

Feeding Thought: A Philosophy of Cooking and Gastronomy

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In the year 2009, renowned performer Marina Abramovic “was able to levitate” in a kitchen in Gijón¹, Spain, as an homage to Saint Teresa of Ávila and to the God that she describes as walking among cooking pots and stoves.²

The work was so apt not just because two strong and

extremely creative women managed to blend their personalities together, overcoming a temporal interval of more than four hundred years; and not just because of the wonderful sobriety of Abramović’s *performative photographs* and the exquisite

¹ See *The Kitchen*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fdonXtb55II>

² Santa Teresa, *Libro de las Fundaciones*, chap. 5.7. (ed. BAC, Madrid, 1976, p. 532.)

precision of their composition, of the whites, the blacks and the steel; neither was it only due to the perfect setting; it was also because everything said so much more and came to bear on what the itinerant Carmelite nun wanted to bring to our attention: the truly extraordinary thing is not that one can levitate, but rather that God is there among the stoves and the cooking pots. Saint Teresa, the mystic, knew that the divine is perfectly at home within physicality and in the everyday normality that is closest at hand; and that the Creed, said correctly, lasts as long as it takes a boiled egg to cook.³ The cooking and gastronomic experience are a privileged place for thought and for aesthetic sensibility, since they hit upon what art and the philosophy of art have always dealt with: the claim that the sensible is the ideal location for the major issues facing humanity. The revolution that has occurred in gastronomy since the 1990s, together with the exponential proliferation of works of art with themes related to food in all its different aspects, has led to a new area of philosophical reflection on aesthetics and the theory of art. In this text we attempt to provide a systematic presentation of that field which is just now, for the first time, being cultivated. In order to do so, we introduce some terminological proposals that, at the same time, prove to be a useful guide running through the whole presentation.

1. First terminological and argumentative proposals: *Research cooking and philosophy of food*

1.1. When three worlds meet

The philosophy of cooking and gastronomy occurs at the intersection of three different areas: 1) the world of philosophy, aesthetics and the philosophy of art; 2) the world of art, art critics, exhibition curators, and the directors of institutions and events; and 3) the world of cooks, gastronomes and *foodwriters* (gastronomy critics and theoreticians, as well as writers of gastronomic literature). The relation between the

³ The artist Julia de Luis made a video about this issue titled *Huevo pasado por agua* (*Soft boiled egg*), 2007. 8 mins. 25 sec. Screened in May 2012 in *City Screen*, as part of *Food Cultura*.

three is uneven and relatively recent. From the first of these worlds, that of philosophy, the move towards the second world and the current possibility of a move towards the third, came about thanks to a slow effect from empiricism and the bringing to centre stage of what David Hume so aptly called *sensible insight*. It is certainly the case that it was extremely difficult for western philosophy to abandon the legacy of centuries and centuries of Neoplatonism, of theological servitude and of many forms of antihedonism. We should not forget that the first philosophy to view itself as *modern*, Cartesian philosophy, was precisely very deeply Neoplatonic, theological and antihedonist.

A very central aspect of that long-lived intellectualist tradition that was highly critical of all forms of sensuality or pleasure, was the hierarchy established among the different senses. Although none of the senses was to be trusted, the more *noble* senses—sight and hearing—were compared to the other *less noble and low* senses—touch, taste and smell. In this way, reason or intellect could be metaphorically associated with sight, but never with taste or the other senses. This hierarchy, which, for example, has been at the heart of the conception of art since the Renaissance, only began to be questioned in the 20th century, and although at present few scholars accept it on paper, in real life it is still very present.

It was necessary to wait until philosophy abandoned any dogmatic dream of reason so that it could take up the sensible commitments of empiricism and direct its attention fearlessly to the complexities of the *sensus*, seen as rationality imbued with the capacity to orient us in the world. A world that was shaken by the Lisbon earthquake (1755), that was about to decapitate absolute power in the French revolution (1789) and that found it hard to come to terms with no longer being fixed at the centre of the universe, but rather orbiting around the Sun. The Cartesian certainties dissolved into a thousand everyday uncertainties, methodical doubt was abandoned to its own fate in the unrepentant critical questioning of the late Enlightenment. The ideal of a *philosophia perennis* was no longer worth much; philosophy had to become worldly, to learn to look at and listen to the world, even to touch it, smell it and taste it. Paying attention to the sensible was no longer a vice but became a virtue linked to a certain type of rationality: *sensible insight*; which consists of exercising one's aesthetic sense coherently and with the goal of acquiring knowledge. Hume and the Kant of the third *Critique* were its main leading figures,

defending the whole palette of elusive grey, from the black and the white; and it was from here that philosophical attention was drawn to the different shades.⁴ *Insightful* human beings are intuitive and have serious difficulties remaining patient, although they possess patience; they look straight at things and their judgments are bold, but sensitive. They can arrive at consensus because they understand the tensions of dissensus, and this is all because their imaginations are so highly honed that they can put themselves in the place of the other.

Perspicare means *to know how to look through*, to know how to look through things to find or construct their soul, as Proust did in his monument to the aesthetic sense which is *À la Recherche du temps perdu*.

The doctor who has a *clinical eye* possesses, without a doubt, sensible insight; just as a good stylist has it, as a designer needs it and so too do those who uncover new fashion tendencies out on the streets. There is no plastic artist, or musician, or novelist, or cinematographer, or poet, or publicity agent, or cook, or teacher or vet who can practice as such without *sensible insight*. It is a virtue which is both retinal and spiritual lucidity; it is an intelligence in the fingertips, a performativity of the olfactory pupil and the palate; it is a *knowing how to look* (or smell, or hear, or touch, or taste) *in order to know how to judge*; it is mastery in the execution of the art of experiencing the world and the generation of the common.

Those who lived through the late Enlightenment (particularly Baumgarten, Hume and Kant) understood that the aim of philosophically defending the free and independent person required the recognition of this capacity to judge, and that knowledge requires not only an art of the production of objects, but also an art of experiencing those objects and their communicability. The self-governance of the subject with a cosmopolitan and communitarian vocation requires the subject to be seen as a *sensible* person, able to attribute precisely the right importance to all the different aesthetic and moral nuances, to look things straight in the face with no veil before their eyes, to touch them, *distinguish them* and sort the good from the bad; to *discern* landscapes, works of art and faces, to become an expert in the provision of meaning to the specific empirical facts that go to make up an experience. The *felix aestheticus* of the old Baumgarten, Hume's art critic and the worldly philosopher of Kant's third Critique are offered as prototypes of a human being who is attentive, bold

⁴ See Onfray, M., *La raison gourmande: philosophie du goût*, Grasset: Paris, 1995.

yet measured; who demanded action without prejudice and devotion to one's own education as well as to that of one's community through the exercise of their faculties; who then left to one side the great universal issues to deal with the things that deserve to be looked at, heard, touched, smelt or tasted. Those who lived through the late Enlightenment understood that the autonomy of the person and the consensus of a community depend more on an agreement *of the sensibilities* (according Yves Michaud's apt expression)⁵ than on a common sense full of prejudice or of theological, categorical or even scientific imperatives. This is the aesthetic sense that, from our point of view, we should recover for the range of argumentation that is available to contemporary aesthetics in the construction of changing worlds that so quickly becomes out of date.

