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Diaspora et déplacement : L'évocation des traditions, des origines et de l'identité dans les mémoires culinaires, un genre littéraire émergent

Diaspora and displacement: The evocation of traditions, origins and identity in culinary memoirs, an emerging literary genre

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who instilled in me a love of books.

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Introduction

> If there is one sure thing about food, it is that it is never just about food. (Eagleton, 1998, 204).[1]

This thesis undertakes the exploration of food-centred narratives which lead us on journeys into kitchens where, we will find not only unfamiliar dishes and new foodways,[2] but also a form of literature heretofore little analysed, that is rarely the object of literary research debates, often remaining in satellite forums such as gender and sociology studies. The works that I would like to bring to the discussion are often popular, sometimes too much so, as well as marginalized as women's or food-related writing, regrettably so, yet at closer look, intellectually and scientifically intriguing in the questions they raise about their narrational ambitions, their poetic quality and the nature of the genre(s) from which they emerge, or which perhaps they attempt to create and define.

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Towards the end of the twentieth century a new form of autobiography appeared, often subtitled 'a memoir with recipes', typically stocked on the bottom shelves of the cookbook section in bookshops. The works continue to be displayed peripherally to the rest of the food writing genre since they are marginal to the huge body of recipe books and food-related literature, not fully-fledged cookbooks, yet nonetheless focused on

[1] Throughout this study, citations from primary and secondary source material are referenced by the title of the work and the page number; citations from critical works and additional references are referenced by the name of the author, the date if the bibliography contains more than one work by the same author, and the page number. Epigraphs are used in the spirit of the device, to set tone, and preface the section that follows; however, those that are drawn from sources and critical works are referenced as other inline and block quotations that are listed in the bibliography, by author and page number.

[2] The term *foodways* ("the eating habits and culinary practices of a people, region, or historical period": *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*) is used in recent food studies to refer to what people eat, how they consider it, how they prepare and serve it and what they deem edible and appropriate to serve and eat in varying social contexts. It is used in this study to embrace food, its preparation and its traditions.

food and, in the majority of cases, including recipes. The presence of recipes however may also explain why they appear to be ostracized also from the auto/biography section.

The works published in and since the 1990s were not however the first autobiographical works to make implicit or explicit allusions to food. Memoirs of foreign travels in the early and mid-twentieth century by authors such as Ernest Hemingway and Lawrence Durrell also evoke food and eating in intimate descriptions and may be considered spiritual and literary precursors of the later food-focused memoirs.

This early amalgam of forms that ostensibly combined autobiography, food and, in many cases, some form of travel, is intriguing because from the 1990s this juxtaposition of themes became an extensively repeated formula that adhered to a commonly recognized pattern, taking the reader on a journey through more or less sequential childhood—and sometimes adulthood—stories or anecdotes, with foodways and their traditions as pronounced themes, and recipes as the concretization or materialization of a preceding anecdote.

The objective of this thesis is to understand what this emerging genre represents in terms of self-writing and travel narratives, and, above all, discern the contribution it makes to the latter genre, moving the little-explored association of food and travel within self-writing to centre stage. We will proceed by analysing the literary form of the genre through the recurrent themes that it presents, the most prominent of which is the questioning of origins and identity in the context of displacement, often in diasporic conditions,[3] involving the forced or self-imposed exile from a homeland that is associated with marked ethnic integrity. The study of the literary dimension of food writing unfolds autobiographical discourses on origins and above all what they reveal about personal experiences of displacement and dislocation.

We will investigate how food in culinary memoirs takes us on a quest for identity and inversely, the search for identity takes us to food (Chatelet, 56). The works bring culinary traditions to the foreground of the narrative, practices which embody

[3] Contemporary use of the term 'diaspora' is no longer reserved to the dispersion of the Jews throughout the world living outside Palestine or modern Israel. By natural extension, it has come to embrace the dispersion of ethnic peoples or communities throughout the world, settled far from their ancestral homelands (refer to *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*).

regionality or 'terroir',[4] individual and community identity. While memoirs indulge in reminiscence, culinary memoirs also act as practical manuals in which memories are consciously explored through foodways and serve the narrator seeking to rediscover her roots.[5] Evoking culinary traditions gives the often diasporic or displaced writer access to archaic memories that are framed in a new context and a new significance through the senses. Preparing and eating food are investigated for the role they play in memory recall and self-analysis, explored through recipes and recollections of the foodways which contextualize them. Culinary memoirists, for whom physical displacement is voluntary or who suffer an existential sense of dislocation[6] within their family or their community, also explore origins that unearth misplaced or forgotten values of home and family roots.

Defining scope and terminology

The term 'genre' is typically associated with a form of literary composition; however, it can also be used to differentiate categories of writing including non-fiction. I use the term to define the autobiographical food focused narratives that are the subject of my research because they have a number of characteristics in common with each other and share specific conventions that we will explore in part I of this thesis. The term also enables us to identify not only traits but also the works' chronological position in relation to other genres and seminal works that might be considered forerunners because they evoke similar themes or impart comparable ideas.

Although a hybrid fruit of the food-writing industry, the culinary memoir is essentially a recent literary phenomenon,[7] offering a space for memory retrieval, self-

[4] Used in association with food, 'terroir', a term borrowed from the French to denote the combination of factors including soil, climate, and sunlight that gives grapes their distinctive character (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*), indicates an association with roots, a personal history related to a certain place, and specific tastes associated with particular foodways.

[5] I have generally, but not exclusively, opted to use the feminine personal pronoun because the majority of authors in this thesis and within the genre are women.

[6] Dislocation as used in this study signifies a rupture with a physical or emotional site of cultural identity.

