

Food Heritage and the Construction of Territory

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Article abstract

In the Western academic tradition, tangible cultural heritage (monuments, buildings, sites and material objects) has generally been considered as a privileged means of constructing places and territory, whereas intangible cultural heritage (oral traditions, arts, crafts, feasts, rituals, song, music, dance) have been associated with the identification of ethnic groups. This article aims to demonstrate that intangible cultural heritage can also be a powerful means of the construction of place, through a case study that shows how the consumption of home-grown agricultural products in Quebec transforms territories into places of heritage. This transformative process is accomplished, first, by the symbolic production and consumption of place. By clearly identifying the place of origin of the product on the label, in writing as well as in image, the act of eating homegrown products entails a displacement of territory from their place of production to their place of incorporation. The distant and the faraway are brought home and made familiar. To further reinforce the domestication of place, the consumer is invited to come and purchase the homegrown product at the place of production and to bring it back home with him. Second, these places are *heritagitized* through the social production and consumption of time. Homegrown products are expressions of the continuity of place through the material conservation of food (dehydration, salting, freezing, etc.), the process of ageing itself and, more importantly, the transmission of their intangible qualities (traditional knowledge, transmission of receipts, preservation of taste). These practices become specific to a place to the point that they give the product a distinctive taste that is passed on from generation to generation. It is through taste that the memory of people and place is reactivated. The author of the article further suggests that it is these intangible elements which most efficiently and forcefully express the heritage of place.

FOOD HERITAGE AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF TERRITORY

Home-grown products in Québec

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Introduction

The market for home-grown products in Québec is evolving at a striking rate; it has been considered to be moving ahead at almost 10% annually for four or five years now. “Saltbush lamb” from l’Île Verte, “smoked sturgeon” from Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Oka cheese, “blueberry mead” from the Lower North Shore and “ice cider” from Rougemont are becoming standard fare in both speciality and health food stores and in trendy restaurants and even in supermarkets. Local products are acquiring the label “appellation réservée” by the government of Québec, such as has been recently the case with the traditional Chantecler chicken. (Lambert and Jouve, 2013) More and more tour guide publications are suggesting tourist routes in the countryside where regional products can be seen, touched and tasted. Since 2006, agri-tourism and regional product manufacturing destinations have become so popular that they been added to the list of options available through the Québec Ministry of Tourism (Péloquin, 2008). The products are found even on shelves in museum shops and, as a result, they qualify as part of heritage. For example, the Musée québécois de culture populaire de Trois-Rivières sells jams, fruits in syrup, vinegar and maple syrup all produced locally.

The success of these products is not limited to Québec. Sales are thriving across the planet. In France, for example, they are sought as never before, as much by urban consumers as by merchants, agronomists and regional developers, especially since the implementation of the European Agricultural Policy which encourages the diversification of local production.

As emphasized by Laurence Bérard and Philippe Marchenay, “The ministries of Agriculture, Culture, Environment and Tourism are paying ever greater attention to their operational features in the structuring and maintenance of landscapes... as well as local microdevelopment and the fight against rural depopulation” (Bérard and Marchenay, 2004: 6). Even in the United States, the land of food standardization, home grown products enjoy great success (Shields-Argelès, 2008: 260) and the practice of identifying the place of product origin has become more and more common. Oranges are from Florida, strawberries from California, yogurt from Vermont and potatoes from Idaho (Trubek, 2008). The region becomes the ideal place for “good eating” and “thoughtful action” (Paxson, 2012: 191). In the United Kingdom, the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD) has recently made known in its study devoted to the development of sales outlets that the most significant increase in visitor numbers involves farmers’ markets, in second position (+19%) behind the large discount markets and far out in front of supermarkets, in sixth position (+6%), pointing to a strong future for regional products. UNESCO has even begun inscribing regional cuisines and dishes on the Representative List of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* regional cuisines and dishes such as traditional Mexican cuisine from Michoacan and the Mediterranean Diet (Dormaels, 2013: 71; Iwadare, 2015).

What does this passion for regional products mean? Does it imply resistance against globalization and the nostalgic desire to reconnect with the region and with localism? Or does it mean the rejection of modernity and the present day in order to take refuge in the comforting days of yesteryear? Or is it a new kind of patrimony ?