Those late-Enlightenment philosophers managed to bring aesthetics into being as an academic discipline, and to set in motion a timid philosophy of art that would have to wait until Hegel positioned it *face to face* with the philosophy of science or of history, at the cost of converting the arts into Art; that is, of paying heed to the romantic concept of Art that only included a few of the artistic practices—those chosen in the modern system of the arts—excluding as "craft" many of those that Kant still consider arts.⁶ In Berlin in the first half of the 19th century, moreover, the philosophy of art managed to move out from academia and into the galleries where it flourished, just as the philosophy of nature was being produced in zoos; while in Paris, art criticism that was at times very close to philosophy prospered in the *salons*. The democratization of the reception of art in its institutions brought philosophy to take care of it, with a good dose of optimism and quite a lot of grandiloquence. It would be necessary to wait until the end of the century and until the emergence of Marxism before it was possible to start to make out the relation between institutional mechanisms and ideological mechanisms; another half a century to see the connection between language and cultural practices with the linguistic turn, and almost a whole century more, with Foucault, for institutional criticism to become the first chapter of any philosophy, theory or practice of art.

⁵ See Michaud, Y., *Critères esthétiques et jugement de Goût*, Jacqueline Chambon: Nimes, 1999, p. 61.

⁶ See Kristeller, O., "The Modern System of Arts", *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 12, 1951, p. 496-527 and 13, 17-46 ; repr. 1965 and 1980; new ed. 1990; and L. Shiner, *The Invention of Art: A Cultural History*, University of Chicago Press, 2003.

In this way, philosophy, art and the institutional worlds of the two have already shared two and a half centuries of joint learning. This is not the case with philosophy and the triad: cooking / gastronomy / institutional world. All of this has much to do with the dominant political–ethical slant in contemporary philosophy of art and its obstinate denial of the power of the sensible and of intelligent hedonism in the interests of a supposed ethics that, in the end, once again confused criticism with the pulpit. However, the contemporary demands not only for the democratization of art and of aesthetic practices, but also for consideration of aesthetics as a ideal locus for the democratization of the political, obligate us to turn our philosophical attention to the productive, receptive and institutional practices of cooking, with all the necessary rigor, as an ideal location to perform philosophical, aesthetical and artistic research.

1.2. Food art, edible art, research cooking and philosophy of food

Two vectors have firmly pointed in this direction, scratching with their arrows the *peau de chagrin*, as thick as it is fragile, of the art world and the world of philosophy. The first, *Food Art*, is already an institutional success. The second, *Philosophy of Food*, is the first terminological and discursive proposal of this paper that captures the way of doing things that is entailed by certain ways of understanding cooking.

Food Art is an art that, although its identification as such has been recent, has existed since the beginning of civilization. The term identifies those artistic practices whose principal material and symbolic referent is food, the process of its production or tasting it. If ephemeral art from all eras had been able to find mechanisms for its own conservation, the history of art would be full of paintings like those from the Etruscan necropolises of Tarquinia and the scenery of plays such as *The Banquet* by Plato. *Food Art* indicates a place of refuge for food where it occupies centre stage in an artistic medium (ambience). In contemporary art, Gordon Matta-Clark, Daniel Spoerri, Antoni Miralda and Rirkrit Tiravanija are the most important representatives of this area of art, in addition to a multitude of artists from Paul McCarthy to Wim Delvoye who have worked on the theme with certain regularity. There are not many doubts with respect to this type of art, precisely because its own tradition supports it. Recently it has been granted wide recognition via a series of exhibitions with a high

level of institutional commitment: in Salamanca, the 2003 exhibition *Comer o no comer* (“To Eat or Not to Eat”); in Düsseldorf *Eating the Universe* in 2010; and in 2011: *L’art de menjar* (“The Art of Eating”), at *La Pedrera* in Barcelona and *Counter Space*, an exhibition about modern cuisine, at MoMA. Neither are there any doubts as to whether cooking as such and tastings should be admitted to large museums as highly glamorous events and new proposals for *socializing*.⁷

The last point picks out a specialization within *Food Art* that we could call *Edible Art*, that is, art that can be eaten and not just contemplated. This is the case, for example, with some of Miralda’s or Tiravanija’s performances, or in the recent practices of many less well-known artists. However, what should more seriously be called *Edible Art* is what is produced in some restaurants; although it does not enjoy general acceptance as art within the world of art. Thus, it was very problematic that in 2007 the restaurant *eIBulli* formed part of *Documenta* in Kassel as a pavilion at the XII edition, and implicitly Ferran Adrià was presented as an artist. In doing so, Roger Buerger, the artistic director, was not proposing a space for *edible art*, but was taking another step along the road of relations between cooking and art, breaking down one of the rigid boundaries that art managers and art critics set up. He proposed the cooking of *eIBulli*, converted into Pavilion G at *Documenta*, as a practice that could increase, rethink and question some of the keys to contemporary artisticity. So, from the maximally radical and ephemeral, the aesthetic practices of *eIBulli* (finally with the restaurant closed for good since the 30th July 2011) have given rise to one thousand eight hundred and forty-six dishes that meet and invite us to rethink some of the requirements of contemporary artistic practices. Those requirements have as a central theme the capacity to generate their own language, with its own grammar; that is, with its semantics, its syntax, its vocabulary, its array of argumentation, its methods of repeating, of citing, of varying and of subverting. They are requirements that are not only met by strictly culinary procedures, but also by the procedures related to the archives, the documentaries, the mechanisms for recall and the preparation for what is to come. *Documenta XII* demonstrated how the practices of *eIBulli* were not only formed in a culinary language as innovative as the language of the first avant-guard artists, but they had completely revolutionized the world of

⁷ See, for example, *Eat, Drink, MoMA!* (17/02/2011): http://moma.org/visit/ca_specialization_lendar/events/11840.

cooking, for two reasons: 1) because it acquired self-knowledge, specifically as an aesthetic practice of *research* on creativity; and 2) because it carried out this research through the intersection of cooking (sometimes resulting more in high tension than in plastic solutions) with the worlds of art, science, technique, the mass media, new technologies and communication. In this way cooking showed itself to be executing something that is highly appreciated by contemporary art: the conquest of autonomy through intersection with other fields. This is just what is happening in processes that have made it possible for art to be practiced in such a way as for it to be an ideal place for thought, knowledge and research: videoart (with Matthew Barney or with Krzysztof Wodiczko), installations (Félix González-Torres, Thomas Hirschhorn, Anish Kapoor, Christian Boltanski, Ai Weiwei, Thomas Hirschhorn), performance art (Marina Abramovic), dance (Russell Maliphant, Wim Vandekeybus), drawing (Tracey Emin, William Kentridge), painting (Anselm Kiefer, Cy Twombly), sculpture (Rachel Whiteread, Rebecca Horn,) photograph (Nan Goldin, Tacita Dean, Thomas Demand), music (John Adams, Thomas Adès, Georg F. Haas) and the relational practices (Rirkrit Tiravanija, James Turrell, Dominique Gonzalez-Foster). It is for these two reasons that we propose the term *research cooking* instead of *avant-garde cooking* or *technoemotional cooking*, which are loaded down, as we see it, with inconveniences and hark back to anachronisms.