[7] The first books bearing the subtitle 'A Culinary Memoir', or associated, intra-or metatextually, with the term by authors or critics, were published in the 1990s. However, research into the central themes and intentions of culinary memoirs led me to include other works in my corpus of an earlier date, which do not, at first appraisal, fit into this category. During the course of my thesis I intend to show that life stories focused on food come in other guises than the somewhat

understanding and self-expression. For displaced people in search of lost identity, it can even be a space for healing and reconstruction. A definition of culinary memoirs is necessary to delimit the scope of the literary category that we will investigate, at the risk of momentarily neglecting the multitude of influences and complexity of themes that interweave these narratives. Taking up culinary memoirs as a topic of academic research invites the question whether the corpus should be categorized primarily as memoirs or rather unclassifiable food literature, especially if you have sought out these works in a book shop and discovered that they typically occupy the bottom shelf of a vast wall of cookery books. They compare poorly with the enticingly illustrated contemporary cookery books, for they rarely include images or food photography. Why are these works collectively of literary relevance despite their ambiguous literary quality? We will endeavour to show that culinary memoirs harbour manifold literary virtues.

The recent genre has adopted some standard conventions in which narratives set forth personal recollections that evoke, often in nostalgic tones, authentic worlds of strong personal and cultural significance. At the heart of these evocations, culinary traditions are woven into narratives of fictional or even mythical dimensions (with regard to food), interspersed with recipes that the reader is invited to appropriate, in order to participate in the act of reminiscence. The narrator has lost partial or total contact with this world, left either voluntarily or forcibly, but invariably in the ultimate pursuit of a more secure, or at least coherent, existence. The memoir with recipes serves as a bridge between two worlds. As critic Carol Bardenstein explains, the "gesture that aims to restore the (past) whole through partaking of a (present) fragment… seems to heal and remove the previous tensions of displacement, or being 'of two worlds'" (2010, 161). A field of scholarship has grown up around these works; the ongoing research of Vivian Halloran (2016), for example, is an interdisciplinary exploration of the literary merits of food writing, including criticism and memoir.

Certain critics have proposed definitions of the food memoir genre, and what can be considered sub-genres of culinary-centred self-writing. Traci Marie Kelly identifies three forms of story-telling with recipes. Foremostly, there are works that she names

reductive definition of the typical works that can be classified in this genre that is a necessary starting point. Works of culinary and literary influence shed light on the evolution and the intentions of contemporary culinary memoirs.

culinary memoirs, defined as personal memories of the author with intimate food as a recurring theme and often with recipes. Examples of such works are memoirs that are central to this thesis including those by Elizabeth Ehrlich (1997) and Ruth Reichl (1998). Secondly, Kelly evokes autobiographical cookbooks, which are cookbooks to be read, and in which recipes and cooking instructions are intertwined with memories. An exemplary work of this type is the cookbook-memoir by Alice B. Toklas (1954), whose place in the corpus we will analyse and justify. Finally, Kelly defines auto-ethnographic cookbooks which illuminate practices of community and family wherein food is presented contextually and is representative of values, behaviours and standards. They seek to represent a group with its own sense of history and culture. An example of such a work that we will analyse is *The New Book of Middle Eastern Food* by Claudia Roden (1968) (Kelly, 2001, 255).

I have chosen to gather the first two types of memoir that Kelly proposes into one category that I call culinary memoirs, and not retain the distinction between the two that Kelly draws. An autobiographical cookbook can be considered a memoir in as much as it is often clearly or implicitly a piece of selective self-writing, albeit within a more classic representation of the genre and with an omnipresent selection of recipes. We will concentrate less extensively on works that fall into the third of Kelly's categories because, while specific culinary memories often echo those of a community, my thesis focuses on the pursuit of individual identity in relation to culinary origins. Nonetheless, the author cannot be separated from her community and certain of my memoir choices reveals a more pronounced community identity than others.

In my corpus, the presence of recipes within the text, whether as an integral part of the narrative or as an appended collection, is essential to the pursuit of identity. They represent embodied sensorial experience through which the narrator (and the reader) can create and access memories. They are a way of connecting with self and others through the enactment of a cherished tradition and a shared food preparation ritual. I propose to look in detail at how recipes can become an intimate part of self-exploration, and even an inadvertent Proustian experience wherein the narrator stumbles upon

memories through taste. Food writer Adam Gopnik[8] offers an ironical proposition concerning the presence of recipes in books of varying genres:[9]

> There are four kinds of food in books: food that is served by an author to characters who are not expected to taste it; food that is served by an author to characters in order to show who they are; food that an author cooks for characters in order to eat with them; and, last (and most recent), food that an author cooks for characters but actually serves to readers. (*Table Comes First*, 213).

Culinary memoirs fall into several of Gopnik's categories as he pinpoints the association of food with identity, both individual and collective, and embraces the nuance that the author cooks for and *with* other characters and serves to the reader.

Defining sub-genres remains nonetheless a question for debate due to the variety and complexity of generic nuances, as elaborated by Carol Bardenstein:

> They vary in terms of the degree to which they foreground individual memory, collective memory, or both. They differ considerably in terms of the relative proportion of recipes to narrative text and in the particular way the relationship between the two is developed and emplotted [...] they also vary in terms of the ways they lend themselves to being read: as 'how-to' recipe books, as memoirs, or, in most instances, as a combination of both. Aspects of authorship also distinguish them (those produced by food professionals, such as food critics, chefs, etc., and those produced by nonprofessionals) [...] they are differently inflected in terms of the particular tone and balance they strike between foregrounding (or submerging) 'loss' or 'recuperation.' The implicit or explicit loss may be of a childhood world from which the author is removed in time, or a particular regional or 'ethnic' world from which an author has moved on. (Bardenstein, 2002, 358).