Reaction against delocalized production

The growing attraction to regional products is part of a reaction against radical globalization and industrialization in food (La Soudière, 2001). Globalization “delocalizes” production and standardizes food products which have become anonymous. Circuits in planetary commercialization, highly developed and costly, have been established to provide us with kiwis, bananas and mangoes all year long. Our diets no longer function according to seasons and food producers, but by markets and the giant multinational food chains. The United States leads the way in this area since it is home base to seven of the ten largest food companies in the world: Philip Morris, ConAgra, Mars, IBP, Sara Lee, Heinz, Tyson Foods; the three others being Nestlé (Switzerland), Unilever (United Kingdom

and Netherlands) and Danone (France) (Nestle, 2002: 12-13). These multinationals advocate industrial agriculture—which is characterized by the cultivation of large farm surfaces, the practice of single-crop farming, the intensive use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides—to increase both productivity and production, to the extent that there results a significant overproduction of food in most industrialized countries. The United States, for example, produces almost double the food needed by its population (Nestle, 2002: 1). Since the 1980s, the European Union has also produced large surpluses on a regular basis (Atkins and Bowler, 2001: 145-148). Overproduction in food tends to create a climate of sharp competition among companies pushing them to promote consumption: on the one hand, by means of advertising and on the other, through food processing to facilitate preparation and rapid consumption (Nestle, 2002: 13). The multinationals invest large portions of their budgets in advertising which often, in fact, sends out deceptive messages, always with the objective of getting people to consume more (Nestle, 2002: 20-23). For example, fat is extracted from yogurt, but at the same time, container size is increased as is sugar content (Guéricolas, 2005: 9).

Quite often, consumers do not know exactly how products they buy are manufactured or even where they come from. Transnational corporations often operate farms in several countries or sign production contracts with cooperatives or producer groups throughout the world so as to ensure stable provision and fixed pricing. How can one know where Chiquita bananas come from when they are produced in about ten different countries? To guarantee a consistent product with roughly the same taste throughout the world, these corporations often impose on producers their choice of varieties to be produced, production methods and dates, sometimes even the brands of chemical fertilizer and pesticide to be used (Atkins and Bowler, 2001: 44-45). The largest Canadian agri-food corporation, McCain, grows the same variety of potato with the same genetic make-up everywhere in the world to ensure that its frozen fries always maintain the same quality and flavour (Atkins and Bowler, 2001: 45). Taking advantage of low transportation costs, many multinationals delocalize all or part of their operations in underdeveloped countries to benefit from cheap labour. The production chain even extends at times to two or three countries. This phenomenon is especially striking in the case of chicken. Several transnational corporations raise chickens in the United States, slaughtering and deboning them in Mexico and marketing them in Asia. The legalities which are often less rigorous in developing countries enable these multinationals to enjoy less demanding quality control measures or greater tolerance in terms of the

use of chemical products or growth hormones which are not acceptable in the developed world. Agri-food multinationals thus consciously develop networks for production and distribution which are extremely complex and hard to control (Atkins and Bowler, 2001: 38-42).

Globalization creates separation between the producer and the consumer, between the place of production and that of consumption. The abundance of standardized products that come from everywhere and nowhere brings about a feeling of alienation, of uncertainty and of disquiet. It is a matter of pure merchandise, in other words products whose value is measured by production and other costs, by nutrient content, by the number of calories and by the immediacy of their consumption. In fact, industrially processed foods are destined for consumption that is easy and rapid and copious.

Such types of merchandise not only produces alienation, they are increasingly making people sick. For this reason, no doubt, nutritional issues are in the forefront of the battle against globalization (Nützenadel and Trentmann, 2008: 2). The overconsumption of industrial food products, with their content high in sugars, processed fats, food colouring and preservatives which are often toxic, causes health problems: it is a major contributor to obesity, cardiovascular troubles, certain kinds of cancer and diabetes (Nestle, 2002: 2-3). These diseases have become the main causes of death in the developed world, the world of overeaters. It is estimated that junk food is responsible for some 20% of American deaths, as many as those caused by tobacco (Nestle, 2002: 3). At a dramatic level in the United States, obesity is now affecting people in all western countries, even France which, until recently, had been spared.¹ This plague is more and more attracting government attention in as much as it proves a considerable burden to the public health purse (Watson and Caldwell, 2005:7-8). The proportion of Americans suffering with excess weight and obesity rose from 25% in 1970 to 35% in 1990, and it continues to grow (Nestle, 2002: 7-8). Even more alarming is obesity as it emerges in the under 15 youth population. Recent studies show that one American youth in four has a weight problem (Nestle, 2002: 7).