While the majority of the cooking world welcomed such recognition, the institutional world of art, in contrast, either rejected it or did not know what to say; and much of that silence has remained with us up to now, as it is still present in the world of the philosophy of art or of other aesthetic practices. The tension in this silence becomes more violent the more cooking—although it seems to keep its distance from the pretension of declaring itself to be *edible art*—does seem to gain self-knowledge, presenting itself and spreading itself as *edible philosophy*.⁸ *Research cooking* is very well aware of having become, through its own language that tends to the universal, a place for thought and an aesthetic practice that generates occasions for reflection.

⁸ We always use the term *edible philosophy* in a figurative, metaphoric or hyperbolic way. Literally a dinner plate, which can be art, cannot be philosophy, because philosophy is thought given form through propositional language, and more specifically explicatory discourse. Neither is a novel or an altarpiece or a play philosophy, although their content may generate much philosophical reflection. Goethe's *Faust* is not philosophy, but a play. Velázquez's *Las Meninas* is a court painting. Culinary dishes, novels and sculptures can have many philosophical elements, but they are nonetheless works of art. It is quite a different matter if we consider the philosophical discourse that we can devise related to them or about them, as Foucault did with the work of Velázquez. Clearly we can always talk of philosophical novels or philosophical cooking.

1.3. *Artification in the kitchen*

Among the many phenomena that are evidence of a certain recurrence and continuity in the period from the First World War and the ready-mades of Marcel Duchamp up to the most recent contemporary art, we find instances of the phenomenon of artification.

Artification denotes the process by which some object or practice which previously was not considered to be art, comes to be considered art. A great variety of objects, practices and technical products, both new and old, have undergone such a transfiguration; to use the term that was introduced into the philosophy of art by A. Danto thirty years ago. The artification movement has been massive and unceasing; and has led to art expanding unstoppably beyond its traditional *terroir*. Important landmarks in the process include: the recognition of the photograph in the 1970s; the recognition of appropriationism as an honorable practice in the 1980s; and the moving of exhibits from ethnographic museums to art galleries in the 1990s.

Recurrent artification runs in parallel to contrasting instances of the phenomenon of deartification. *Deartification* denotes the process by which works of art lose traditional or familiar qualities that they possessed up until a specific time. So, for example, deaestheticization and dematerialization have been important



aspects of this process. The aesthetic dimension of art was a fundamental dimension of all art until the avant-gardes burst onto the scene, which meant that up until that point it was the recognizable form and aesthetic qualities were the base of any artistic meaning and were always present in every work of art as definitional elements of what art was. After

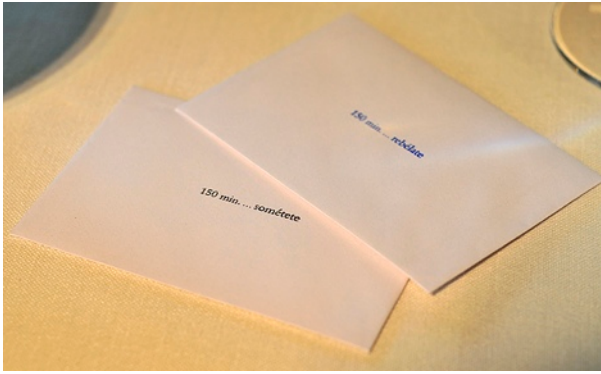
Duchamp, that dimension moved out of the foreground, since it can now be present or not, and in many works of contemporary art it is absent or irrelevant.

That artification and deartification can be seen as parallel phenomena is exemplified by Duchamp and Picasso, who were both at the very start of both the movements. The cubist collages and the ready-mades were at a time practices of artification and deartification. The collages artified elements of daily life, such as newspapers and tram tickets; while at the same time they deartified the venerable practice of painting, by means of the same gesture. The ready-mades artified ordinary objects such as bottle racks and snow shovels, and at the same time deartified the ancient practice of sculpture.

The phenomenon of artification is taking place at present where art borders on fashion, design and popular practices such as graphic novels and graffiti. However, the artification movement that we are interested in here is occurring today within the framework of *research cooking*. So, what creative cooks such as Ferran Adrià, René Redzepi, Massimo Bottura, Heston Blumenthal, Andoni Aduriz and Joan Roca have been doing to their dishes and menus is artifying something that up until now has been considered to be a mere craft or a minor art. What they do is, nonetheless, art which has just the same entitlements as any other contemporary artistic practice.

We do not believe that there is any new philosophical problem with the artification of certain cooking. In an era such as this, when the idea that anything can be art has wide currency, how is it possible that certain creative cooking is not art and in contrast any banality perpetrated by a recent fine arts graduate is considered to be art? There is no particular problem with *edible art*: in certain circumstances comestibles can be art and, therefore, there is no problem with the issue of food as art that is any different from the problem that anything else poses as art.⁹ Be that as it may, we can identify typical features of the most recognized forms of art in culinary art: there are very good reasons to maintain that a dinner at *e/Bulli* was not merely an aesthetic experience of tasty dishes, but an occasion to think with the senses about our bodies, their capacity to interact with the world and the many ways to say something in a non-propositional language; ways such as metaphorically, ironically and using other edible tropes. Edible art has an edible language. Another impressive

⁹ Some authors, however, insist on making the problem a specific one: Elizabeth Telfer, "Food as Art", in A. Neill and A. Ridley (eds.), *Arguing about Art*, Routledge, London and New York, 2002, pp. 9-27; G. Kuehn, "How Can Food Be Art?", in A. Light and J. Smith (eds.), *The Aesthetics of Everyday Life*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2005, pp. 194-212; D. Monroe, "Can Food be Art? The Problem of Consumption", in F. Allhoff and D. Monroe (eds.), *Food and Philosophy*, Blackwell, 2007, pp. 133-144. For the general problem, see: G. Vilar, *Las razones del arte*, Machado: Madrid, 2005; and the special issue of *Contemporary Aesthetics* 4 (2012) on artification.



example of this is the menu and the performative development of the dining experience at *Mugaritz*, which starts with two sealed envelopes which the spectator has to choose between which say on them: “Rebel!” and “Submit!”. From here one can encounter major themes from the western artistic

tradition, as in the case we consider below of representations (that are not immediately explicit) of the seven deadly sins in a menu.¹⁰ Therefore, at least sometimes we are faced with art accompanied by its reasons because it does what art does: it brings into question the ordinary mode of meaning; it is precisely because it makes us doubt the habitual order of intelligibility that it is fully art.