Far from inciting intellectual panic, the multiple scenarios that Bardenstein lists here find their coherence in the definitions that structure the analytical framework that we will apply to the corpus in this thesis.

The use of the term 'culinary memoir' is a deliberate choice in the context of this research. The modern tendency towards the use of reductionist expressions such as *foodoir,*[10] is a short cut that excludes some of the refinement and significance of the

[8] Adam Gopnik is an American writer, who has written about food, and published a memoir of a period of residence in Paris, with a strong food element.

[9] Gopnik was responding to a debate about food in novels, but his categorization can be applied with equal pertinence to the presence of food in self-writing, the fictional dimension of which will be expanded upon in part I.

[10] Foodoir is a synonym of culinary memoir, within its definition as a book or blog that combines a personal memoir with a series of recipes (*Collins Dictionary*).

contemporary undertaking.[11] Firstly, I use the term 'culinary' because these memoirs, and the food-related discourse in general, are as much about stories of food preparation and rituals of eating as about the food itself. Etymologically, the word 'culinary' denotes something relating to, or used in cooking, of, or relating to, the kitchen or cookery. The term embraces the idea of food, its preparation and its attachment to a location, a dedicated space that is the locus of food traditions. I also agree with Anita Mannur's insistence on the use of the word 'culinary' to recognize the vital importance of the physical space represented by the kitchen and the space of consumption and production, but also to deliberately position the culinary as a site of critical and cultural analysis, rather than emphasizing food alone as the primary object of analysis (2010, 222).

I distinguish 'memoirs' from 'autobiographies', and will detail this distinction in the analysis of genre in part I. The memoir is, by nature, more selective than the autobiography, and, by way of its discriminatory nature, inventive in construct, and therefore closer to fictional narrative forms. While autobiographies attempt to rewind the clock on a chronology of past events, memoirs are historically more permissive, narrating personal recollections against an intermittent backdrop of factual events. Memoir, from the French *mémoire*, meaning memoir or reminiscence, and the Latin *memoria*, meaning memory, is a collection of selected memories of emotionally or sensorially encapsulated moments, or personally experienced, mostly private events, that took place in the subject's life.

The term 'memoir' used with the adjective 'culinary' turns the typically plural utilization of the noun into the singular, accentuating the intimate nature of the work, engendered by the author's first-hand knowledge and experience of the events described and her implicit relationship with the reader. While historically associated with biography or autobiography, the narrowed focus of the memoir differentiates it in form, making it less a sub- than a parallel genre. The memoir captures the episodic, or sometimes parenthetical, nature of the narrative, wherein a biography or autobiography

[11] Culinary memoirs unquestionably also fall under the term that Rosalia Baena coined of 'gastrography', which identifies the genre as a form of life writing in which the story of the self is closely linked to the production, preparation and/or consumption of food (Smith and Watson, 2010, 271). While acknowledging its pertinence, I do not consider this literary jargon adds more in terms of definition and justify its usage merely for diversity of taxonomy.

tells the story *of* a life, while a memoir often tells a story *from* a life, using touchstone events and turning points from the author's personal history.

Considering themes and authorial intentions

These definitions give some clues to the motivation behind the writing of culinary memoirs. Authors may use the memoir form to access or recreate memories, to perform a symbolic transmission of traditions, or to tell the story and share the spirit of a community, whether it be the family unit or a larger ethnographically or geographically defined group of people. Food memoirs tell stories of ethnic heritage and diasporic mixing, often with an underlying spiritual quest that manifests itself in the form of a search for integrity in relation to one's family or community of origin, or in pursuit of a sense of place and existential purpose. Some conjoin the story of preparing and eating food with the discovery of a vocation, as in the memoirs of celebrity chefs, who retrace their path to understand how they achieved their current success. They are of varied literary calibre, in terms of narrative construction, aesthetics and self-exploration. However intimate or formal the memoir is in its evocation of food, a construction emerges that suggests a trope of self-nourishment within stories of emotional and spiritual needs that articulate a form of hunger, a notion that we will return to at length.

Many authors use memoirs to tell stories of journeying with varying degrees of literality. They focus on food and its capacity to connect with people and self through the passing of traditions and shared meals, and make a spiritual connection with community foodways. While the association of food and displacement is most explicit in recent culinary memoirs, we can trace its roots back to early twentieth century travel literature, fiction and non-fiction, that implicitly suggest or explicitly evoke food, including the works of E. M. Forster, and D. H. Lawrence, or Ernest Hemingway and Lawrence Durrell, who describe scenes which foreground eating, or social contexts in which important interactions occur around meals although we may, as in the novels of E. M. Forster,[12] never see the dishes they eat.

[12] While novels are excluded from the corpus of this thesis, we will occasionally make reference to those which serve as landmarks in the evolution of personal food writing.

We will consider how culinary memoirs, primarily a literary rather than a culinary pursuit, have roots in culinary writings and cookbooks, and how these latter, since their origins have embodied a literariness that nourishes present culinary memoirs, can help us to understand the literary worth of the food descriptions in contemporary memoirs. Women have traditionally used food writing as a form of discreet life-writing.[13] Within even the most pragmatic of culinary discourses and the most prosaic of literary agendas there is an author who makes deliberate stylistic and discursive choices about the construction of the text, and inevitably leaves something of her personal story between the lines. Underlying a veneer of practicality are roots and branches of literariness which speak of the author's intentions for self-expression, literary endeavour and desire for posterity, which even the most practical of works scarcely conceals. The progression of cookery writing over the centuries is intimately linked with the emergence of gastronomic writing, which is at the heart of our discussion of culinary memoir writing.