Even if obesity is less prevalent in Québec, it is on the rise, especially in those under 15 years of age. It is noteworthy that advertising for soft drinks, candy, snack foods and pocket pizzas essentially target young people. A study

1. Despite the increase of obesity in France, there is five times less than in the United States and significantly less than in the neighbouring European countries (England, Holland, Germany, Italy, Spain), see Fischler and Masson (2008 : 24-25).

carried out on the ad-based content of Québec's seven major television stations shows that nearly one-third of food ads were aimed directly at children² (Guéricolas, 2005: 10). To be noted as well is the fact that fast food restaurants, such as McDonalds, Subway, Pizza Salvatore and Pizza Hut, which offer menu items high in starches and processed fats, set up shop, on purpose, near secondary schools and colleges in order to appeal to a teenage client base through intensive ad campaigns. They manage to build loyalty among these clients guaranteeing them a minimum income and a profitable business. These major fast food chains operate in fierce competition with school cafeterias which, despite their subsidies, have trouble offering better prices to attract young people with their "healthy menu" items. To deal with this problem, three Québec municipalities—Gatineau, Lavaltrie and Baie Saint Paul—have changed their zoning to keep fast food restaurants away from school neighbourhoods. If this pilot project is successful, there are plans to expand this policy across the entire province.³

Problems such as "mad cow disease" and, more recently, avian flu and swine flu have hit the headlines and helped to put consumers on their guard against the risks and dangers of factory farming (Watson and Caldwell, 2005: 3). In addition to raising fears of contracting a deadly disease by consuming the meat, "mad cow disease" uncovered upsetting practices in the raising of livestock for our symbolic systems. It was learned that breeders were feeding our cows products made from the flesh of other animals and even human placentas. Our fine grass-eating beast had turned "cannibal" (Kilani, 2002: 113-126). The bacteria behind listeriosis, which contaminated Québec cheeses in the summer of 2008, also shocked many souls. Several of those infected died suddenly, bringing in the *ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Pêches* to inspect all the cheese dairies in Québec and confiscate their products. These epidemics made consumers aware of the threats to the environment from growing crops or raising animals on factory farms—excessive spreading of manure, seeping of pesticides into the water table and watercourses—and their long-term repercussions on health (Atkins and Bowler, 2001: 50). The danger of contamination comes not only from the food itself but also from the impact of its production on the environment. All elements that increase consumer mistrust toward the present industrial and globalized agri-food system.

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2. Even more worrisome is the fact that 74% of the foods appearing in television ads are not in the Canada Food Guide. The study was carried out by Estelle Labelle of the department of information and communication at Université Laval.
 3. See Bérubé (2009).

Relocalizing production

The reason that regional home-grown products are enjoying great success at present lies in the fact that they make it possible to rebuild the link between the producer and the consumer, between the place of production and that of consumption. They no longer represent merchandise but rather, as the name suggests, a product deeply anchored in a place. The territory of origin is usually added to the name used to denote the product. Even if it follows the name which describes the contents, it is sometimes substituted for this former and stands by itself. For example, St-Laurent cider, connected to the St Lawrence River, ends up overshadowing the content designation to be called simply “Le St-Laurent,” as the bottle label clearly points out. The region, through its place name, defines the product which thus becomes its emblem at the same time that it marks its uniqueness and lifts its place to heritage status.



Figure 1. “Le St-Laurent” cider label. Cap Saint Ignace, Québec, 2014. Photo: Laurier Turgeon.

In the same way, we would say a *Bordeaux* to denote a wine from Bordeaux, a *Porto* for one from Porto, or again a *Sherry* for a wine from Xérès⁴. The label, affixed to the product, mentions the name of the producer, his mailing address, his phone number and, more and more, his email address or the link to his Website, where information abounds on the producer and the manufacture of his product. All these traceability features are reassuring for the consumer, for they enable him to make

contact with the producer and possibly even check the production processes. Moreover, the label often carries an image of the owner’s property, his home or field or perhaps both together in one scene. The consumer can thus even visualize the production site. Such an image is an invitation to taste the product of this very land which is open to viewing and located just behind the glass wall or the plastic packaging. He is encouraged to visit the spot which has now been qualified and legitimized as a real place. “Heritage,” they say, “brings territories to life. Its tangible and intangible components

4. See Tran (2013) on French and American wines at the end of the 19th century.

are what revitalize the countryside. [...] They conform to practices and ways of doing things that make territories distinctive.” (Genest, 2001b: 166). More and more, consumers are looking for handmade products, which respect the environment (without pesticides, synthetic elements or GMOs) and which contribute to sustainable development, that is to say, products which minimize risks to health and the environment. The ecological has become a matter of ethics.

