that field (Harding 1952/2011: 428).

Such “size variation” (as a contrast with “size constancy”)⁶ is ubiquitous in visual perception and hence on the face of it is a part of a normal and accurate visual perceptual experience. Hence size variation can be distinguished from inaccurate perceptual experiences such as the moon looking larger at the horizon (illusions) and seeming to be aware of a red door that is not there (hallucinations). The goal of the objectivist is hence to find objective properties or relations in the physical environment such that the experience counts as veridical rather than illusory or hallucinatory.

How do we account for such perceptual experiences? According to Peacocke (1983) the trees in the avenue look the same size in some sense, so objective

metaphysical nature of presented objects and properties, however, I do not pursue this topic here.

⁵ Doubts about phenomenal objectivism, usually in the context of criticising a strong representationalist account, also arise for reductively explaining the phenomenology of attention (Block 2010), blurry vision (Boghossian & Velleman 1989; Pace 2007), double vision (Boghossian & Velleman 1989), afterimages (Block 1996), and perceptual grouping (Peacocke 1983).

⁶ Size constancy is when things look to remain the same size despite variability in the area they take up in the visual field as the distance between the perceiver and the object changes. An example is when an approaching car looks to remain the same size as it approaches. For recent discussions of perceptual constancy, see Allen 2018, Cohen 2013, Hatfield 2009: chapter 6, Matthen 2010, Overgaard 2010, Siewert 2006.

properties show up in visual experience. However, there is also a sensation of size which accounts for the sense of different sizes between the trees. The property of largeness of the closer tree belongs to visual sensational space (as distinct from public physical space).⁷ It is a non-representational property that is intrinsic to experience. He argues that size variation is non-representational because veridical experience cannot represent a tree as being both larger than another tree and the same size (Peacocke 1983: 12).

The main objectivist account of size variation is the dual content view which is a popular theory amongst contemporary philosophers (Brewer 2011; Jagnow 2012; Kelly 2008; Noë 2004; Tye 2000). The strategy of this account is to identify mind-independent properties or relations in the environment which can account for such experiences. Tye, for example, holds that “the nearer tree looks the same objective size as the tree further away while also looking larger from the given viewing position” (Tye 2000: 78). He agrees with Peacocke that the trees look to have the same size, there are perspective independent properties in the experience, but there is also an objective property of how large the nearer tree looks from here in the experience. He proposes that this viewpoint relative relation is the visual angle of the objects. Visual angle is an objective geometric relation in the environment. It can be pictured by imagining two strings stretching from the centre of the eye to the extremities of a distant object. The angle formed by the strings is the visual angle. According to Tye, the visual angle is represented in the visual system by the number of cells that are triggered on the retina by the object. The nearer tree takes up more of the visual array than the further tree which allows the visual system to represent (track) the different visual angles of the objects (ibid.: 78). Thus, size variation is also representational—it’s not a sensational property. Alva Noë (2004: 166) refers to such objective viewpoint relative relations as “perspectival properties”.

The dual content view answers Peacocke’s challenge by positing that visual experience represents objective relations between the viewer and objects as well as objective size (for a defence of Peacocke, see Millar 2010). Peacocke’s (1983) response was that properties and relations can only be represented if one possesses these concepts. As the average person does not have the concept of visual angle, they cannot represent it. An opponent however can plausibly deny this assumption (e.g., Tye 2000: 78-79). In fact, Peacocke himself not only changed his mind in favour of a non-conceptual account of perceptual content, but became a champion for this view (e.g., Peacocke 1992, 1998, 2001).

A more promising strategy for refuting the objectivist response is to show that visual angle cannot account for size variation (Hatfield 2003, 2009, 2012; Millar 2010). Gary Hatfield (2003, 2009, 2012) holds that the geometry of visual space contracts with distance.⁸ This can be experienced by looking down a long corridor, path or road. The objectively parallel lines apparently converge. Hatfield

⁷ Peacocke (1983: 52-53) points out that we need to sharply distinguish between public physical space and sensational space. This way we can avoid the confusions sense data theorists got into such as asking “‘Are sense data surfaces of material objects?’ and ‘Do we perceive sense data?’” (ibid.: 53, Footnote 22). By restricting his talk to subjective properties, Peacocke also avoids the need to posit sense data.

⁸ “Visual space” refers to the spatial structures visually experienced by a subject. This phenomenological notion is to be distinguished from the “physical space” as investigated by physicists. Visual space as so defined may or may not be identical to a portion of subject-independent physical space.

further holds that this contraction is not identical with visual angle as represented in a two-dimensional perspective picture. Rather, as the lines of the corridor converge in depth, the contraction is less steep than would be represented in a perspective picture. Hatfield and a colleague estimated the phenomenal convergence of a corridor to be between 80 and 85 degrees, while the angle in a perspective picture would be between 35 and 40 degrees (Hatfield 2012: 42). They also adjusted a calliper as an aid to making these judgements, so their observations could be counted as a kind of first-person experiment. Their judgements suggest that the convergence in visual space is intermediate between linear perspective and full constancy (parallel), though closer to constancy than linear perspective. The prediction of this account is that in the context of depth cues things in the distance will look larger than their angle subtended at the eye. This is exactly the situation that occurs in the Müller-Lyer illusion when the line intersecting with inward pointing arrows (a visual indication of spatial remoteness) appears longer than a line intersecting with outwards pointing arrows (a visual indication of spatial closeness) despite the fact that they take up the same visual angle.

In the spirit of the experiment reported by Hatfield, I propose that the objectivist account of size experience can be tested empirically by designing a first-person experiment in which the apparent size of a close object is contrasted with that of a distant object that takes up the same visual angle. This set up would hold fixed visual angle, while manipulating depth cues. If apparent size is determined solely by visual angle then the distant object should seem the same apparent size as the close object. This would support the objectivist account of size variation. If, on the other hand, due to the influence of depth cues the distant object appears larger, this would undermine this theory. This type of experiment would be a three-dimensional equivalent of the Müller-Lyer illusion. In viewing the Müller-Lyer diagram subjects do not need to estimate the apparent size of each line, but merely make a simple judgement about whether there is a phenomenal difference in size between them.

In section 2, I use first-person experiments to show that there is a phenomenal difference in size experience between items that are identical in visual angle, hence providing evidence that visual angle does not account for size variation. In section 3, I review psychological evidence which also supports the view that size variation does not reduce to visual angle. I outline some issues raised by alternative objectivist accounts of size variation in section 4, hence providing a motivation for subjectivism about size experience.

2. Experiments in the Perspective of Size

In this section I use first-person experiments to show that variation in size experience is not typically reducible to visual angle. Rather than “just looking”, in first-person experiments a subject’s experience is manipulated (often with the aid of apparatus) to hold fixed extraneous factors (Ramm 2018), typically with the goal to produce a salient phenomenal contrast (Siegel 2007). This assists one in isolating an experience of interest and reducing common introspective errors (Ramm 2018). The current methodology follows in the tradition of experimental phenomenology originating with Carl Stumpf (Albertazzi 2013; Ihde 2012; Ramm 2018; Versteegen 2005; Vicario 1993). The first experiment provides a means of measuring perspectival size properties. The second, third and fourth experiments provide evidence that variation in size experience is not the same as perspectival properties, in particular visual angle.

Is there a first-person means of operationalising perspectival size? Alva Noë defines the “perspectival size” of a thing as “the size of patch that one must fill in a given plane perpendicular to the line of sight in order to perfectly occlude an object from view” (Noë 2004: 82). My own suggestion is to use a ruler.