The literary value of culinary memoirs is of diverse quality both from a practical and a poetic perspective, and riddled with paradoxes, but of literary relevance with regard to the memoir genre, women's writing, literature that explores self-identity and one's place in the world, whether that be one's own geographical, social and cultural space or an adopted one. In exploring the quality of their textual and metatextual intention we will better understand the literary relevance of culinary-oriented self-writing as autobiographical narratives in the representation and construction of individual identity. We will also encounter further paradoxes innate in the genre and understand the problematics they reveal about autobiography and the literary exploration of memory.

As the introductory quotation by Terry Eagleton suggests, the topic of food, both within and beyond cookbooks, brings in its wake a number of contingent topics and sub-genres, or in the case of autobiography, super-genres, that are intimately associated. The genre complexifies and distinguishes itself by what we can describe as a pluralism or hybridity. The term 'hybrid' as pertaining to a literary genre can either be perceived

[13] More recently, we find male authors also using foodways as a vector for literary self-writing. However, while contemporary women authors, who are not necessarily professionally implicated in food preparation, use the food medium because it is socially, culturally and psychologically part of their conditioning and evolution, male authors are, with few exceptions, professional cooks or food writers.

as the bringing together of recognizable characteristics from different genres, or the experimental and unconventional use of elements from established genres within a recognized western literary tradition. Whether a patchwork of tradition, or experimentation, one must ask at what point the genre is considered mature and, at that moment, no longer hybrid? Is this emerging genre simply an immature generic form undergoing a metamorphosis, and, in which case, does its tangent appear to target autobiography or travel literature, or both?

These memoirs, in their preoccupation with identity and origins, seem to follow a postmodern inclination to explore the way we see ourselves and how we construct notions of self from the past and in the present, reaching beyond the traditional forms of historical narration (Hutcheon, 1989, 51-2). Linda Hutcheon, in her discussion of postmodernism, claims that life-writing sits on the borderline between fiction and personal history (1989, 161). Although the inadvertent hybridity of culinary memoirs that mixes genres and creates new forms of self-writing, culinary self-writing also emerges from traditional forms of autobiography and does not reject the existing corpus.

While the idea of autofiction, or fictional elements within autobiography,[14] merits exploration and will be subjected to textual scrutiny in part I in an analysis of the hybrid form, it is also symptomatic of a splintering of narrative forms, that is not just limited to autobiography or themes related to travel and alterity, but include other narrative styles, indicative either of the multifarious external influences, or the turmoil inherent in the authorial position.

Regardless, at this point in our analysis, of the degree of fidelity to historical truth, the construction of stories of personal origins around the theme of food reveals that these memoirists, for the most part unknown as authors, are ostensibly not seeking so much to explore the autobiographical genre as to find the answers to questions about their identities by telling a part of their life story from the perspective in the kitchen, using food as a medium to explore questions of identity, as they relate to family and to place of origin.

[14] Autofiction is a term coined by Serge Doubrovsky in 1977 and used in literary criticism to refer to a form of fictionalized autobiography. While we will reveal fictional tendencies or undercurrents in culinary memoirs, the works in this corpus are more overtly autobiographical than the works that constitute the autofiction as a recognized genre.

However, the reader, finding it hard to leave once invited into the sacred intimacy of the kitchen, and also intrigued by these universal questions of identity and origins that the narrator poses, finds herself equally drawn into a reflection of the enigmatic nature of place and displacement presented in the memoirs. Is this presence, symptomatic of the modern social preoccupation with rootlessness and a reflection of the fragmentation of contemporary society, or a constructed and intentional literary endeavour to explore the themes of origin, residence and memory? The self-consciousness that Linda Hutcheon discerns in postmodern autobiography (1989, 161) seems to find just resonance in these memoirs. Are the disparate traits of the genre symptomatic of contemporary confusion of identity? And are fragmentation and paradox, the characteristics of postmodernist literature and omnipresent qualities of culinary memoirs, the reflection of trends in modern writing in general, or do these memoirs contribute in a conscious way to the travel writing genre through these literary devices? We will endeavour to answer these questions in the course of this study.

This thesis is divided into four sections, opening with study of the hybrid literary genre that typifies the works that I have chosen to study. We will explore the literary relevance of culinary memoirs, as autobiographical narratives in the representation and construction of individual identity. We must also analyse the multiple paradoxes inherent in the genre and ask what problematic they reveal about autobiography and the literary exploration of identity and memory. This section looks at the corpus from different perspectives, in section A, from an external historical perspective, from the outside looking in, assessing the origins of food writing; in section B, from an internal perspective, from the inside looking out, in an analysis of discourse; and in section C from both perspectives, narrator and reader looking at each other as though through a mirror. The multifaceted hybrid form appears ironically to be attempting to make sense not only of disparate parts but also of disparate perspectives to create a coherent whole.

Part II considers the preoccupation of culinary memoirists with their own fragmented identity and the need to find a place within the larger community. Beyond the pursuit of self-understanding lies the desire to share and transmit knowledge, experience and even personal traditions. We will ask what motivates the drive to transmission: trauma, loss, other emotional and physical turmoil, or more spontaneously, nostalgia for traditions that represent obscured values. We will look at

the role that food occupies in memory recall and the search for one's self-identity, as a way of making connections in the context of displacement and dislocation, as central themes in these works.