Deeply tied to the region, home-grown products are rooted in time. The label often indicates the founding date or makes mention of an artisanal manufacturing process. The earlier the recipe, the more it is cherished and considered to be authentic. Direct handing down between generations, from mother to daughter, from father to son, with no intermediary and, obviously, without alteration, gives the product a value-added quality. The plant varieties which date back to the French colonial period carry a weight of time and symbol stronger than the more recently grown hybrids. The species before colonization (i.e. indigenous) are even more highly prized. The wild fruits and vegetables all have a reputation as more nutritious, tastier and healthier than domestic or farmed species. Studying the domestic vegetable heritage of Québec, Louise St-Pierre concluded that the earlier varieties of tomatoes, green beans, pumpkins and potatoes were all judged more delicate and “tasty” (St-Pierre, 2005 : 99). Those varieties termed “wild,” like the Jerusalem artichoke of New France, Micmac corn and Abenaki potato, species not yet “contaminated” by European influences, even had the power to preserve memories and to link the consumer to a plot of land and an ancestral essence, thus gaining an almost sacred status (St-Pierre, 2005: 163). Seeds that have come from the First Peoples create a feeling of kinship, acquaintance and intimacy with the original land. They are fully integrated into family genealogy; they always come from a parent, grandparent, aunt, uncle or someone close. They are qualified using emotional expressions, as in “our good old vegetables.” Their antiquity and their “descent” gives consumers a feeling of safety to the extent that the product has passed the test of time and so has, more or less, proven its worth. Sometimes, it is taken to the point of naming a product after a historic figure connected to the place, such as “Le Curé Labelle” cheese, referring to a priest-colonizer who was founder of the Laurentian region north of Montreal, or one called “Le Sir Laurier d’Arthabaska,” the birthplace of Sir Wilfrid Laurier, Canada’s second prime minister. Along with their names, these cheeses carry a close-up portrait of the individual on the packaging, printed in black and white to reinforce their historical and heritage aspects



Figure 2. Label of “Le Curé Labelle” cheese. Québec, 2014. Photo: Jocelyn Gadbois



Figure 3. Label of “Le Sir Laurier d'Arthabaska” cheese. Québec, 2009, Photo: Laurier Turgeon

– as does also the name and old-time logo of the “L’œuvre du temps. Du village 1860” brand. The same is true of the soft cheese from Île aux Grues “Le Riopelle,” named for Québec’s best known painter who died there. History becomes literally incarnated in the food.

While, at the outset, the regional product craze stemmed from a popular movement reacting to junk food, it increasingly got the attention of the State which saw it as one means among many to rebuild the regions and the whole of the country. This rebuilding is as much the doing of the producer as the consumer. The political figures consider the establishment of small and medium businesses for the manufacture of these products as an enabler for regional development, a means of revitalizing regional economies, keeping their youth and creating a feeling of belonging (Deshaies, 2003). To the extent that Québec does not have large agri-food businesses, there is no competition risk and it is, therefore, in the interest of the State to occupy this niche market. To support this movement, the government offers producers both money and protection, providing subsidies to small business owners who wish to embark on the manufacture of regional home-made products. Furthermore, to protect these against fraud and unfair competition, the State regulates the distribution of designations of origin which confer exclusivity on each producer. In 1996, the government passed a law regarding reserved designations to regulate the production and marketing of organic products. An interministerial committee, made up of representatives from the ministère de la Culture et des Communications, the ministère des Affaires municipales, des régions et de l’organisation du territoire, and the ministère de l’Agriculture, de l’Alimentation et des Pêcheries, submitted a report in 2006 which led to the broadening of the law to four new designations and to a range of new products tied specifically to a given territory: farm products developed in an agricultural operation; home-made products resulting from non-industrial production methods; regional products specific to that region; and regional products coming from a region but not specific to it.⁵

Consumption of territory

It is not a matter of chance that most regional home-made products are food items, less often clothing, furniture, decorative objects or beauty