2.1 Experiment 1: Measuring Perspectival Size

Hold out a ruler at the same distance as your hand. I find that my hand measures 17 cm from the bottom of the palm to the top of the middle finger. Maintain the ruler at the same distance and align it with the appearance of your foot. I find that it measures 5 cm on the ruler (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Measuring Perspectival Size. Holding a ruler fixed at the same distance as my hand, my foot measured as a third of the perspectival size of my hand on the ruler.

If this procedure accurately measures visual area, then my hand currently takes up more than three times the visual area of my foot (I will be arguing that this method does not typically measure visual area). Why hold the ruler close to the hand rather than closer to the foot? Where you hold the ruler does not make an important difference because whilst the units will change the ratio remains constant. Perhaps my foot will be measured as 10 cm, while my hand will then be measured as 30 cm. My foot will continue to be measured as a third the size of my hand, where ever I hold the ruler, unless of course I change the distance between my hand and my foot, or the relative position of the ruler. This method abstracts away from depth and thus provides a first-person means of measuring perspectival size on the vertical and horizontal axes.

The same method can be used for measuring perspectival shape. For example, upon measuring the shape of an obliquely viewed plate I found that it took up less area on the vertical axis than the horizontal axis which is consistent with an ellipse. A plate viewed straight on however was measured as the same area on both axes consistent with a circle.⁹

⁹ An objection is that using a ruler introduces another thing into the visual experience which may interfere with it. To test this, one can take a photo and measure the size of the images on the photo. I find that the ratio of the images is the same as measured by the

While perhaps a useful approximation of how things look, it turns out that in many circumstances apparent size and shape does not coincide with perspectival size and shape as measured by a ruler. The Müller-Lyer illusion in particular shows that perceptual size variation is not always identical with perspectival properties such as visual angle. The lines look different in size in the context of intersecting lines, despite the fact that they take up the same visual angle. As another example, the moon looks larger when it is close to the horizon than when it is at its zenith (the “moon illusion”).

2.2 Experiment 2: The Corridor Illusion

That size variation cannot always be explained by visual angle is illustrated in figure 2. In A, block ii looks smaller than block i. There is a phenomenal difference in size between the blocks. However, block ii looks larger than block iii even though they are identical in visual angle. In B, block v looks larger than block iv, however they are in actual fact identical in visual angle.

The phenomenal difference between ii and iii, and iv and v demonstrates that not all size variation is identical with such view-point relative properties. In the context of depth information there is a phenomenal difference between the experienced size of a thing and its visual angle. By contrast, we are relatively accurate in judging the size difference between block i and block iii, in particular in judging that block iii is one third the size of block i. In this case, when depth information is the same for both targets, we are sensitive to relative perspectival sizes.

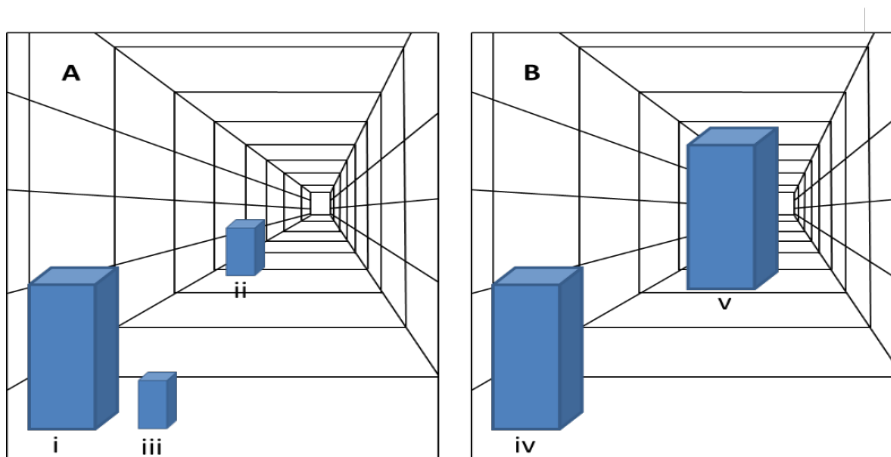


Figure 2. The Corridor Illusion. Adapted from Palmer 1999. There is a phenomenal difference in size between ii and iii and iv and v despite these items being identical in visual angle.

One criticism of this methodology is that it involves contradictory depth cues. The image is viewed from a distance, and the image itself also presents depth cues. Hence the example could be dismissed as involving a non-standard perceptual experience.

original ruler, and it remains the same both with and without the ruler, hence I conclude that there is no interference occurring in the experiment.

2.3 Experiment 3: How Large Does your Head Look in the Mirror?

Another experiment is looking at your head in the mirror and trying to judge how large it looks in comparison to the size of the image in the mirror. Gombrich (1960: 5) has pointed out that people are unaware that the image is half the objective size of their head as is seen by tracing its size on a steamed-up mirror. Below, I extend the experiment as reported by Gombrich.

The experiment is as follows: stand in front of a mirror and use a ruler to position your head 30 cm from the mirror. Now trace around the outline of your head in the mirror with a whiteboard marker. For me the image traced measured only 11 cm high and 8 cm in width. That the image was so small was a highly surprising result. Now step to one side, and use the ruler to again stand 30 cm from the mirror. Now compare the size your head looks with the outline. I find that my head looks significantly larger (perhaps a third larger) than the outline next to it. To be even more precise, next to this outline, you can also draw the objective size of your head on the mirror. Again, position your head 30 cm from the mirror. I find that the head in the mirror looks smaller than the outline of its objective size, but not as small as the image outline. That is, the experienced size is intermediate between the image and its objective size. This experiment shows that my head looks bigger than the outline on the glass (when the image and the marking are not lined up) despite the fact that they are the same visual angle. This again provides evidence contrary to the dual content theory.

Noë (2004: 165) briefly considers Gombrich's experiment as showing that we do not usually experience perspectival properties, but then dismisses it as being due to the "puzzling character of reflections" (ibid.: 166).¹⁰ As with experiment 2, mirrors are examples of non-standard perceptual experience. It again has conflicting depth cues which may have been confounding the experiment. The mirror is at a distance from me and the image it reflects also has depth information (it seems to be projected beyond the glass). A means of overcoming this problem is to repeat the experiment with non-reflective glass. Leonardo da Vinci in fact traced scenes on glass as a technique for translating three-dimensions to two-dimensions. In the following experiment, I extended da Vinci's method by using it to distinguish between the visual angle of objects and their apparent size in the context of depth information.¹¹

¹⁰ One of the counter-intuitive properties of mirrors is that the image of your head is always half the objective size of your head independently of the distance you stand from the mirror. This is because the glass is always half of the distance between you and your virtual self in the mirror (Bertamini & Parks 2005: 86). I confirmed this startling effect by drawing the outline of my face on the mirror and walking backwards. I found that the image did indeed stay the same size as the outline.

¹¹ In his notebooks Leonardo da Vinci describes the method as follows: "In order to put into practice this perspective of the variation and loss or diminution of the essential character of colours, observe at every hundred braccia some objects standing in the landscape, such as trees, houses, men and particular places. Then in front of the first tree have a very steady plate of glass and keep your eye very steady, and then, on this plate of glass, draw a tree, tracing it over the form of that tree. Then move it on one side so far as that the real tree is close by the side of the tree you have drawn; then colour your drawing in such a way as that in colour and form the two may be alike, and both, if you close one eye, seem to be painted on the glass and at the same distance. Then, by the same method, represent a second tree, and a third, with a distance of a hundred braccia between each. And these will serve as a standard and guide whenever you work on your own pictures, wherever

2.4 Experiment 4: Tracing Objects on Glass

View the scene out of a window and choose an object in the distance. Use a white-board marker to outline the size of the image on the glass. I outlined the image of a window of a distant building, and again stepped to one side using a ruler to keep my head 30 cm from the glass. As with my head in the mirror, the distant window looked larger than the outline on the glass. This was only the case with binocular vision. With one eye closed both the window and the image on the glass looked the same size. The phenomenal difference between binocular and monocular vision can hence be experienced by opening and closing one eye.