These latter themes evoking journeys are the focus of part III which explores the genre as writing of displacement, inherent in the notion embodied in memoir narratives and the exploration of often traumatic memories. Finding one's place must inevitably involve locating ones *dis-place*—where one cannot be—in a fundamental process of making choices and making connections, as one chooses memories to resuscitate within a memoir. Several questions arise. Firstly, in what ways and with what objective do culinary memoirs embody the notions of displacement and travel? Also, to what extent are culinary memoirs a rewriting of travel literature? And importantly, from the point of view of the narrator, is the dominant focus of culinary traditions personal narrative or the expression of the spirit of place?

In the fourth and final section, we examine the aesthetics of nourishment that is at the heart of these works, an eternal symbol that invites us to revisit the very notions of food and eating themselves. Nourishment infuses questions of endotic and exotic displacement allowing the narrators to confront themselves and others. Nourishment, required before, during the journey - of whatever form - and on arrival, is intimately tied to notions of movement and its opposite state of physical or cultural immobility. We will finally question whether this is an emerging literary genre, in and of itself, or part of a literary movement that places the aesthetics of nourishment at its centre.

The choice of corpus

Beyond complying with the definition of culinary memoirs as defined here for the purpose of the research herewith undertaken, the choice of corpus for this research is based on a textual analysis of the literariness of the works, which we will discuss in detail in the section in part I B dedicated to discourse analysis, and a review of the literary quality of text, language and narrative structure.

Each work in my chosen corpus is a memoir in the form of an intimate narrative implicating narrator and reader, that proposes a fragment of a life, centred around the notion of a search for origins and identity through the exploration of culinary traditions,

whether they be the author's own, in the case of writers such as Elizabeth Ehrlich, Madhur Jaffrey or Diana Abu-Jaber, or appropriated from an adopted culture, such as those described by Elizabeth David, Frances Mayes or Elizabeth Gilbert. They are narratives of self-exploration, whether a form of autobiographical *Bildungsroman*, where the story is either centred on childhood, looking forward, such as those by Madhur Jaffrey, Shoba Narayan, Ruth Reichl, Colette Rossant and Nigel Slater, focused on the present, with excursions into the past as in the works of Diana Abu-Jaber, Elizabeth Ehrlich, Luisa Weiss, Molly Wizenberg and Joyce Zonana, discreet memoir cookbooks by Samuel Chamberlain, Elizabeth David, Madeleine Kamman and Alice Toklas, or explicitly focused on self-pursuit through travel in the works of M.F.K. Fisher and Frances Mayes. We will also look at pivotal works by Lawrence Durrell and Ernest Hemingway in which questions of self emerge from travel experiences.

The corpus also embodies the fundamental notions of diaspora and displacement in association with the themes of traditions, origins and identity. We will analyse authors who seek to understand their roots and moral and cultural foundation in homeland or host land. Certain of them travel across oceans such as Shoba Narayan and Colette Rossant, others make turbulent emotional journeys such as Molly Wizenberg or Ruth Reichl; M.F.K. Fisher and Luisa Weiss undertake both types of journey. Each work contains the implicit or explicit notion of displacement. Explorations of self are *sine qua non* with the notion of displacement, whether forced exile or self-imposed displacement, literal or figurative, for displacement inevitably encounters the primordial act of eating.

Emerging from these memoirs is a sense of dualism, of double lives involving migratory journeys and periods of exiled residence or diasporic dwellings, of the recurrent paradoxes of residence and voyage, of movement and immobility, of stability and mutation, with one paradox imbricated in another, the one coexisting with the other. These works epitomize the essence of the dichotomies that Homi Bhabha finds in the diasporic condition, between hidden and public: "The recesses of the domestic space become the sites for history's most intricate invasions." (Bhabha, 9). We will explore the way in which the domestic space is revealed in these memoirs as the stage in which identities and personal histories are created and played out, with examples in the works of Shoba Narayan, Elizabeth Ehrlich and Molly Wizenberg. Diana Abu-Jaber's *The Language of Baklava* presents a stage in which the drama has no clear direction, a

quintessential example of these dichotomies and the ambivalence of roots and belonging, between homeland and host land, staying or returning, taking root and taking routes.

Although diasporic dilemmas and tales of displacement are common to all communities, the creation of food narratives around questions of exile, foodways and hunger has been formalized into what may define itself as a new genre that brings together two paradoxical and seemingly disparate elements in the form of displacement and culinary origins into a codified sub-genre of autobiography. The primary corpus of this research focuses on American and British authors whether emigrants or immigrants, who have one foot in each the Old world and the New. Several authors of Asian or postcolonial Indian origin have pronounced cultural and historical ties with the Anglophone world.[15] The majority of Anglo-American works in the primary corpus also have a strong link with the Mediterranean, whether as birthplace or as the origin of a form of spiritual enlightenment emerging from an epiphanic culinary experience. As the symbolic motherland of civilization, the Mediterranean draws the culinary memoir into a western literary tradition that embraces James Clifford's essential notion of roots and routes (1997), tradition, authenticity, history and memory, sensuality, hedonism and nurturing. These values are associated with notions of home, family, community, and nourishment that are evoked in the works of the corpus.