5. In April 2006, Law 137, *Loi sur les appellations réservées et les termes valorisants*, made official the status of regional homegrown products and created the Conseil des appellations réservées et des termes valorisants (CARTV) whose role is to ensure the accreditation of products.

products. Even though traditional clothes and furniture often refer to specific regions, they carry less power of identification with a region. The name of the region of origin rarely is substituted for the product name. Only food items have a designation of origin because they maintain a special relationship with the territory by making a direct link with the body (Counihan, 1999; Timothy, 2015). Food comes from the ground, so to speak, and becomes the very incarnation of the territory that produced it. This association with the region of origin is recalled and reinforced by means of an entire descriptive apparatus (label on the product, advertising signs at the market or brochures distributed to consumers). For example, the ad brochure of the Rouville RCM (Regional County Municipality), entitled "From the field to your table" and illustrated with vegetables formed into a *pièce montée* on the end of a fork, with a farm panorama in the background, evokes in a powerful way this direct link between the territory and the food item, the land and the table. And what's more, regional home-grown products are sometimes sold still with the bits of that land of origin sticking to them so that it accompanies them right to the house and perhaps even to the table. Michèle de La Pradelle has shown how the truffles from France's Carpentras Market were sold as they came from the ground, without washing, not just to recall the territory, but so that in a concrete manner the consumer would carry with him a piece of that territory (La Pradelle, 1996: 147-151).

Beyond being a simple reference to the region of origin, the food item makes it possible to 'consume' it. Food consumption involves the consumption of a territory to the degree that behind it lies a geographical relocation of the food from their place of production toward the place they will be ingested. The act of eating expresses the appropriation of distance; the exterior space is internalized and becomes personal space (Bell and Valentine, 1997; Tran, 2014). In fact, through the process of incorporation, the space is compressed and brought to the bodily self, as the food is transported from field to market, then to the home, the table, the dish, the palate and, finally, the digestive tube. In the same way, time is appropriated, if not incorporated. The past is brought into the present and literally consumed by the eater to strengthen and propel him into the future.

In the case of regional home-grown products, this movement is turned around to increase the power in the representation of the consumption of territory. It is not the product which changes place, but the consumer who goes to the place of production to acquire it. In fact, the products are sold primarily at the farm. In this way, the consumer can see and have

explained to him with what and how the product is manufactured, can judge its quality and its authenticity by means of long-standing practices and the direct link to the region of origin⁶. He can taste it and take it back home with him, sometimes after even picking it himself⁷. In a recent survey conducted in the province of Quebec, the favourite activities in terms of the agri-tourism industry were: the possibility of seeing animals up close (43.3%), farm products sold on site (42.3%) and pick-it-yourself fruits and vegetables (14.4%) (Zins, Beauchesne et Associés, 2006: 5-11). Picking one's own strawberries, raspberries or apples means that the consumer takes the place of the grower; he reintegrates the seasonal consumption of yesteryear, he recaptures the "natural" cycles and thus rediscovers "real life" through "real" seasons. (Perrot, 2009: 117). This participation in the distribution chain helps develop the eater's feeling of appropriation and incorporation. The advertising brochure from the municipality of Rouville proposes a "personalized outing." Getting there is presented as a veritable initiatory journey: "Design your own menu for the day. Take the road and take the time to wander, to see, to smell, to taste and, above all, to chat with our producers. You will leave satisfied with your day, your heart light, your spirit refreshed and your food basket filled to overflowing!"⁸ The text puts the emphasis on the importance of the meeting and the exchange with producers. According to Jean (2003: 12), "direct selling at the farm is becoming a strong trend, the social link between producers and consumers being the best guarantee of food quality." Eating regional home-grown products winds up in an almost physical and moral conversion, that is, in the idea that the food ingested is integrated into the body transforming it biologically and ethically. Consuming locally grown food is expressed here as a conversion, a transcendent ritual, which makes it possible to feed the consumer in a more healthy manner, to make him better and to work toward a more ecological and ethical society.