This outcome confirmed the original finding without the possible confounds of using a reflective surface and without conflicting depth cues which was a potential problem with experiments 2 and 3. The size of the image on the glass and the distant door both take up the same visual angle. That they appear different sizes (with binocular vision) again demonstrates that size variation is not accounted for by visual angle. Rather size variation is partly determined by depth information.

Furthermore, recall that one means of operationalising perspectival size is the area that something would take up if it was projected upon a plane perpendicular to the line of sight. In viewing my head in the mirror and images on windows I am literally viewing a plane perpendicular to the line of sight. If size variation was explained by its perspectival size then it should look to take up the same size as the image on the glass. The fact that they diverge demonstrates a failure of perspectival size to explain size variation. That this effect is found in many different contexts as seen in experiments 2-4 suggests that it is a robust effect.

3. Psychological Evidence

In section 2, I presented phenomenological demonstrations that size variation is not explained by visual angle. In this section, I discuss how psychological studies also suggest that this generalises to typical cases of perceptual size variation.

In a classic study, Thouless (1931) presented subjects with two white discs of different sizes at varying distances. The distance of the smaller (closer) disc was varied until subjects reported when it looked the same size as the larger (further) disc. It was found that subjects did not adjust the closer disc such that it took up the same the size as the further the disc on the retina, but rather to a size intermediate between the retinal size and objective size. Thus,

as the distance of an object changes, its phenomenal size changes, whether the object be far or near. It changes, however, less rapidly than does the size of the retinal image. The tendency to constancy is shown by the amount of change being a compromise between the changing size of the peripheral stimulus and the unchanging 'real' size of the object (Thouless 1931: 353).

Thouless (1931) also found that same for shape. Subjects tended to choose an ellipse for a tilted circle, but it was an ellipse that was in between that of the shape projected on the retina and its objective shape. Furthermore, many studies have shown that when subjects are asked to estimate the projective size of an item, or

they may apply, and will enable you to give due distance in those works" (da Vinci 1970: 158).

the amount it takes up in the visual field (ignoring depth), the results produce underconstancy, but the size selected is larger than retinal size (Carlson 1960; Gilinsky 1955; Singer 1952).¹²

Perdreau and Cavanagh (2011) have also presented evidence that artists are not better at judging the perspectival size of images in the context of depth information than non-artists. Artists, art students and non-artists were given images of cylinders in the context of depth cues (similar to the images in Figure 2) or in no context (with a grid as background). They were then asked to adjust a comparison cylinder such that it was the same objective size as the test cylinder (ignoring context). They were effectively being asked to adjust the comparison so that it took up the same visual angle. All groups' judgements significantly overestimated the size of the test cylinders when they were in the context of depth cues. There was no difference between groups in ignoring context therefore suggesting that artists do not have superior perceptual access to visual angle.

It is also noteworthy that one technique used by painters to produce a perspective picture is to hold up their brush against things. This recalls the ruler experiment, and suggests that even painters do not directly experience perspectival size—or at least not without the assistance of tools. The history of art also shows the use and development of sophisticated artist techniques for capturing perspective and the discovery and the use of geometric principles such as contraction to a vanishing point. Many of these techniques were only developed in the Renaissance (Edgerton 1978, 2009; Kemp 1990; Kubovy 1986). This again suggests that two-dimensional linear perspective is at best difficult to access in experience, if not an invention by artists in an effort to translate three-dimensional visual space to two dimensions (Schwitzgebel 2006). That is, visual experience is not the same as drawn in a perspective picture.

This being said, it is likely that in some situations when depth cues are minimal that perspectival size and apparent size coincide, such as when we see the moon at its zenith. Also, when the visible terrain is eliminated by viewing the moon through a tube the moon illusion is eliminated and the apparent size of the moon is the same as its retinal size (Rock & Kaufman 1962). Similarly, when depth cues are eliminated by viewing objects through a tube then apparent size reduces towards that of the size of the image on the retina (Holway and Boring 1941). Thouless (1931) found the same result when visual cues were eliminated. We can then be aware of the perspectival size, but only in contexts where depth information is minimized.

The evidence presented here backs up the phenomenological findings that the angle subtended at the eye only approximates the experience. The experience of the tree does not directly track these objective properties in the environment. If experience does represent objective perspective-dependent properties these are systematically misrepresented. Tye and Noë cannot reduce the experience to relations in the environment (except in restricted cases). Hence, they can at best treat most size experiences as on par with illusions, awareness of uninstantiated properties, rather than in terms of actual objective properties. Perhaps the objectivist can identify a different relation in the environment other than visual angle or retinal images which could plausibly account for visual area. It is difficult to

¹² For further discussion of how empirical results support a view in which size experience is intermediate between visual angle and full constancy see Hatfield (2009: 182-83) and Hill and Bennett (2008).

know what this could be. The burden here is on the objectivist to supply a plausible candidate relation or property.

4. Alternative Objectivist Accounts

The dual content theory is a popular account of perceptual size variation. In this paper, I argued that distant things looking smaller cannot be accounted for by their visual angle. In particular, I used first-person experiments to show that in the context of depth cues, distant objects are experienced as larger than their visual angle. Hence these perspectival properties cannot explain typical size experience. This paper hence shows that a plausible version of the dual content theory is false. I will conclude by outlining some issues raised by alternative objectivist accounts of size variation.

A major objectivist alternative is to treat size variation as illusory, in particular to explain it as an awareness of uninstantiated mind-independent properties. As an example, representationalism can account for the experience of a red afterimage by the visual system misrepresenting the presence of a red square with size, colour and shape properties. These properties do not need to be instantiated, just as I can mistakenly believe that there is a dragon outside without there being any actual dragon. The case of size variation can hence be treated as on par with illusions such as afterimages. But what are these uninstantiated properties of which I am aware? As I cannot be aware of non-existent properties, a common account is that they are platonic universals (Dretske 2003; Forrest 2005; Johnston 2004; Tye 2000). There are independent reasons for thinking that universals do in fact exist (Armstrong 1989), so if they can be put to work in explaining illusions and hallucinations this is a theoretical virtue. Furthermore, as universals (purportedly) exist independently of my awareness of them, they are objective properties.

Despite these appeals, this theory has some counter-intuitive consequences. Particularly, the phenomenal character of these ordinary spatial experiences would no longer be kicked downstairs into the external world (as quipped by Shoemaker 2003: 256), but out of the world entirely. When the moon looks larger near the horizon than at its zenith, I certainly do not seem to be aware of something abstract like universals which exist outside of space and time. The moon's size is apparently equally instantiated in both cases in the same visual space. Conversely, then, this provides a *prima facie* case for subjectivism which holds that variant size properties (and all sizes, shapes and colours) are all equally instantiated in my visual field (a mind-dependent field of visible properties).

The objectivist account also raises thorny metaphysical issues about whether uninstantiated properties can account for phenomenal character (Pautz 2007: 517; Thompson 2008). For example, it is not clear how I can be sensorially aware of universals given their lack of spatial and temporal properties, any more than I can sensorially experience unextended spacetime points or abstract objects (Pautz 2007: 517). Thompson (2008: 398) points out, that if my doctor told me that I do not need pain killers for my phantom limb pain because it is illusory, I would be justifiably irate. This is because the phenomenal character of painfulness self-evidently exists and is instantiated in the here and now. Another problem is mental causation. Given that universals lack causal powers, how can phantom limb pain cause me to wince if it is grounded in universals? (*ibid.*: 404). These questions may well have solutions. My point here is not that these questions do not have possible solutions (see Thompson 2008, for a discussion), but that these alternative

accounts of size experience lose the phenomenological appeal and explanatory simplicity of the original objectivist motivations.