There exist related memoirs of similar form and content to those in the primary corpus, which offer essential points of comparison. These secondary works partially fulfil the criteria defined in the preceding paragraphs identified as essential to the study of the central thesis of this research. Their food focus can be a chef's rise to fame, albeit with an exploration of emotional as well as culinary origins, such as *Yes, Chef: A Memoir* (2012) by Marcus Samuelsson, an experience of culinary tourism such as *Eating Up Italy: Voyages on a Vespa* (2005) by Matthew Fort, or as a potential publisher's marketing artifice as in *Julie and Julia: My Year of Cooking Dangerously* (2005) by Julie Powell. Their focus is often on exotic rather than endotic culinary travel, not always systematically

[15] See the memoirs of Madhur Jaffrey (2005), Shoba Narayan (2003), Linda Furiya (2006) and Leslie Li (2005). Madhur Jaffrey's memoir is focused on her childhood in India, however the reader contextualizes the book with the meta-knowledge that she later made her home and career in America.

involving personal self-questioning, and typically describing brief, recent moments in time, around 'inauthentic' or ersatz travel experiences, the objectives of which often appear to ultimately be a commercial literary venture. They capitalize on societal food trends and create simplistic, culturally superficial and reductionist portraits of communities, regions or countries. Tourism, with its emphasis on consumer culture and leisure, epitomizes postmodernism, symptomatic of a moral rootlessness which explains some of the impulsion behind culinary memoirs that seek to recover or rediscover roots (Kaplan, 1996, 27), wherein recipes create cohesion, as a common thread that binds the work together, and textual fragmentation which reflects this postmodern dislocation.

Personal food blogs, although an intimate form of self-writing, particularly those by culinary memoirists with a food focus,[16] are excluded from this research because they are by nature temporally constructed and intrinsically non-selective, in terms of an exploration of self. Subject and object are one without the defining narrative thread to guide the reader in understanding the intended construction. The blog reader focuses on the most recent story, which is offered as a self-contained narrative within a framework of metatext, while previous posts constitute a reference archive from which the reader can form her own ongoing narrative, cultural and material expectations thus mediating the texts that constitute a random private diary within a public forum. It is important to note however that certain memoirs bear the stylistic and motivational traits of their author's blogs.

Like the culinary memoirs themselves that seamlessly fluctuate from story to recipe, we will make shifts in perspective as we proceed in our analysis, beginning firstly with an analysis of a fragmented and hybrid genre, moving on to an analysis of the narrator as fragmented subject, then to the narrator as object within an oscillating space, and finally look beyond narrator and narrative to the notion of nourishment, as embodied in culinary memoirs, as an all pervasive poetic symbol.

[16] See the blogs *Ruth's Words* by Ruth Reichl (ruthreichl.com/ruthswords), *Nigel Slater Recipes* by Nigel Slater (www.nigelslater.com/recipes), *The Wednesday Chef* by Luisa Weiss (www.thewednesdaychef.com) and *Orangette* by Molly Wizenberg (www.orangette.com), for the blogs of authors in the primary corpus.

I. A Hybrid Literary Genre

> I'm one of those people who read cookbooks the way other people read travel writing [...] Any cookbook, read it its entirety, creates its own imagined view of the world. (Atwood, *The CanLit Foodbook*, 1).

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In these few words, Margaret Atwood opens up new worlds to our imaginations, one of gastronomic reverie, as well as that of an inspired journey, that offer us a new perspective on the world. Plunging into a cookbook, one falls into a self-contained imaginative world that takes us—according to Atwood—if not always to far-flung lands, at least to far-flung corners of our minds. In the first section of part I, we will explore the genre and analyse its literary characteristics. The first chapter will look at the origins of culinary writings, those which might be considered historical influences, rather than contemporary determinants, be they specifically culinary or related to the literature of travel, which in confronting alterity juxtaposes interpretations of self and others. The second chapter will look at the diverse forms of contemporary self-writing that use food as a leitmotif, from their most binary form as cookbooks disguised as memoirs and memoirs that stage a recipe book, to more complex forms which make subtle use of memory exploration. The third chapter analyses the divergences in autobiographical and memoir forms, their functions and traits of authorship.

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A. Defining the genre

We have introduced the idea that culinary memoirs are narratives of self-exploration with agendas around the pursuit of identity and origins. In chapter 1 we will consider the notion that culinary memoirs, although primarily a literary as opposed to a culinary pursuit, have their roots in two literary genres. We will endeavour to show that the broad genre of food writing has, since its origins, harboured a literary gene that

has seen the emergence of gastronomic[17] writing and nourished present-day culinary memoirs. They are similarly nourished by the poetics of journeys and travel literature.

In considering culinary memoirs as literature, we must begin by clarifying our understanding of the term 'literature' in the context of this study. In its broadest sense and according to dictionary definitions,[18] literature has an inherently perennial value in terms of artistic merit, with regard to the aesthetic excellence of its form or expression, signifying any written text, that expresses ideas of a permanent or universal value around themes of general or enduring interest, often embodying thoughts and feelings. Literature does not typically have a pragmatic function except when we refer to documentation that aims to advertise, inform or advise, concerning a place, an object or an abstract concept.

How do we arrive at this characterisation? According to the Russian formalists to whom Terry Eagleton refers (1983, 2), literature is text that is elaborated, using thoughtful writing in which ordinary language is transformed and intensified such that the texture, rhythm and resonance of words exceed their abstractable meaning. This linguistic approach considers the material manipulation of words into arbitrary devices rather than their inherent meaning. However, literature can be realistic as well as poetic, qualified as a non-pragmatic discourse of no obvious practical purpose, and thus the presence of recipes in culinary memoirs raises specific questions about the latter's literary quality. This definition of literature also implies that a text cannot be objectively evaluated because it depends on how the reader interprets the text and not the nature of what is written. The literariness of a text must then also be associated with the author's intentions, and the question asked whether it was constructed as a literary work, and in which literary genre it was destined to reside, for literature is also typically associated with a body of works with similar traits and a discernable identity. In the study of memoirs, we must then consider authors' biographies. Academics, journalists

[17] The definition and the scope of the term gastronomic, as used in this thesis, is the art of preparing and eating good food (*Cambridge Dictionary*). Inherent in the definition are the notions of good food, implying choice, quality ingredients and creative as well as expert preparation. It also embodies the pleasure associated with the preparation and eating of such food that often stimulates memories, and of the raising of food preparation and feeding to an art, involving skill, and aesthetic and sensorial discernment.