2. Second terminological and argumentative proposal: The *flavoring turn*

2.1. *Cooking as a performative and relational practice. On the flavoring turn*

As we indicate above, since the 18th century understanding of the human being has had to do with laying claim to an aesthetic sense, understood as an unusual type of rationality that orients us in the world and constructs it. It includes all the capacities that lay hidden beneath that obscure term from medieval philosophy *sensus*:¹¹ sense (a meaning or interpretation; a direction), sensitivity (from which come *sensitive* or the archaic meaning of *sensible*), sentiment, sensibleness (in its modern meaning), sensuality (from which *sensual*) and sensation. Also each one of the five different human senses and the sum of all of them together, which has its centre in the *sensorio*; all of which gave rise to the *sensorial*. It indicated a special intelligence that was the heir of the Greek *aisthesis*, guided by that which was not uniquely intellectual and which *oriented* us in the world through skillful insight. The Late Enlightenment

¹⁰ Presented in Vitoria-Gazteiz, on 7th April 2011.

¹¹ See J. Jaques, “El sentido estético”, *Disturbis* 3 (2008): <http://www.disturbis.net>.

did, in effect, relate aesthetic sense and knowledge as if they were the skin and internal organs of the human body: aesthetic sense was like the limit or the protection of knowledge and its possibility to exist. There would be no turning back from this point in philosophy or in art; not even in the most Adornian moments of the former or in the most conceptual moments of the latter. The great philosophical moments of such a claim in the 20th century were the neo-Kantianism of Ernst Cassirer, the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, the hermeneutics of Gadamer, the peculiar irrealism of Nelson Goodman, and the reception theory of aesthetics of Hans Robert Jauss and others. Despite all those philosophies having a commitment to art, their possibilities were not realized until the 1990s with Nicolas Bourriaud and his *relational aesthetics*.¹² There, philosophy, the theory of art and institutional criticism became embroiled in a single generative source, which gave rise to a discourse and certain artistic practices¹³ of reciprocal and often indiscernible action, realizing an old and persistent illusion of the theory of art that may not have had the occasion to be realized again since the Renaissance. The central theme of this tradition, from Cassirer to Bourriaud, is the recognition of and insistence on the role of the spectator as co-generator of the work of art or of artistic practice, which in this way becomes an *occasion*¹⁴ to exercise aesthetic rationality as the goal of constructing the common. In short, what *relational aesthetics* proposes is a performative turn according to which the reception of the work or the artistic practice is conceived as an activity that constructs the world, as well as continuing and, ultimately, legitimizing the practice in question.

The genealogical link between performance art and *relational aesthetics* is evident. At least it is obvious that the performative turn¹⁵ first happened in the arts, very particularly in the *performances* of the 1960s, although it had already been laid

¹² Laid out in the book whose title is precisely *Esthétique relationnelle*, 1998, and also in *Postproduction*, 2001.

¹³ Among the artists who are most representative of *relational art* the names of the following are usually mentioned: Rirkrit Tiravanija, Maurizio Cattelan, Douglas Gordon, Pierre Huyghe, Philippe Parreno, Vanessa Beecroft, Christine Hill, Liam Gillick, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster, Carsten Höller and Jorge Pardo.

¹⁴ Just as Kant claimed in paragraph 49 of his *Critique of Judgment*.

¹⁵ On the *performative turn*, see Fischer-Lichte, Erika, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. London: Routledge, 2008 (original in German, Suhrkamp, 2004.)

claim to by a certain aesthetics of architecture¹⁶ during the second half of the 20th century, and it had been a constant in dance, theatre, circus, live music, dress, installations and urbanism. These are precisely the artistic practices that are said to be *occasions* or *events* for the development of the capacities of those who receive them in order to construct the common, and which give such development, as an activity, the ultimate responsibility of understanding a *work of art* as such, which is no longer an *opus* but becomes a real *work of art* as in a *work in progress* or a genuine *opera aperta*. Certainly dance, live music and dress have something very important in common: they are everyday aesthetic practices (almost everybody dances, sings, and dresses) as is also the case with cooking.

We are now drawing near to the crux of the matter. Of these everyday practices, cooking and dress on the one hand, and dance and music on the other, form two independent families. We can certainly say that, while the latter are usually performed in their everyday form only for reasons that have nothing to do with any predetermined function or benefit (we could say that they are performed “because they are”, freely), the former have two different modes of production: for a strict reason of utility (I cook to feed myself; I dress to keep warm) or to exercise the freedom that brings them much closer to the first family. This attitude is what in Kantian terms is called “aesthetic disinterestedness”, and it goes back to the possibility of the subject exercising their autonomy in a transition from the real to the possible through art and without any concept predetermining that transition. Such a transition is to be understood as an opening of the world, a production of sense that modifies the familiar order in the world and rearranges it.

This is exactly the aim of *research cooking*. It is clear that *alimentation* does not satisfy this goal; but what does, is an opening generated by the physicality of the dish (the real) into emotions and thoughts that transcend that well-known physicality and lead us towards unexpected symbolic dimensions: taking the dish from the world of

¹⁶ See Cacciari, M., “The Dialectics of the Negative and Metropolis”, in *Architecture and Nihilism: On the Philosophy of Modern Architecture*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993; Debord, Guy, *The Society of the Spectacle*, New York: Zone Books, 1994; Lefebvre, H., *The Production of Space*, Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991. Simmel, G., “The Metropolis and Mental Life,” in *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, edited by Kurt H Wolff, translated by Kurt H. Wolff. Glencoe: Free Press, 1950; Vidler, A., “Spaces of Passage: The Architecture of Estrangement: Simmel, Kracauer, Benjamin.” In *Warped Space: Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2000.

the real into the world of the possible. Sometimes the transition is disturbing,¹⁷ as it is in the best art; sometimes it “violates the palate”, as Adrià likes to say; sometimes it is full of humor and playfulness to an extent that the arts seem to have left behind long ago.

This transition has been extensively and intensively explained in recent years from the point of view of the cook, locating this opening from the real into the possible within the all-powerful—and somewhat belittled by its own excess—notion of *creativity*. Given its considerable theological, romantic and auratic connotations, this term continues to sit uncomfortably within the vocabulary and array of argumentation of contemporary aesthetics. With a certain dose of anesthesia, *foodwriting* has simply accepted awarding privilege to this desiccated narrative, adopting the narrative protocols of the first avant-gardes and obviating all criticism of a this paradigm which, at least since Marx and Freud, has demonstrated its huge explicative deficiencies.

So that a meeting of the theory of art and the theory of cooking is possible and fruitful, so that the voluntary deafness that exists in the world of art starts to be banished, we believe that the theory of cooking should undergo an experiential and relational turn, in the understanding that, as an aesthetic practice, it is located among the performative and relational practices. That is why the second terminological and argumentative proposal in this paper is the *flavoring turn*.

It would seem that *foodwriters* have reached agreement in designating with the term *flavor* the set of senses that intervene in the gastronomic experience. An alternative could be *the faculty of taste*, if it was not that this seems to obviate the reflexive connotations and it refers only to the most immediate response. That is why we prefer not to swim against the current and to go with the term *flavor*, with the aim of alluding to the set of the five “traditional” senses (sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell) and also thermoception or the capacity to feel temperature, and the sense of reflection, of memory, of imagination; in short, of everything that intervenes, from the first appearance of the dish until that unforeseeable moment of recollection a few hours, a few days or a few years later, which Michel Onfray so aptly names *La raison gourmande*.¹⁸

¹⁷ As Hegel said, “schmecken können wir nur, indem wir zerstören [we can only please to the extent that we destroy]”, *Aesthetik I. Werke*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1970, vol. 13, p. 184.