Another objectivist response is to accept that visual angle *alone* does not determine visual area, but rather visual experience represents a combination of visual angle and depth information (e.g., depth cues and binocular information). Since visual angle and depth information are objective properties, any inference to subjectivism would be blocked.¹³ The important question to ask here is: how is this property of visual angle + depth information instantiated in the environment? It is also not clear what this holistic combined property is. One possibility is that in some contexts the visual system represents objects as having a visual angle with a non-veridical depth. This is of course possible and if successful would neatly explain the experience of size variation. In fact, there are infinite mathematically definable spatial geometries that could be represented by the visual system. The main problem is that very few of these geometries are actually present in the physical world. By contrast, standard (veridical) visual angle is both precisely mathematically definable *and* instantiated in the environment. In particular, it is the angle that light strikes the eye from the extremities of a distant object. This angle is a property of the stream of light from the object to the eye, and hence a property of a concrete system that has causal effects. This is why visual angle would be an ideal explanation of size variation for the objectivist. On the other hand, it is not clear that conjunctive properties or alternative visual geometries are concretely instantiated in the external environment, let alone how they are causally relevant. Hence, the objectivist would need to make the case that these proposals do not collapse into the abstract uninstantiated property account with its attendant puzzles.

In the absence of plausible instantiated or uninstantiated mind-independent properties for explaining apparent size, the objectivist is forced into less desirable positions such as it being a mere cognitive illusion—hence denying that perceptual size variation is an aspect of sensory experience at all (Brewer 2008; Fish 2009: 172-77). This is certainly a defensible position, but it is surely at odds with visual experience. A penny that is held out so that it takes up the same portion of the visual field as the moon, *visually* looks the same size (in some sense). To deny this arguably fails to acknowledge the sensory experience we were trying to explain in the first place (see Millar 2015).

The main goal of this paper was to show that a popular version of the dual content theory is inadequate for accounting for size variation. The objectivist may still appeal to a theory of misrepresentation to account for size experience. However, the arguments presented here, when combined with criticisms of objectivist theories of illusion and hallucination (Millar 2015; Pautz 2007; Thompson 2008), provide reasons for rejecting these accounts, and consequently favour a subjectivist account of size experience.¹⁴

¹³ Thank you to David Hilbert (2016) and an anonymous reviewer for raising this objection. John Campbell (Campbell and Cassam 2014: 88-90) makes a similar proposal for explaining visual illusions.

¹⁴ This paper was presented at the 2016 American Philosophical Association Central Meeting. Thanks to David Hilbert for his insightful commentary and helpful comments by participants. Thanks to David Chalmers, Frank Jackson, Boyd Millar, Eric Schwitzgebel, Declan Smithies and Daniel Stoljar for helpful comments on the manuscript.

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Book Reviews

Galeotti, Anna Elisabetta, *Political Self-Deception*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, pp. 261.

Political Self-Deception by Anna Elisabetta Galeotti is a brilliant example of how crucial the category of self-deception is in our attempts to correctly describe, conceptualize, and explain a wide variety of predicaments that go well beyond the domain of our private lives. Most of the literature on self-deception has thus far provided examples of the phenomenon when it surfaces in more or less troublesome events involving affective, emotional, and self-esteem related issues. Galeotti instead rightly takes self-deception to *also* have an impassable relevance for national and international political life: our tendency to self-deceiving is so pervasive in human psychology that nobody is immune to it, including political agents in the hands of whom is often the destiny of nations, the development of international relations, and even the future of our planet.

Galeotti's view of self-deception is framed by a widely defended paradigm of self-deception, long known as *motivationalism*: individuals are prone to self-deception on the basis of a more or less significant motivational set which can lead them to believe what a dispassionate analysis of the available evidence, and/or a dispassionate search for easily accessible evidence, would instead show to be false, or at least unlikely. Far from conducting such a dispassionate analysis of evidence and/or search for it, those agents do not operate an epistemically optimal treatment of evidence. Rather, they embrace false beliefs owing to the biasing effect of motivation over their rational cognition, so that they end up believing what they are independently interested in believing. Contrary evidence is thus avoided, discarded, misinterpreted, depending on the specific case. Interestingly, however, Galeotti's largely motivational theory is supplemented by at least two specifications:

- (1) Motivation may not be *per se* decisive to leading to self-deception, unless suitably favorable circumstances are also in place (35);
- (2) Defenders of motivationalism should be wary of embracing any "rampant" anti-agency view, amounting to a purely causal picture of self-deception, where an epistemic and practical agent proper is allegedly lacking—such a purely causal picture would also lead to the unpalatable consequence of making it difficult to attribute any sort of epistemic and practical responsibility to the agent who embarks on the self-deceptive maneuver (38).

It is important to emphasize why Galeotti thinks that (1) and (2) are in order. As to (1), by adding favorable circumstances to the motivational set of self-deception, we would be in a better position to try to overcome a troublesome objection, long known as the "selectivity problem". The "selectivity problem" objection roughly runs as follows:¹ motivation may not be sufficient to cause self-deception, as there may be people who do not end up self-deceiving, even when they are in the grip of a quite strong motivation to believe what they favor. If this is the case, as it seems it is, then self-deception is more selective than the mere presence of motivational factors predicts. In a word, we need additional conditions which can explain why motivation can casually go all the way down

¹ Bermúdez, J.L. 2000, "Self-Deception, Intentions and Contradictory Beliefs", *Analysis*, 60, 309-19.

to self-deception, when it does, and to diagnose what else is missing or present in the causal set of a subject when motivation is present, although self-deception does not happen. Thus, Galeotti argues (49) that motivation to believe what one favors is casually effective when the subject is *also* involved in a situation where there is a strong pressure to conclude that *p* is the case. Without such pressure, motivation might well remain inert.

As to (2), Galeotti is interested in counterbalancing any purely causal pictures of self-deception, because such views tend to conceive of the phenomenon as largely (if not entirely) passive, something that merely happens to us, and for which we couldn't be reasonably credited with any significant form of responsibility (38-44). By reintroducing the epistemic and practical operations of a subject that is not an entirely passive victim of motivational events, the subject is now best seen as practically and epistemically active. In this way responsibility for self-deception gets back into the picture. It is to be clearly emphasized that Galeotti is not endorsing any crudely *intentionalist* views of self-deception, that is, views where agents act *under the explicit and aware description of bringing it about their own self-deception, willingly, consciously and intentionally*. For there is much that agents do *not* see about themselves—above all, they do not see the hidden, distorting working of motivation over their cognition, and also the causal effect of the pressure to which they are exposed.² However, Galeotti is interested—and rightly so—in stressing that a subject is at work, and acts as an intentional agent does. For the subject assesses evidence, evaluates epistemic principles at hands, avoids or looks for new evidence, and so on. While failing to see that all of these epistemic endeavors are misled by the motivation towards a desired conclusion, and while also operating under an explicit description that does not include any attempts to deceive willingly him- or herself, the epistemic acts and the practical steps that he or she takes or avoids are nonetheless intentionally conducted. In other words, the subject works under the explicit description of wanting to take a certain step, assessing a certain piece of evidence, choosing to avoid another piece, and so forth.

I have already addressed³ one first critical aspect regarding (2), and I now wish to cover one more point about (2). I start from discussing (2), and then I move on to an evaluation of (1).

I have argued that it is unlikely that classic motivationalism, as put forward by Al Mele,⁴ for instance, can invariantly contain a genuine risk of being an anti-agency view, where the term “anti-agency” is interpreted as denying the presence in self-deception of an epistemic and practical agent proper. My sense is that such conflation may be due to a more or less hidden fallacy of equivocation bearing on the term “agency” as it appears in the “anti-agency” phrase, other than being a truly genuine issue. Arguably, when Mele put forwards what he dubbed as his “anti-agency” view of self-deception, he made use of the phrase “anti-agency” in order to mark a substantial difference from Davidson's inten-

² Scott-Kakures, D. 2002, “At ‘Permanent Risk’: Reasoning and Self-Knowledge in Self-Deception”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, LXV, 3, 576-603.