[18] Internet dictionaries including: *Oxford Dictionaries*, *Cambridge Dictionary*, *Collins English Dictionary*, *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*.

and writers for the most part, it is pertinent to consider that the general intention of culinary memoirists in writing about their lives is to create a literary work, primarily around the evocation of values or the pursuit of identity, and secondarily to share recipes.

The reader also brings ideas or convictions to the text about the nature of literature, which surpass practical motivation. We read a literary text for the pleasure it procures us, reacting to features that include the formulation of the language, and the ideas expressed. The reader indeed turns to literature for entertainment, as Karl Beckson and Arthur Ganz explain, be it elevated and intellectual, or of a less exalted nature (132). Other readerly forms of motivation that accord the status of literature to a text are escapism, the search for moral and spiritual values, an empathetic understanding of people's motivation and personal situation, and the discovery of vicarious experiences. The reader's evaluation, as Eagleton explains, thus contains both subjective and objective elements, for we bring a heritage of literature as well as our own personal preoccupations and convictions to a given text.

Whatever the single or several sources of motivation for culinary-oriented self-writing, the food evoked is typically representative of culinary traditions, whether those traditions are inherited from family and community or from sources external to personal experience in unfamiliar places. Cookery books and culinary memoirs, above all, share a common preoccupation with traditions and their transmission. Depending on the perspective—as upholder of domestic or local community traditions, or as the voice of a distanced or disseminated community—and the personal intention of the author, be it transmission or integration, a cookbook may also represent either a static condition or one of flux in the author's relationship to those traditions. Some cookbooks represent both states, and the paradox of their juxtaposition is one of the many that distinguish the culinary memoir genre. Food, that so often represents home and hearth can also be a journey that takes one far from the same on a voyage of discovery—desired or not—or self-discovery.

We will trace the evolution of the role of women in the history of food writing that has shaped their complex and sometimes conflictual relationship to culinary traditions, apparent in contemporary writing today. Anonymous women were able to express themselves in cookbooks sometimes even in a personal, albeit dissimulated,

voice.[19] Male authors were not subject to the same anonymity and their role in the evolution of culinary literature was, as we shall see, quite different.

As we explore storied culinary production, we will analyse the literary expression of food in the transcription of the act of cooking, and the autobiographical representation of foodways, with the slow emergence over time of the narratorial force of food that has recently given voice to a hunger for space, place and identity, in the description, preparation and eating of culinary cultures. In this interconnected and ever evolving corpus were sown the seeds of culinary memoirs.

1. The origins of culinary writings

While we observe that culinary memoirs are an essentially contemporary phenomenon, we can trace the origins of the genre along two parallel paths. The first path is that of the culinary corpus of food writing: culinary memoirs are unequivocally autobiographical, albeit selective in nature. The second path is that of the broad literary corpus, which includes autobiographies, memoirs, fiction and travel writing. We will return at length to the autobiographical dimension of these works and its significance for both narrator and reader as a forum for self-understanding. We begin by drawing a map of the types of food literature, including cookery books and gastronomical writings that preceded this recent genre, which together constitute an intellectual, aesthetic, artistic and even moral heritage. Histories of cookbooks, notably American, trace ever more organized recipe recording as an archive of culinary knowledge and memory. Contemporary food-related autobiographies are a testimony to the evolution of food writing from ethnographic culinary records to personal literary narratives.

In exploring the history of the literary evolution of culinary traditions as one of the roots of contemporary self-writing about food, we will plant signposts to indicate the emergence of a literary genre of self-writing.[20] After a broad-reaching review of the history of culinary writing and the evolution of culinary literature in America and

[19] Refer to Theophano, 2002.

[20] I owe the framework of this appraisal of the history of culinary literature to a core of food writers and historians, in particular, Adam Gopnik (2011), Sherrie A. Inness (2001, 2006), Mary Drake McFeely (2001), Stephen Mennell (1996), and Laura Shapiro (2008).

England, we will take a focused look at several exemplary travel memoirs that evoke food and which, as we will seek to demonstrate, are another of the literary roots of culinary memoirs from which we can observe the similar emergence of self-searching personal stories as enthralling as the voyages against which they are played out.

Contemporary culinary memoirs have roots in two sub-genres of food literature, the oral tradition, with the transmission of recipes within and across generations, and in the written tradition, through informal or published cookbooks. The volubility and familiarity of tone in the food discourse of contemporary memoirs defend the argument that to write about food is tantamount to talking about it, and talking about food, as we shall discover, leads inevitably to the formation of diversely motivated written traces. Molly Wizenberg's is perhaps the most caricatural example of conversations about food. She engages in an enthusiastic one-way dialogue: "[…] you'll note that I've made the caraway seeds optional. Not everyone loves caraway seeds as Burg did, and I'm sure he wouldn't mind if you left them out. (I usually do.)" (*Homemade Life*, 14). Transposing oral traditions to written testimonies not only changes the way traditions are transmitted, explains Luce Giard, but the knowledge that is transmitted intrinsically transforms and evolves the tradition.[21] Wizenberg's words suggest that adaptation is possible; the written recipe is instantly less malleable. Memoirs capture the way women communicate their lives through food while preparing, talking and eating food and identifying and transmitting traditions.[22]

Early culinary writing represented culinary traditions with varying degrees of practical application. Loosely or closely tied to traditions, writing down recipes recorded them for immediate practical purposes, rarely for posterity. In the present day, culinary memoirs represent an important testimony to the evidence that women's food writing is now perceived and cast within more formal literary conventions, in terms of the quality of the text and the values which they convey, as well as a potentially non-

[21] "La généralisation d'une transmission écrite au lieu d'une communication orale entraîne un profond remaniement du savoir culinaire, une mise à distance de la tradition, aussi accentués que le fut le passage de la marmite dans l'âtre à la cuisinière à bois, puis aux appareils électriques ou à gaz." (Certeau et al., 1994, 310).