Products which most regularly and strongly conjure up the landscapes appearing on their labels or in their advertising are alcoholic beverages (wine, cider, spirits) and dairy products (milk, yogurt and especially cheese),

6. According to Bernard Genest, "the test of authenticity is the distinctive quality a product has; it can be measured by the degree of rootedness of a practice and of a product in its environment [...]. The product will be authentic to the extent that it comes from a given 'geography' and participates in the history of the place." (Genest, 2001b: 173)
7. Picking your own is more and more popular. It is estimated, for example, that 6000 Québec farms offer this option and between one-third and one-half of Québec strawberry production are sold through this type of commercial operation.
8. Brochure from the Rouville RCM.

in other words products having strong power of representation in terms of territory and history. Wine, cider and fruit liquors require sophisticated manufacturing techniques and their region of origin helps cause their taste to stand apart. For example, production resulting from the same vines on the same land strives to reproduce, year after year, the smell, the colour and the taste of the wine, so that the consumer is able to identify them, preserve the memory of their taste and log them in a continuum in order to count them as heritage. In fact, the transmission through the generations of the same manufacturing methods and the consistent product taste both play a role in inscribing them as heritage (Brulotte and di Giovine, 2013). It is also a question of psychotropic substances capable of transforming the state of the eater, of putting him in an alternate state of consciousness and of transporting him an “elsewhere.” As for dairy products, these often take one back to the territory by means of the cow’s image, this well-known animal, fully integrated into the lives of humankind, which spends its days grazing in the fields on this grass of the region. A few years ago, the Association des producteurs laitiers du Québec put out, in *Flaveurs*, a food magazine, a series of ads on the back cover, which insisted explicitly on the relationship that ties cheese to its regional territory. They pictured the “Mamirolle” cheese in an Appalachian landscape or the “Migneron” with Charlevoix in the background.

Moreover, a cow regularly appears on cheese packaging. For example, “Le Vieux Charlevoix au Lait Cru,” an old cheddar from Baie St Paul, or “Le Gré des Champs,” a firm ripened cheese from St Athanase d’Iberville, show on their labels the enlarged head of a cow. Its pleasant and innocent look recalls a healthy and idyllic natural setting. Even more suggestive are



Figure 4. Label of “Le Gré des Champs” cheese. St Athanase d’Iberville, Québec, 2014, Photo: Laurier Turgeon

the labels for “La Diable aux Vaches,” a soft ripened cheese from Mont Laurier or “Fleurmier,” from Baie St Paul in Charlevoix or “Pied-de-vent,” a soft raw milk cheese manufactured with milk from “Canadian” cows from the Magdalen Islands; these show images of cows grazing in fields.

Wine and cheese are not simply made part of heritage by incorporating their taste into the continuum; the process also involves the fact that they are the producers of their own history. They can be conserved over relatively long periods of time and even voluntarily aged. They are even products which, it is said, should not be consumed fresh or young, because they take on value in the ageing process. In fact, this adds to their value, conferring on them an added gourmet value and, need it be said, value as heritage. Furthermore, these two products are often consumed together, no doubt because combining them creates surprising effects for the taste buds, but also because it signals twice over the effect of the appropriation and the history of the region.

Conclusion

Heritagization of the territory through food consumption involves, of necessity, a repetition of the act of eating so that the food item takes on a certain longevity. A food item is transitory, by definition, to the extent that it is continuously exposed to natural decomposition or, in fact, to consumption itself. The first way to fight against this dematerialization and this detemporalization of the food item is to extend its life through a host of conservation techniques, either cooking, curing or drying, smoking, freezing or dehydration, etc. However, these conservation techniques, sophisticated as they might be, do not succeed in prolonging its life beyond a few months or, at best, a few years. The second way toward heritagization, more effective but much more demanding is the conservation of a product's intangible elements, especially its taste. The preservation of the same taste requires reproducing the food in a similar fashion on the same territory, perpetuating the same preparation techniques, respecting the same recipe, repeating consumption in ritualized and commemorative settings, at popular festive holidays, for example, and ensuring their being handed down through generations. Advertising plays an active role in this transmission process. The objective, then, is not only to conserve the product in its material essence but in the memory of its taste, an immense challenge, for the taste is a fleeting thing, fragile, delicate and basically intangible in nature (Dietler and Hayden, 2001: 1-22). It is necessary to mobilize territories, people, plants or animals and above all various kinds of

know-how, often kept secret, to preserve the same taste, understood to be the ultimate expression of heritage. Slow Food, begun some twenty years ago in Italy, has travelled around the globe precisely because it puts the emphasis on tasting foods slowly rather than rapid consumption, which is typical of fast food (Grasseni, 2013). Its promoters suggest taking time to taste and savour food items, extending at the same time the meal period. Its success can be explained by this desire to make of the world of food a heritage to cherish and protect, especially in its intangibility.

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