³ Pedrini, P. 2020, “Autoinganno: con o senza agente? Sui rischi della fallacia di equivocazione per la spiegazione causale”, *Notizie di Politeia*, XXVI, 137, 194-96.

⁴ Mele, A. 2001, *Self-Deception Unmasked*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 13.

tionalism.⁵ According to Davidson, self-deception is the product of an agent who willingly and intentionally brings it about his or her own self-deception. By attacking Davidson's intentionalism, Mele made use of the rhetoric of anti-intentionalism and anti-agency in order to emphasize that on his view of self-deception the subject is not someone who acts under the explicit and aware description of wanting to self-deceive. However, this does not imply that Mele leaves out of the picture any forms of intentional acts pursued by the agent under different descriptions. This seems to be confirmed by the conditions that Mele judges to be jointly sufficient to fall prey to self-deception.⁶ They include a number of biased epistemic maneuvers that it is hard to consider as entirely passive. In all, if this reconstruction is correct, then any attempts to conflate classic motivationalism, even when rhetorically qualified as an "anti-agency" view, with the denial of any forms of agency, is perhaps due to a fallacy of equivocation on the term "agency" that might have somehow secretly operated over time. While in the heydays of Mele's anti-intentionalism was perhaps more obvious that the agency against which Mele's view was directed was the agency of someone acting under the explicit and aware description of causing oneself to be deceived, in Galeotti's theory the agency against which anti-intentionalism is directed is taken to risk to become a purely causal picture of self-deception, where the agent disappears. I am sympathetic with any views that emphasize the epistemic endeavors of agents when they self-deceive,⁷ and I also agree that Mele may not have done the best interest of his theory when he used the phrase "anti-agency". Furthermore, it is a truly pointed issue to establish under what description then the agent acts, if he or she does not act under any explicit and aware description of bringing it about his or her self-deception. Nonetheless, I believe that it may be wrong to take the label "anti-agency view" to be invariantly equated to a purely causal account with no agent in place at all.

One second aspect regarding (2) that I briefly wish to touch upon has to do with the responsibility that attaches to a self-deceiver who actively works out his or her own self-deception, even if not with the explicit and aware view of causing his or her own self-deception. As said, Galeotti argues that self-deceivers intentionally enter the biased reasoning that is conducive to self-deception, even if they are not aware that self-deception awaits them at the end of the process. That would suffice to attribute to them a certain accountability for what they do. It is less clear, however, how this view works in details. For one thing, the prospect of this view dramatically changes if we start looking at it under the angle of the motivation that puts in motion the whole machine of the biased reasoning. If it turned out to be the case that self-deceivers are in fact *caused to reason* as they do by the motivation that alters their belief-formation cognitive process, would we be willing to attribute to them the responsibility for such reasoning? In other words, if we move back the focus of the theory from the form of their altered, intentional reasoning as such to the *cause* of such reasoning, we immediately seem to have fewer reasons to take them to be accountable for such reasoning. This is a notorious line of attack against all of those views which take awareness and intentionality of first-order acts and mental states to be a suffi-

⁵ Davidson, D. 1985, "Deception and Division", in LePore, E. and McLaughlin, B. (eds.), *Actions and Events*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

⁶ Mele, A. 2001, *Self-Deception Unmasked*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 50-51.

⁷ Pedrini, P. 2013, *L'autoinganno. Che cos'è e come funziona*, Roma-Bari: Laterza.

cient ground of responsibility. For causing factors can end up making *unaccountable* even fully aware and intentional first-order acts, if these causing factors are something on which the agent has ultimately no *control* or no other margins for correction and/or counteraction.

More demanding theorists may even require that we establish whether causing factors create conditions that ultimately leave the agent unfree to reason otherwise. I set all of these much thrown-around questions on responsibility *qua* connected to control and/or freedom because, even if Galeotti argues that she is going beyond the control model (64), I am left with the sense that her basis for attributing responsibility to self-deceivers relies on *much more* than the *mere* first-order intentional epistemic and practical operations of the subject who misleadingly and prejudicially treats evidence. As far as I can see, the issue can begin to be settled by analyzing *what other faculties* Galeotti is in fact attaching to first-order intentional epistemic and practical operations.

For the sake of pumping intuitions, let us consider two scenarios. The first scenario has us to imagine a subject who is unaware of the very existence of self-deception, of its working, and symptoms. At some point, this subject goes through the self-deceptive process. He or she might well be reasoning intentionally and consciously, as Galeotti diagnoses. However, by hypothesis, and for reasons to be explained, he or she has *no tools to detect* the phenomenon that is affecting and distorting his or her reasoning. In this case, it is hard to attribute full-blown responsibility to this agent.

Another scenario has instead us to imagine a subject who is equally unaware of the distorting effect of motivation over his or her cognition; however, the theorist here may point out that this subject is *in principle and as a matter of fact under certain conditions capable* of detecting that something is going wrong in his or her reasoning. For being this reasoning conscious and intentional, the subject is in the position to reflect upon such form of reasoning, to compare it with other instances of reasoning, and possibly also to make an inference from an aware, or easily discoverable, motivation to its causal, distorting role over cognition.

There are passages in the book which seem to confirm that Galeotti might have a preference for this second scenario (68). She seems to attach to the first-order intentional operation a variety of other capabilities that the subject either directly enjoys, or can at least retrospectively learn (68). One might wonder, however, whether this second scenario can constitute a sound normative, as well as empirical, basis for attributing responsibility. At the very least, this view requires, and empirically predicts, a good amount of (*ex ante* or *ex post*) surveillance over one's mental states and processes that many would find excessively demanding. Be that as it may, if Galeotti's view ultimately relies on the practice and/or the possible activation of these other faculties, then she might turn out to endorse a view where responsibility for self-deception is not merely based on the intentional first-order acts. Rather, her view seems to be ultimately based on some form of *control*, or *possible activation of control*, over one's mental states and processes.

Let me now turn back to (1). I have reasons to believe that (1) can hardly be a tenable solution to the "selectivity problem" as a problem of causation of self-deception. I can only offer here an outline of an argument against the alleged success of the strategy Galeotti adopts when she explains how favorable circumstance can be decisive to leading to self-deception. Other than blocking the selec-

tivity problem, favorable circumstances remain exposed to the reiteration of the selectivity problem against the causal compound made of motivation *plus* favorable conditions. That is to say, there may be people who do not self-deceive, even if they have the motivation and are *also* put in favorable circumstances. It may be true that the motivation to believe that *p*, coupled with circumstances of hard pressure, can increase the probability that one ends up self-deceiving. This may happen because pressure can erode the possible resistance that the subject, under less pressure, might still exert over the motivational thrust. If this is correct, then there must be something causally relevant in pressure, if a smaller number of motivated people resist against pressure. Yet, the addition of pressure as a means to making motivation stronger can't hardly be the end of the causal story, given that selectivity is still looming. Resistance to motivation and pressure thus seems to depend more on the psychological structure of the subject than on any other circumstances. Simply put, some people have a psychological structure that make them more resistant than others to various level of motivation and pressure. Even if we include the psychological structure of the subject in our causal analysis, it may be hard to adjudicate the question whether the psychology of the subject is causally decisive. Is the kind of psychological one has that is the *ultimate* determinant of self-deception? Or is it the vector computed by combining motivation and pressure with the psychological structure of the subject? This is a metaphysical topic for another, wider piece. But I think it is important to emphasize that there is a genuine issue here, which is urgent to adjudicate.