¹⁸ Onfray, M., *La Raison Gourmande. Philosophie du Goût*, Paris: Grasset & Fasquelle, 1995.

We propose the term *flavoring turn* to designate a narrative turn that we consider indispensable if a philosophy of cooking and gastronomy is to develop. This narrative turn consists of considering the whole length and breadth of the gastronomic experience with a validity and a responsibility that are equal to those of the productive experience and as the development of its symbolic commitment which is both so essential to it and so promising; it consists of recognizing gastronomy as an ideal place for the construction of the common. So, the *flavoring turn* is a radically experiential, performative and relational turn.

The *flavoring turn* requires locating the cooking–gastronomy continuum within performative practices; but also much more than this. It has to have leadership. In the last five years, the theory of art has given way faced with the strength of performative practices, and it has awarded them their turn in terms of what is genuine, what is powerful and what has something solid to say in times of uncertainty and precariousness. A sign of this is the intense interest that Arthur Danto—the art theoretician who has generated one of the most solid contemporary narratives—took in Marina Abramovic’s performance for MoMA from 14th March until 31st May 2010, titled *The Artist is Present*.¹⁹ Danto, at the age of 86, went on to write of having participated in Abramovic’s performance in his paper “*Sitting with Marina*”,²⁰ and he started thinking about art anew.

The strength that the performative arts transmit has to do with something endemic: their language is universal; it is the language of gesture, of ritual, capable of transcending the language or languages in which we speak and think. Moreover, of all of them, the language of cooking is perhaps the most universal, possibly competing for that accolade with music. Cooking is, on the other hand, the language of what is most physical, together with the languages of sexuality and sensuality, which in contrast are intimate languages. Therefore, cooking has the responsibility *now* to lead not only productive processes, but also theoretical processes, and to comprehend that the time has come to de-auratize itself and to carry out its relational turn: the *flavoring turn*, at last handing over to the diner or *commensal*, one who shares in the food. The word *commensal* comes from the Latin words for a conjunction or combination as in *community*, and *mensa*: table. It

¹⁹ See <http://www.moma.org/abramovic> y http://www.youtube.com/MoMAvideos_-_p/search/0/2GD5PBK_Bto

²⁰ New York Times 05/23/2010: <http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/05/23/sitting-with-marina/>

designates a communal or shared table for the generation of the common. The undertaking to generate symbolic values cannot only be left to the hands nor to the mouths of the cooks, it is time for the *commensals* to speak of the symbolic potential of cooking, time for the auratic creativity to become shared generation; emancipated and democratic. This is what the *flavoring turn* calls for, in total consonance with the communicative and relational vocation of *research cooking*: research is only conceived of as research shared in *networks*, *netthoughts* and *netfeelings*. Only in this way will *research cooking* be able to free itself of the absurd burden of elitism that it has been maliciously saddled with by the bad faith encrypted in the art world; tired, tiring, dogmatic and dull.

2.2. Feeding Thought: *on how research cooking and the flavoring turn force us to rethink certain fundamental issues in traditional aesthetics*

The philosophical perspectives that *research cooking* opens up are what led us to call the first course to be held on the international academic scene on the philosophy of cooking and gastronomy *Feeding Thought*.²¹ In fact, talk of *research cooking*, *edible art*, *the artification of cooking*, *edible philosophy* and *the flavoring turn*, as appears in the sections above, already forms part of the effort to generate a new vocabulary and scope of argumentation for the incipient *aesthetics of cooking*, in gnoseological analogy with traditional *aesthetics* or *philosophy of art*. The closing subsections below are concerned with the two truly essential terms: *taste* and *symbol*.

2.2.1. *On the renovation of the term taste and the flavoring turn*

In Section 1.1. above, we already indicate how, in the late Enlightenment, western philosophy required a shift towards the realm of the personal and aesthetic sense in order to complete the philosophical construction of the modern autonomous

²¹ <http://www.feedingthought.net>

subject. In paragraph 40 of his *Critique of Judgment*, Kant called that aesthetic sense *taste*, calling on the implication of *physicality* in this new faculty that should make the modern individual *insightful*. However, that was not all he had to say; individual insight was both *for* and *in* the community; that is why *taste* is called aesthetic *common sense* (*sensus communis aestheticus*). Kant says:

“...taste can with more justice be called a *sensus communis* than can sound understanding; and that the aesthetic, rather than the intellectual, judgment can bear the name of a public sense, i.e., taking it that we are prepared to use the word sense of an effect that mere reflection has upon the mind; for then by sense we mean the feeling of pleasure. We might even define taste as the faculty of estimating what makes our feeling in a given representation universally communicable without the mediation of a concept.” (Kant, *KU*, § 40)

Taste is being laid claim to here, as opposed to the position of the more intellectualist tradition, as the faculty to which the construction of the common most intimately corresponds, with the peculiarity of permanently linking physicality, feeling and reflection for that which *I can place of the negotiating table*. *Taste*, in this way, is a faculty that claims that the autonomy of the subject can only be constructed in that which brings us together and which we share as subjects; that a subject, however autonomous they may claim to be, is only a *human* subject thanks to *feeling*—with the heart, skin, senses or feelings—in some way, the common. That is why Kant states, in the most beautiful and synthetic text in the *Third Critique*, that:

“ ... humanity means, on the one hand, the universal feeling of participation, and, on the other, the capacity for being able to communicate one’s inmost self universally” (ibid. § 60).

Taste is the faculty that, once again after the late Enlightenment, was called on to take on the responsibility for this communication which is both intimate and universal. It is beyond the scope of the present work to recount the history of the decadence of the concept of taste from Romanticism up to postmodernity. It is a history of a lack of prestige and of rejection because of its association with the philosophy of the subject. So, for example, Marxist, historicist and sociologist criticisms could only see in taste forms of social group or class ideology, rejecting all

of its rational content. The famous book by Pierre Bourdieu *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste* was the last episode in that tradition that had no compunction about throwing the baby out with the bathwater. The history of this contempt was coming to an end in the last third of the last century, as we note above, with attention turning to aesthetic participation and reception, and the call for a hedonist dimension. However, despite use of the word always having connotations with its origin in the palate,²² there was no possibility of a call for gastronomic taste until, in the present, cooking has made the great creative leap forward in research and innovation which, as we note above, thanks to the theoretical efforts of the performative arts and relational aesthetics, we are now beginning to think about and to explain. Undoubtedly, a philosophy of cooking will have to make a long discursive journey in order to grant to taste—in terms of *flavor*—the cognitive dimension that it deserves. We do not even have the vocabulary to do it. Which words and what type of argumentation should govern the communication of the gastronomic aesthetic experience? Without a doubt some of them will be taken from the theory of the performative arts, and will pay particular attention to its ephemeral dimension; others from relational aesthetics, but it will always be necessary to adapt them to a spectrum of faculties for which we have no tradition, such as the sense of smell, the taste of the palate and throat, thermoception and textures, the whole catalog of appreciative reactions of the five basic tastes (sweet, salt, acid, bitter and umami), sight and hearing in non-hegemonic disposition, the peculiarities of gastronomic desire and the expectations of imbibing something external that becomes internal. It will also be necessary to tackle the questions of how to strike upon the continuum between the physical and reflective—including physicality, body, memory and imagination—and likewise the continuum between subjectivity, intersubjectivity and objectivity. As well as tackling questions regarding the fundamental aesthetic categories required to refer to all of this (delicious, disgusting, tasty, good, appealing, sophisticated, original, shocking, ironic, fun, creative, nauseous, disturbing,