In all, this is a beautifully written, and excellently argued, book that by all means should become a must-read for a wide audience, including (although not limited to) students and scholars interested in political philosophy, international relations, social and political sciences, philosophy of mind and psychology, ethics, as well as all those who are active in policy making.

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McCarroll, Christopher J., *Remembering from the Outside: Personal Memory and the Perspectival Mind*.

New York: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. xx + 220.

The theme of observer memory might strike one who hasn't read McCarroll's book as somewhat narrow or specialized. Anyone who has read the book, however, will understand that it in fact intersects with a wide range of issues in the philosophy of memory and beyond. The book is thoroughly researched, rigorously argued, and might be read with profit by philosophers working not only on memory but also on perception, imagination, and language. It might also profitably be read by psychologists working on any of these topics, for McCarroll both displays an impressive mastery of the relevant empirical literature and makes use of philosophical tools to shed considerable new light on the conceptual puzzles to which it gives rise.

In field perspective memory (FPM), one remembers an event from the point of view from which one originally experienced it; in observer perspective memory (OPM), in contrast, one remembers an event from a point of view other than that from which one originally experienced it, seeing oneself in the remem-

bered scene. The central question of the book is whether OPMs can be fully genuine or faithful to the past. McCarroll claims—in opposition to a claim found throughout the philosophical and psychological literatures—that it can be, and this in a very precise sense. We can distinguish between the truth of a retrieved memory and its authenticity (Bernecker 2008):¹ a memory is true if it is accurate with respect to the remembered event; it is authentic if it is accurate with respect to the subject’s experience of the remembered event. What McCarroll claims is that OPMs can be both true and authentic.

The claim that OPMs can be true is unproblematic: one’s memory of an event might clearly be accurate with respect to the event even if the point of view from which one remembers it differs from the point of view from which one experienced it. It is the claim—and McCarroll makes it clear that he does indeed mean to defend this claim—that OPMs can be authentic that is surprising. How, given that one did not see oneself while experiencing the event, might a memory in which one sees oneself be accurate with respect to one’s experience of the event? (Compare two photos, taken from different angles, of the same scene: they might both match the scene, but they will not match each other.) After reviewing the literature on OPM in chapter 1, McCarroll develops, in chapters 2 and 3, a two-part framework designed in part to answer this question. The framework combines a “constructive encoding” approach and a “reconstructive retrieval” approach. The basic idea behind the former is that constructive processes occurring during encoding may shape the content of a stored memory. The basic idea behind the latter is that reconstructive processes occurring during retrieval may shape the content of a retrieved memory. Both of these ideas are empirically well-established, but the way in which McCarroll builds on them to defend the claim that OPMs can be authentic is highly original.

According to the reconstructive retrieval approach, the new content that figures in an OPM—including a visual representation of the rememberer himself—is sometimes the product of reconstruction at retrieval. This approach thus does not by itself imply that OPMs can be authentic. According to the constructive encoding approach, the apparently new content that figures in an OPM is sometimes the product of construction at encoding; the apparently new content may, in other words, not be new at all. This approach thus implies that OPMs can be authentic: the problematic components of the content of an OPM, including, in particular, the visual representation of the rememberer himself, may, in some cases, have figured in the corresponding earlier experiences. In short, there is an important sense in which one does sometimes see oneself while experiencing an event, a sense in which one sometimes has “observer perspective experiences” (OPEs).

The notion of an OPE is both the most provocative and the most problematic element of McCarroll’s book. He emphasizes that he is not interested in what we might call literal OPEs, experiences in which one literally entertains a visual representation of oneself while experiencing an event (e.g., by visually imagining oneself from a hypothetical observer’s point of view). Thus his claim is not that an OPM might be authentic because the apparently new content that figures in it figured, in the same, visual form, in the corresponding OPE. It is, instead, that an OPM might be authentic because the apparently new content that figures in it figured, in a different, nonvisual form, in the OPE. This entails

¹ Bernecker, S. 2008, *The Metaphysics of Memory*, Netherlands: Springer.

that the content of a nonliteral OPE can be equivalent to the content of a literal OPM, and McCarroll goes to considerable effort to show that this is the case, arguing that experience has a multimodal character and that information in one modality might be “translated” into another. When giving a public talk, for example, one experiences the scene from one’s own visual point of view, but one might (say, if one is feeling self-conscious) also experience it from an emotional observer point of view; this emotional content can then be translated, during encoding, into a visual representation of one’s self.

McCarroll’s strategy here is ingenuous. It does, however, face two obvious problems. First, the notion of an OPE is highly speculative. McCarroll borrows the notion from Nigro and Neisser’s foundational (1983) paper.² Nigro and Neisser do not, however, provide any real evidence for the occurrence of OPEs, and the concept of an OPE has played no role in subsequent research on OPM. McCarroll does point to evidence from a variety of sources suggesting that the self may be present in experience in a variety of (nonvisual) ways, but this evidence falls short of indicating that ordinary experiences may include content of the required sort. Second, the notion of translation is likewise highly speculative. The claim about authenticity presupposes not only that a nonvisual representation of the self may, via the translation process, give rise to a visual representation of the self, but also that it may do so without generating new content, for, if a retrieved memory includes content that was not included in the experience, it is by definition inauthentic. McCarroll does point to evidence suggesting that information in one modality can be translated into another modality; this evidence does not, however, indicate that a nonvisual representation can be translated into a visual representation without the addition of new content.

In order to surmount these problems, McCarroll might relax the standard of authenticity so as to allow a memory to be authentic as long as it includes at most a moderate amount of new content. Once the standard is relaxed, however, it becomes hard to see why we should care about it at all: if genuine memory is compatible with the addition of a moderate amount of new content, why think that it is incompatible with the addition of a large amount of new content? Two further moves suggest themselves. First, McCarroll might weaken the concept of OPM: if the OPMs in which he is interested are not literal OPMs—i.e., if they do not include visual representations of the self but only, say, emotional representations of the self—the authenticity claim becomes much more plausible. Second, he might strengthen the concept of OPE: if the OPEs in which he is interested are literal OPEs—i.e., if they do include visual representations of the self—then the authenticity claim again becomes much more plausible. The cost of making either of these moves is, however, a significant reduction in the interest of the authenticity claim. The claim that literal OPMs can be authentic with respect to literal OPEs and the claim that nonliteral OPMs can be authentic with respect to nonliteral OPEs are much less surprising than the claim that literal OPMs can be authentic with respect to nonliteral OPEs.

There may, of course, be further moves that are open to McCarroll. The intention of these remarks is not to show that his argument does not succeed but simply to show that there are ways of pushing back against it. And if it should eventually turn out that the argument does not succeed, McCarroll will never-

² Nigro, G. and Neisser, U. 1983, “Point of View in Personal Memories”, *Cognitive Psychology*, 15, 4, 467-82.

theless have enabled us to learn a great deal about the nature and limits of memory's faithfulness to the past; this alone is sufficient to ensure that his book will stand as a major contribution to the philosophy of memory.

McCarroll's argument for the authenticity claim will be of interest not only to philosophers of memory but also to philosophers of perception. Subsequent chapters will be of interest to philosophers working on topics including imagination and language. Chapters 4 and 5 engage critically with Vendler's (1979)³ claim that imagining "from the outside" is just a special case of imagining "from the inside", arguing that Vendler goes wrong by overlooking the possibility of an unoccupied point of view in visual imagery. Chapter 6 engages critically with François Recanati's work, arguing that Recanati's (2007) framework⁴ can be modified so as to accommodate a form of implicit *de se* thought that is both first-personal and from-the-outside. Chapter 7 of the book brings things to a conclusion by drawing together the various threads of the overall argument.