²² It is claimed that the English word taste may in part be derived from the Latin *gustus* (taste), derivations of which are present in modern Romance languages, and which itself comes from the Greek: *geúsis* (taste). In Antiquity, the term could already be used for the whole range of meanings from the taste of the palate to its metaphorical use for experimentation. This was even present in the New Testament. For example, in *The First Letter of Peter* 2,2: “*Si tamen gustastis quoniam dulcis est Dominus*” (“if you have tasted how sweet the Lord is”). (*I Petri* 2,2), or in the *Gospel According to John*: “*Non gustabit mortem*” (“he shall not experience death”). (*Gospel According to John* 8,52). These meanings were then inherited by Romance and Germanic languages, and eventually English.

disgusting); the moral dimension of food (vegetarianism, health and food); its political dimension from the most humdrum table to the most experimental restaurant; the way it redefines mass culture and the democratization of aesthetic practices and uses; and also its institutional and business profile.

Finally, we must be realistic with regard to the work that is to be done in relation to the concept of taste so as to be able to provide it with legitimacy in a social and cultural context in which the term signifies complete subjective relativity and consumer trends or tendencies. Some promising lines of research have been indicated by G. Vilar,²³ in terms of taste as a form of reason with no fixed foundations, and by C. Menke,²⁴ as a *tertium datur* between an enlightened concept and its sociologically banal counterpart. Nevertheless, the work remains to be done.

2.2.2. *On the redefining of the term symbol and the flavoring turn*

The aspects that we present in the previous subsection point to the possibility of redefining or renovating of the term *symbol* or *symbolic form* which, in our view and following philosophers such as Ernst Cassirer and Nelson Goodman, is the central concept in the theory of contemporary art and, in fact, in any theory of art. Naturally, we are not referring to a codification of tastes just as there was a codification of colors in the medieval period. We are referring to the question of what it is that *research cooking* and the *flavoring turn* bring to traditional reflection on aesthetic rationality, which we see as always being a symbolic rationality. What takes place in the aesthetic experience both of a work of art and of a *research cooking* proposal is the generation of an *embodied sense* (adapting Danto's hypothesis that every work of art is an *embodied meaning*) as a set of communicative reasons.²⁵ This generation of an *embodied sense* is carried out in the transition from the real (the physicality of the piece) to the possible (the realm of thoughts, memories, emotions and projections) in an exercise of the aesthetic freedom of the spectators or of the *commensals*.

²³ See G. Vilar, *El desorden estético*, Barcelona: Ideabooks, 2000, chap. 10 ("Los desórdenes del gusto"); *ibid.*, *Las razones del arte*. Madrid, Antonio Machado, 2005, chap. 6, especially pp. 230 s.

²⁴ C. Menke, "Otro tipo de gusto. Ni autonomía ni consumo de masas", *Enrahonar* 46 (2011), pp. 137-151.

²⁵ See Vilar, G., *Las razones del arte*. Madrid, Antonio Machado, 2005. We use the terms *sense* and *meaning* in the Fregean way.

It could be claimed that any symbol that can be attributed to a work of art or to any aesthetic practice is such an *embodied sense*, considered in a way that cannot be untangled from the physicality of the piece. The peculiarity of aesthetic rationality, compared to other types of rationality, resides in the capacity to generate symbols through a formalization that does not call upon functionality as an element of the construction of the *embodied sense*. This implies the exercising, with a communicative intention, of all the faculties required for it: imagination, memory, sensitivity, feeling, sensation, senses, the capacities to demonstrate, appreciate and form appreciation, discernment, generative daring and an openness of spirit. These faculties come together in the conversion of “a thing” into a *symbol*; together they have the capacity to “give voice” to the fragments of nature, faces, objects and food; and to convert them, respectively, into a landscape, a countenance, a work of art and a place for gastronomic experience. Marcel Proust refers to this conversion with the lucidity that belongs only to a great literary genius:

“Even the simple act which we describe as ‘seeing some one we know’ is, to some extent, an intellectual process. We pack the physical outline of the creature we see with all the ideas we have already formed about him, and in the complete picture of him which we compose in our minds those ideas have certainly the principal place. In the end they come to fill out so completely the curve of his cheeks, to follow so exactly the line of his nose; they blend so harmoniously in the sound of his voice, that these seem to be no more than a transparent envelope; so that each time we see the face or hear the voice, it is our own ideas of him which we come to recognize and to which we listen.” (PROUST, *Combray I, Du Côté de chez Swann*)²⁶

This is the first characteristic of orientation in the world that belongs to aesthetic rationality: to distinguish and comprehend the empirical by means of properties established by symbolic generation; that is, by properties added to the empirical by the community of subjects and which mediate what is seen. These properties, which are constitutive of *embodied sense*, cannot be made out at first sight: in effect, that which leads to a fragment of nature being converted into a landscape or a face into a countenance, is indiscernible. In this way, what distinguishes the face of my mother from the face that anyone may see on the bus is something indiscernible to others. In

²⁶ Proust, M. *Remembrance of Things Past* Vol. 1 [C. K. Scott Moncrieff](#) (Translator): Wordsworth Editions; 1st English edition (2006) p 39.

the same way that what it is that makes *Pedraforca* mountain a Tertiary outcropping Pyrenean foothill to a geologist, is indiscernible when seen with aesthetic–symbolic eyes that see it as a landscape of totemic beauty. The same thing happens with contemporary works of art. Since Duchamp (now a full century ago!) and later with the endearing Hamilton and the theory of *pop art* and of *conceptual art*, *anything* can be a work of art, and its designation as such depends on a process of symbolic transformation based on *embodied sense*.

This is one of the points of contemporary aesthetics where *research cooking* and the *flavoring turn* oblige us to rethink some arguments, given that they lead to a return to discernibility and to physicality. It should be said that all culinary practice, when it is situated beyond its alimentary function, generates a symbolic continuum that links domestic cooking to *research cooking*: my parents (who are Flemish; J.J.) say a lot when they prepare Belgian endive soup on certain days of family celebrations, just as Ferran Adrià says so much with his *Pina colada, disappearing*



candy floss, 2004. Notwithstanding, Belgian endive soup, although it may be a sophisticated dish, *is a soup*, that can be recognized as such at first sight. So it turns out that there, the symbolic value that is reconstructed in my family every time we eat *that soup* together is indeed *indiscernible*. The same

does not happen, however, with the *Pina colada, disappearing candy floss*; it does not have an encoded aspect that can indicate what the dish is, and the generation of the symbolic—which has to do with memories of fairgrounds from childhood and the first drinks out in bars during adolescence; that is, with a fusion of two moments of “initiation” from an early age and later—in this way is much more *free* based on an emphatic affirmation of its physicality, which marks it at first sight as a product of *research cooking* and, immediately, situates the diner in a clearly aesthetic sphere. Adrià’s *pina colada* is presented to us as a clearly aesthetic sign, unlike the family soup; that is, as a symbol that questions the familiar modes of meaning, the ordinary intelligibility of things in the world. Thus, it does what art does; it offers us an

alternative way of seeing which forces us to reflect and negotiate. It mixes up and reorders an aspect of our world because it makes us doubt the order of intelligibility, and that is what makes it fully art. The family soup can never do that; it can only move us in the certainties of the small worlds that are familiar to us or, like Proust's Madeleine, give them back to us when we had forgotten them. But the familiar culinary worlds are very limited compared to other areas of symbolism.

In this way we maintain that the *embodied sense* and, therefore, the generation of symbols is, in the field of *research cooking*, a greater exercise of aesthetic freedom than occurs in most other contemporary aesthetic practices, since its commitment to codification is minimum while its commitment with physicality is maximum.

2.2.3. *On the redefining of aesthetic freedom in research cooking and the flavoring turn: The emergence of a flavoring community*

This resounding affirmation of the physicality and discernibility of the practices of *research cooking* is one of the most solid contributions that can be made to *aesthetics* as a place of philosophic reflection, given that it indicates what since the beginning of discipline has been considered essential in *the aesthetic*: the emancipation of this experience with respect to the utility/functionality of the object or practice. In reality, here we are recovering the basic element of Kantian aesthetics and sanctioning it once again as the means of comprehending the aesthetic experience. This subsection is concerned with *research cooking* as a place of compliance with the conditions of the aesthetic that Kant appeals to. These conditions are basically three: aesthetic disinterestedness, the absence of concepts and the affirmation of the existence of *ideas* that are strictly *aesthetic*. All of that indicates an aesthetic freedom as a means of constructing the common.

First we present artistic examples. Leonardo da Vinci's *Virgin of the Rocks* is not a work of art because it provokes a feeling of religious piety (which would be a functional argument and not sufficiently disinterested) or because it correctly represents something in addition to "the concept of Virgin–Mother of Christ / the relation between the baby Jesus and John the Baptist"; these are not the reasons

that confirm it as a work of art, and neither could they be used to differentiate between the two versions in existence (one in the Louvre, 1483-1486; the other in the National Gallery in London, 1495-1508) or to single it out as a work of art compared to other pictorial representations of the period with the same theme. The same is true of contemporary works of art: *Perfect Lovers*, by Félix González-Torres (1991), is not a work of art because it deals with one of the most recurrent themes in the whole of humanity: desire and the promise of eternal love, but rather because of how it does it. These reasons are strictly aesthetic. That does not at all mean, as formalists or antiformalists sometimes mistakenly claim, that they are reasons that are merely formal or compositional. No. The aesthetic permanently binds together physicality and reflection on the common in the realization of the piece as a symbol, and thereby generates a space of freedom of thought that belongs precisely to this sphere of human endeavor and which distinguishes it as a privileged place for thought and research.

Let us now move on to other examples and reflect on why *research cooking* should have a higher index of freedom than other aesthetic practices. Pieter Brueghel the Elder was interested in cooking, as can be seen from so many of his pictures. We could consider, for example, the extremely eloquent exercise that he



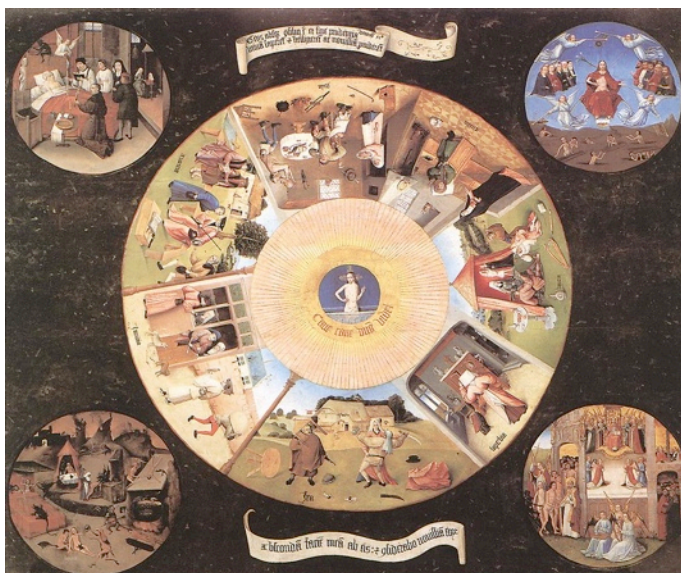
performs in his compositionally twinned—even if we concentrate on the two versions of each of them—engravings of 1563: *The Fat Kitchen* (or *The Opulent Kitchen*) and *The Thin Kitchen* (or *The Meager Kitchen*). The first represents the kitchen of abundance and the second the kitchen of deprivation;

the first expelling the thin man from the door, the second showing how the fat man flees in horror. As if this was not sufficiently explicit, a text (in French and repeated in

Flemish) explaining the scene accompanies the engravings. This is what Kant²⁷ meant when he pointed out—firmly located within the art of his time, which was always narrative—that the appreciation of a work of art, unlike the appreciation of nature, is linked to the concept (here, the representation of the opulent and of the meager kitchen), but this is not what makes it a work of art. However, it is clear that the commitment to codification and, therefore, to a certain functionality (at least narrative) is extremely great, at least until abstract painting appeared on the scene.

Let us now move to a culinary example that we mention above. Andoni Aduriz has a set menu called *The seven deadly sins*, the content of which is not made explicit to the diner; maybe only the most forewarned can even begin to wonder about the reasons behind a set menu of seven dishes that seem to have a silent cadence. In such reflections, the diner will be far freer than with Pieter Brueghel's

engravings, or even when the seven deadly sins were presented for the first time as a table, in the work *Mesa de los pecados capitales* ("Table of the Deadly Sins") by Hieronymus Bosch, El Bosco (1475, *Museo del Prado*); both in the engravings by the Flemish painter and in the Dutch painter's table, each sin respected the traditional representative codification. The language that is



research cooking, in this case with Aduriz's series, shows itself to be much freer than that of painting because it requires a considerable effort for the spectator to generate meaning out of minimum codification.

We now move on to an example in which the diner exercises even greater aesthetic freedom. The *Muelle de aceite de oliva virgen* ("Virgin olive oil spring"; *eIBulli*, 2005) is a gastronomic proposal that says so little with its title that it is as if Brueghel, instead of calling his engravings that we refer to above *The Fat Kitchen* /

²⁷ See the second and the fourth definitions of the beautiful in the *Critique of Judgment*, respectively §§ 6–9; 18–22.