The quantity of published philosophical work on memory has increased rapidly over the past few years. Much of this work is of the highest quality. Even against this background, however, McCarroll's book stands out as one of the most important contributions to the area in many years. The publication of the book is a major event in the philosophy of memory. I look forward to engaging with it in my own future work, and I have no doubt that many others will as well.⁵

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³ Vendler, Z. 1979, "Vicarious Experience", *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 84, 2, 161-73.

⁴ Recanati, F. 2007, *Perspectival Thought: A Plea for (Moderate) Relativism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

⁵ McCarroll is currently employed as a postdoc at the Centre for Philosophy of Memory, which I direct. I had read the book and agreed to write this review well before he was recruited. This work is supported by the French National Research Agency in the framework of the "Investissements d'avenir" program (ANR-15-IDEX-02).

Mendelovici, Angela, *The Phenomenal Basis of Intentionality*.
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What is the deep nature of intentionality? What is its source? What relation is there between intentionality and phenomenal consciousness? These are some of the main questions addressed by Angela Mendelovici in her recent, well written and original book *The Phenomenal Basis of Intentionality*. Mendelovici's proposal, as the title of her book clearly suggests, belongs to that family of theories that take a "consciousness-first" approach to intentionality. Such an approach is endorsed by all the advocates of the so called "Phenomenal Intentionality Theory" (PIT) (people like Loar, Searle, Siewert, Strawson, Kriegel, Horgan, Tienson, Pitt, Farkas, Chalmers, Smithies, Montague, to mention just a few of them). For PIT's friends, intentionality has an experiential-phenomenal nature and has its source in phenomenal consciousness. According to Mendelovici, this is so because intentionality is phenomenal consciousness, in the sense that intentionali-

ty is not merely *a species* of phenomenal consciousness (as most of PIT's advocates claim), but rather *its only species* and therefore truly identical with it. This peculiar way of accounting for the relationship between these two (at least conceptually distinct) properties qualifies her proposal as a strong identity version of PIT, according to which phenomenal intentionality is the only kind of intentionality (there is no non-phenomenal kind of intentionality) and it is identical to phenomenal consciousness. Other versions of PIT provide different accounts of the relationship between intentionality and consciousness, either in terms of grounding, or in terms of constitution, or of realization. According to Mendelovici, strong identity PIT provides the clearest possible answer to the question regarding what kind of property intentionality is. By contrast, she claims, any non-identity account leaves the nature of intentionality ultimately unexplained. Whether she is right or wrong in so claiming, her book is definitely worth-reading, if only for the fact that it provides the most articulated and sophisticated presentation of an original theoretical proposal in the philosophical debate on the nature of intentionality.

Before presenting my critical remarks, let me provide a sketchy presentation of the book's overall structure and main claims. The book, which consists of six parts, can be taken to be organized into four main topic sections. In the first one Mendelovici presents the methodology that she adopts. This section deals with the following question: How can we fix reference on intentionality? In her view, the traditional answer according to which intentionality is the property that mental states originally possess of being about, being directed towards something (a property, a thing, a state of affairs) is too vague to constitute the starting point of the inquiry. Even though the notions of *aboutness* and *directedness* gesture towards the target property, they are, in her view, too fuzzy to provide a firm grip on it. In order to remedy such a lack of precision, she suggests to make use of an ostensive reference-fixing definition which characterizes intentionality as "that feature, whatever it is, that we at least sometimes notice in ourselves and are tempted to describe using representational terms like 'aboutness' and 'directedness'" (5). She criticizes other ways of fixing reference on intentionality (ways that make reference to some alleged roles that intentionality is supposed to play) because they do not individuate, in her view, intentionality, but different, albeit related, notions. This section is followed by a *pars destruens* whose aim is to assess whether PIT's main competitors (namely: tracking theories and functional role theories both in their short and in their long-arm version) are true and empirically adequate. In order to show their empirical inadequacy, she makes use of what she labels the "mismatch problem" that she illustrates by presenting cases in which the contents attributed by the competing theories do not match the contents we have "theory-independent reasons" to think we represent. In her view, the competing theories are guilty of two kinds of errors: an "error of commission" (in so far as they include in the representation's content material that is not represented) and an "error of omission" (in so far as they do not include material that is represented). As to the faultiness of the competing theories, she presents what she labels the "Real Problem" according to which what is ultimately wrong with those theories is not so much that their alleged content-conferring external relations sometimes "grab" the wrong content, but rather that they cannot "grab" anything at all, because genuine intentionality cannot arise from mere external relations with the world. What would then be the right source of genuine intentionality according to Mendelovici? This is the question

that she addresses in the third topic section of her book, in which she presents her positive proposal. According to it, intentionality cannot arise from anything different from phenomenal consciousness because only the latter has the right ingredient to give rise to intentionality. This is so, in her view, because intentionality just is phenomenal consciousness (that is precisely what the identity account that she endorses amounts to). She then concludes by showing that her theory is also not clearly empirically inadequate in so far as it can accommodate all cases of intentionality, including those that are commonly thought to pose problems for PIT (these cases include thoughts, non-conscious mental states either standing or occurrent, states representing rich descriptive contents or object-involving contents or more generally broad contents).

In my critical discussion of Mendelovici's proposal I shall mainly focus on two issues. The first one has to do with the methodology that she adopts and recommends. My main question here is the following: Is she right in claiming that her suggested way of fixing reference on intentionality is theory-independent? This point is of the outmost importance in order to assess whether the starting point of the inquiry is neutral enough as not to compromise from the very beginning its entire development. The second issue has to do with whether her phenomenally-based account of intentionality is ultimately able to provide a satisfactory answer to what, according to many people, is *the* problem that any theory of intentionality worthy of its name has to address, namely to account for how our mind succeeds in "getting in touch" with the world. The discussion of this point is preceded by an assessment of the criticisms she raises against PIT's rival theories. Let me now address these issues starting from the first one.

To begin with, it is important to stress that the ostensive definition that she introduces to fix reference on the property of intentionality does not ultimately dispense with the traditional characterization of it in terms of "aboutness" and "directedness". Rather, it incorporates such a characterization together with the further condition according to which intentionality is a feature that we at least sometimes (i.e. in what she considers "paradigm cases" such as perceptual states, but also thoughts and judgments) notice in ourselves. She tries to minimize the role that the traditional characterization plays in her picture by claiming that the ostensive definition only *mentions* the aforementioned representational terms without using them. Actually, the role they play seems to be more substantive than that in so far as it is only by making use of them that it is possible to unify under a single label the huge variety of things we can introspectively notice, no matter how different they (phenomenally) appear from each other (compare a perceptual state with a judgment, for example). This said, let us consider the other part of her suggested definition. As I have said, the definition of the subject matter of an inquiry should not be committed to any controversial way of conceiving it. Does Mendelovici's definition satisfy this requirement? Well, as a matter of fact, in order for something to be introspectively noticeable it has to have an experiential-phenomenal nature and that intentionality does actually possess such a nature is a point that not everyone in the philosophical arena is ready to accept. Think for example of theorists like Fodor, Dretske and Millikan for whom intentionality is a property that can be studied by natural sciences by making use of their investigation methodologies. Any such theorist would find Mendelovici's starting point question-begging and theory-laden. It has to be stressed that, according to Mendelovici, what introspection reveals is not so much the *nature* of intentionality, but rather, as she says, its *superficial*

character. What she means by this somewhat vague expression is that introspection gives us knowledge of which contents our conscious occurrent mental states have. I want to make two critical remarks on this point. First. Even granting that we do have some sort of introspective access to the mental contents of (at least some of) our conscious occurrent mental states (but, as we will see in a moment, this is an issue that should not be taken for granted), it does not follow that we also have introspective access to intentionality, that is to *the feature* of our mental states *in virtue of which* they have the contents they have and a content at all. Mendelovici does not seem to be aware of this problem, for she says: “When we introspectively notice intentionality, we do so at least by introspectively noticing our contents. Indeed, it might be that there is nothing more to notice when we notice intentionality than those intentional contents” (note 7, p. 8). In any case, and this is my second remark, even assuming that the introspective noticeability of contents suffices for the introspective noticeability of intentionality, the fact remains that such a claim about mental contents presupposes an internalist metaphysical picture of their nature and individuating conditions that is anything but uncontroversial and non-committal. Mendelovici is well aware of the fact that if externalism were true, then her suggested methodology for finding out about our intentional states and their contents would prove ineffective. She discusses this point by observing that it is generally taken to be an objection to externalism that its adoption makes it difficult, if not impossible, to account for the introspective accessibility of mental contents, which is why most advocates of externalism try to defend the claim that their metaphysical picture of the mind is compatible with a plausible account of self-knowledge. Her conclusion on this point is quite hasty: “If this attitude is correct [the so called “compatibilist attitude” endorsed by most externalists], then if there is an incompatibility between the assumption underlying my methods and externalism, it is externalism that should be rejected” (66).

Let me recap the main points of my critical assessment of the methodology that she adopts: a) the reference-fixing definition that she introduces seems to be no less fuzzy than the traditional one, in so far as it not only incorporates, but makes substantive use of it; b) the claim that intentionality is introspectively noticeable is theory-laden, since it presupposes that intentionality is an experiential property; c) it is disputable that the introspective noticeability of content suffices for the introspective noticeability of intentionality; d) the claim that mental content is introspectively noticeable presupposes a non-neutral picture of mental content. In my view, these points provide strong, albeit non-conclusive, evidence in support of the claim that the starting point of Mendelovici’s inquiry is not as theoretically neutral as it should be. This seems to me to be enough to put pressure on her claim that her recommended methodology is theory-independent.

The issue of the theory-independency is relevant also for the second issue I want to address. As I said at the beginning, the non-neutrality of the starting point of an inquiry very often propagates to the inquiry itself. In my view, this is precisely what happens in Mendelovici’s case, in particular as regards the kind of arguments that she presents in support of the claim that PIT’s rival theories are both empirically inadequate and wrong because they do not have the right ingredients to account for how our minds succeed in getting in touch with the world. My main aim here is to assess, first, whether those arguments go through without assuming any controversial and theory-laden assumption and, second, whether strong identity PIT is ultimately able to properly account for that issue.

Let us start from the first point. As anticipated in the presentation of the book, Mendelovici ascribes to the competing theories two kinds of error that should falsify the theories' predictions as to what a given mental state would or would not represent given the truth of those theories. The arguments she presents in support of her criticism have the following structure: "If theory T is true, then the representation R has the content C / Representation R does not have the content C / Therefore..." (as regards the error of commission) and "If theory T is true, then the representation R does not have the content C / Representation R does have the content C / Therefore..." (as regards the error of omission). The problem I here see concerns the two arguments' second premises. Do we have any theory-independent way of finding out which content a given mental state has or does not have? Mendelovici thinks we do: introspection and considerations of psychological role are precisely two such ways. Well, are they truly theory-independent as she claims? Let us consider the following point. As a moment's reflection shows, neither argument could go through unless an implicit premise were in place, respectively: (i) a given representation cannot represent a content unless it is a content the subject "feels" she is entertaining (as for the argument in support of the error of commission) and (ii) a representation cannot avoid representing a given content if it is one the subject "feels" she is entertaining (as for the argument in support of the error of omission). These two further premises hint at what she labels the "psychological involvement" of mental contents, which ultimately amounts to the idea that which contents we entertain is wholly transparent to us, because we are the authors of those very contents. As before, this claim commits itself to a radically internalist picture and such a commitment, which is licensed by her suggested ways of finding out which contents our mental states have, is anything but theory-independent. Or so I claim.

The issue concerning the psychological involvement of mental content comes up again in the "Real problem" that she raises against the competing theories: "theories relying on tracking relations not only fail to attribute psychologically involved content in mismatch cases but, worse, preclude the contents they attribute from being psychologically involved in the first place" (79). According to Mendelovici, what ultimately shows that the competing theories are wrong is their inability to account for how our minds can make psychological contact with the external world. As she says: "The Real Problem with the relation view is that it's hard to see how any relation to distinctly existing items can make them entertained or otherwise intentionally represented [...] No ordinary relation can allow us to literally entertain tables and chairs, to take hold of objects existing in the concrete world and bring them into our minds to make them available to our cognitive system" (204). I think that the way in which she frames the problem she is confronting with is strictly conditioned by her internalist picture of the mind. By assuming such a picture, the problem becomes that of accounting for how the gulf between mind and world can be bridged, so as to bring inside the mind what is outside of it. According to Mendelovici, no non-phenomenal theory of intentionality is able to solve this problem. Well, perhaps she is right (maybe because, once so framed, the problem becomes intractable). But is her phenomenal intentionality theory able to account for the psychological involvement of the world after all? About this point I find the following passage very enlightening: "concretely existing objects, properties, and states of affairs exist distinctly and usually independently of us, our cognitive systems, and our intentional states. So, it's hard to see how any relation we can

bear to these distinctly and independently existing items can make them psychologically involved. So contents can't be such items. *Tables, chairs, and obtaining states of affairs are not thinkables, experienceables, entertainables, or, more generally, (intentionally) representables. They are not the kinds of things that can play the role of intentional contents*" (205, emphasis mine). Well, is this a solution to the problem raised or just a capitulation? And, in the latter case, can a theory of intentionality worthy of its name be compatible with such a capitulation? In my view, even granting that Mendelovici is right in claiming that tracking and functional role theories of intentionality leave unexplained an issue that any adequate theory of intentionality ought to address, the fact remains that, on balance, not even her account seems able to explain how the world, the real world made of concretely existing objects like you and me and tables and chairs, can be psychologically involved.

It ultimately turns out that her account of intentionality is highly revisionist. If she is right, intentionality does not possess most of the properties that we tend to ascribed to it, such as: being relatively abundant, externalistic, relational. All this can be accepted. But what about the trait according to which intentionality is the directedness of our mental states at something *beyond* themselves (ordinarily, concrete objects and properties) which could exist independently of being experienced? Is this a dispensable trait or is it rather a constitutive element of the very nature of intentionality, as most people (even within the PIT's camp) claim? Personally, I am on the side of all those who take such a trait to be indispensable. I therefore believe that in so far as Mendelovici's picture gets rid of it, one can legitimately conclude that it gets rid of intentionality through and through. But if this is so, what is her theory ultimately a theory of? My suspicion is that her attempt at overcoming the fuzziness of the traditional characterization of intentionality by trying to pin down the property by means of mainly experientially-based criteria ends up meeting the same fate as other attempts already made in the past, like for example Chisholm's, namely that of individuating not intentionality, but a property that, albeit closely related to intentionality, does not ultimately coincide with it. My suspicion is that the property in question is the *presentationality* that accompanies any conscious occurrent intentional state, that is the property that accounts for the fact that consciously representing something is always accompanied by a presentation to the subject of what she is thereby representing. It is a pity that the distinction between representation and presentation is rarely thematised within the PIT's camp. I personally think that such a thematisation would highly improve the ongoing debate on intentionality.

It has to be said that Mendelovici shows great awareness of all the problems that her proposal raises. Not only that. Actually she addresses them and, more often than not, provides interesting and plausible solutions. Regardless of whether one finds them satisfactory or not, one must allow her an uncommon capacity of making a radical and provocative position look eminently reasonable. To conclude, let me say that Mendelovici's book is to be warmly welcomed: if it contains much to disagree with, it also contains much to learn.

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