The Thin Kitchen had called them *Ink Engravings*. In the *Muelle de aceite de oliva virgin*, the transition from the real to the possible is only codified in reference to the title. The exercise of aesthetic freedom springs from a very powerful physical proposal (the real): the conversion of a liquid that is absolutely essential in certain cultures into a solid in the form of a thread that is longer than anyone

could consume, and presented as if it were a jewel. This physical proposal will pan out into a series of possible reflections, linked perhaps to the greatness of the simple, to the complexity of the simple, to the tensions and points of contact between the humdrum and the sophisticated, between finitude and infinity, etc. If we look back over the one thousand eight hundred and forty-six dishes created by *eIBulli*, the set menu at the Mugaritz, or those of Redzepi or Bottura, it becomes apparent that *research cooking* is a privileged field for what Kant designated with such insight *aesthetic ideas*, offering new possibilities to human rationality, which up until then had been held hostage by rationalist understanding. For Kant, the aesthetic idea is:

“...that representation of the imagination which induces much thought, yet without the possibility of any definite thought whatever, i.e., concept, being adequate to it, and which language, consequently, can never get quite on level terms with or render completely intelligible.” (KU, § 49)

This text leads the imagination into the faculties of knowledge, and moreover it does so with hegemony. The transition from the real to the possible becomes incorporated into the construction of the world. There is no language that can keep apace, but some manage to come closer than other.²⁸ Kant opened the door to artistic languages; today it seems that, given the aesthetic freedom that *research cooking* and the *flavoring turn* permit, the theoretical micro-leadership that new forms of appreciating the world generate—however discreet they may be—depend on both

²⁸ A. Danto has also defended the relevance of the Kantian notion in: “Embodied Meanings, Isotypes, and Aesthetical Ideas”, *JAAC* 64 (2007), pp. 121-129.

of them, since cooking surpasses all languages and constitutes itself as a universal language, just as is the case of music. They manage to address the Kantian challenge of pursuing the essence of the human in the search for a language that is both intimate and universal at least to the same extent as music does.²⁹

The different grammars of this language, with their semantics,³⁰ their syntax and their pragmatics, start to take form in the restaurants dedicated to *research cooking*, which are nothing other than *laboratories of aesthetic ideas*, just as the workshops of the avant-garde artists were; and as they are today those of so many architects or those of artists such as Oliafur Eliasson and Ai Weiwei. The responsibility to *communicate* and generate *embodied senses* from what goes on in these laboratories is in the hands of the *flavoring community*, just as it was in the hands of the first patrons, art dealers and those who received the art to generate meaning from the best paintings and objects of the avant-garde. It would do us good if in this fleeting world of ours we were not as slow as the public was back then.

The *flavoring community* is made up of: *food writers*;³¹ those who attend or participate in cooking conferences;³² networking projects between science, cooking and technology;³³ digital projects;³⁴ alimentation–scientific–culinary research projects;³⁵ incipient academic projects;³⁶ well-grounded projects concerning the *artification of cooking*;³⁷ and, what is more important, each and every *commensal* who is prepared to generate *embodied senses* based on the *flavoring turn*.

The *flavoring community* constitutes part of the world of cooking just as spectators, gallery goers, art critics, the editors of art books and publications, and

²⁹ As he claimed in the text of *Critique of Judgment* § 60, cited above.

³⁰ You only have to read the menu from *elBulli* to understand the scale of the innovation; it is full of *foams, airs, sferifications* and *morphings*.

³¹ Such as Josep Maria Pinto, Lisa Abend, Óscar Caballero, Pau Arenós and Toni Massanés.

³² <http://www.madridfusion.net>

³³ <http://www.seas.harvard.edu> (School of Engineering and Applied Sciences)

³⁴ epintxo.gulalab.org

³⁵ <http://www.alicia.cat>

³⁶ *Feeding Thought*: http://web.me.com/gerardvilar/Gramaticas/Feeding_Thought.html and cookery schools such as the Basque Culinary Center: <http://academics.bculinary.com/>

³⁷ Hannah Collins, *The Fragile Feast* <http://www.hannahcollins.net>; Mugaritz-Fura dels Baus: *Titus Andronicus* tasting <http://www.mugaritz.com> (2010); Francesc Guillamet: <http://www.francescguillamet.com/>.

teachers of aesthetics and the history of art all form part of the art world. What is more, just like the institution *the art world*, the institution *the cooking world* has a business dimension. If in the case of art that dimension races forward from the art market to the ever more influential tourist happenings at galleries and the huge artistic events in the world's metropolises, then the *research cooking* happening has a peculiarity: it does not have a public dimension. Being a *commensal* of *research cooking* and participating in the *flavor community* is still only possible in the form of pilgrimage to one of the laboratories of aesthetic ideas that are the restaurants where this type of cooking takes place. That does not stop—in fact quite the opposite—its powerful influence on tourism and the generation of jobs in the tertiary sector in the territory where the site of pilgrimage is located; together with new economic opportunities for the primary and secondary sectors.

Despite this, *research cooking* is still labeled by certain moralistic tendencies in contemporary aesthetics as *elitist*. However, to go on pilgrimage to *research cooking* restaurants is not so different from going on a pilgrimage to art fairs and events; to theatre or music festivals; or to the stadiums where the finals of football tournaments are held. In fact, it is much cheaper; and there is one great difference: each *commensal* becomes a *partner* in the research that goes on there, in a patron for a day.

In this sense, *research cooking* is indeed similar to the avant-garde, for which there was no public money to subsidize experiencing the artists, and there was a very reduced number of those who received the artistic products. Picasso's experimentation would not have advanced the way it did without the sound intervention early on of Gertrude Stein, Ambroise Vollard and Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler. Stein was not just his patron, and neither were Vollard and Kahnweiler just his dealers; they were generators of narrative for work that had none, just as today this is the *flavor community's* job with respect to *research cooking*.

Meanwhile, the moralistic accusation of "elitism" rests on a unique peculiarity that *research cooking* has to cope with. That is that nobody in the world dies, at least in theory, from artistic starvation; while millions of people starve to death due to lack of food. For their part, the moralists who insist on adopting such positions with respect to *research cooking* do not usually, in their conservative form, raise objections to the astronomical quantities of money that are invested in large artistic

events or spent on insurance to move works of art so that they can be seen in the large metropolises of the first world. Meanwhile they quietly accept that the rest of the world remains completely excluded from such aesthetic activities. In their more “progressive” version the moralists include post-situationist activists who attempt to carry certain practices out into the rest of the world without being aware of their stunningly neocolonial or neo-messianic attitude. Perhaps these judgments from the pulpit are the cross that *research cooking* has to bear as a consequence of its fate of being the only aesthetic practice that has to overcome and ignore a biological need in order to be realized. As Aristotle said: “Primum est vivere, deinde philosophare”. *Research cooking* is, as it has been our intention to show in the foregoing pages, a place for philosophy; but just like philosophy, it can also be a place for micro-revolutions. Now it is time for the revolution that is the *flavoring turn* to be responsible for the distribution of the sensible and the generation of symbols for the common. There seem to be places that offer themselves as the setting where this can take place. *eIBulliFoundation* is starting to forge a way for itself as a pioneer,³⁸ just as *eIBulli* did in terms of being a laboratory of aesthetic ideas. And on every table in every house. With endive soup à la Flanders, for example.

³⁸ Recently, Adrià claimed that: “We are not chefs so that we can make money; we are chefs to create a new gastronomic language at a revolutionary moment”. Zigor Aldama, “Adrià, aprendiz en China”, *El País*, 23/08/2011.