[22] Apart from acknowledging the influence of the form and voice of transmission, the study of oral culinary traditions is beyond the scope of this thesis which focuses on the literature that has evolved around food traditions.

pragmatic function. Traci Marie Kelly describes them as "a literary extension of this kitchen storytelling [...] a complex pastiche of recipes, personal anecdotes, family history, public history, photographs, even family trees." (Kelly, 252). Indeed, as records of social interactions and exchange, cookbooks, as Jane Theophano describes them, leave a thread of women's interpersonal relationships and a map of the social and cultural world they inhabited. (2002, 13). We will develop our discussion on the nature of memoirs as self-writing in chapter 3.

Our research into the history of food writing takes its cue from recognized pioneers of culinary writing such as M.F.K. Fisher and Elizabeth David, who revolutionized culinary food writing in the twentieth century in their own way and within their geographical sphere of influence, reflecting on the value of food on our plates and in our lives. They were themselves fascinated by, and well-read in their heritage of cookery books. David researched the history of her recipes, and later in life after an illness deprived her of much of her sense of taste, she relied increasingly on her library of cookbooks to validate the culinary feasibility and gustatory value of a recipe. No less erudite in her approach to food, M.F.K. Fisher was described as a "philosopher of food" by the writer and editor Clifton Fadiman, in his introduction to the anthology *The Art of Eating* (xv).[23] Her literary references included the gastronomic writer Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, whose work *Physionomie du Gout* (1826, 1982) she translated into English.[24]

While Amy Trubek asserts that cuisine became less permeable to change with the development of the written trace (2000, 12), other critics take the inverse position. Jack Goody, like Luce Giard, opposed this claim with the idea that the fixing of a tradition in written form makes it available for broad discussion and personal interpretation in ways that a reverence for the oral tradition could not. Giard pinpoints the evolution of culinary knowledge once it was put to paper. It is undeniable that the proliferation of the printed texts at the end of the Middle Ages displaced the oral tradition and accelerated the rate of change, and, I would add, of *exchange*. They quickly became a forum for discussing foodways and incidentally one's own personal implication. The

[23] This anthology contains *The Gastronomical Me*, the most autobiographical of Fisher's works.
[24] Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826) was a French gastronome, author of *The Physiology of Taste*, published in 1825 and considered to have inspired the first century of food writing.

personalizing of traditions turns modern memoirs from pseudo-cookbook into personal stories, the most obvious of these are Elizabeth David's 'book' of 'food' and Alice Toklas' 'cookbook', neither a 'recipe' book.

As early as the seventeenth century, cookery books became a genre distinct from works of medicine or manners, while at the end of the eighteenth century, cooking became an object of discourse, a cultural category similar to the sciences or the fine arts.[25] In the nineteenth century, the cookery book matured into either a work of art or a record of the personal achievements of a distinguished chef (Mennell, 68). The recipe book followed divergent gender directions in the nineteenth century, in both England and America, and within those tangential channels, emerged the formation of a moral discourse. Janet Theophano defines these tendencies thus: "As much recipes for living as formulas for cooking, cookbooks serve as forums for the discussion of the conduct of life." (Theophano, 2001, 139). Ironically, as home cooking became less essential in the twentieth century, it became a yardstick of femininity, the measure, often imposed by women themselves, of their value and degree of freedom from legacy diasporic traditions. Thus was introduced an ambiguity in women's relationship with food, in which women could appear to be 'chained' to the stove, yet also able to express themselves through cooking, appearing to be both limited by, and liberated through their relationship with food. This ambiguity is expressed in contemporary memoirs by authors such as Elizabeth Ehrlich and Joyce Zonana who each 'lose' themselves in work that is far from the stove, and yet only find a coherent identity when they ultimately return to the kitchen.

Entrenched in the feminine tradition, the kitchen was where women cooked and supervised the domestic realm, and recipe collection was an essentially female-centric activity. Men were instrumental in defining, orienting and throwing women's culinary narratives into relief, initially casting women in the role of domestic pupil, which, over time, evolved into cook, editor and author, providing a meta-commentary on women's discreet but steady rise to the stewardship or curatorship of culinary traditions, a role into which women cast themselves in contemporary memoirs. Adam Gopnik writes that

[25] "'[L]a cuisine devient l'objet d'un discours, au même titre que les sciences et les beaux-arts" (Jean-Paul Aron, *Le mangeur du XIXème siècle*, R. Laffon, 1973, 15).

"Cooking was the first of the modern arts to do entirely without classical sanction" (*Table Comes First*, 39), opening its evolution up to diverse paths and influences, including class and gender distinctions. In England and America, food literature flourished in a proliferation of forms, of which the culinary memoir is one of the most recent, and joins other forms of intimate personal expression, such as blogs, Internet sites and social media channels. Let us consider the social and geographical specificity of the literary evolution of food writing, in America and England.

American food literature revolutions

In early nineteenth-century America, cooks were considered angels and cooking a divinely-inspired activity. By their regular provision of daily sustenance, women personified perpetual salvation. Domestic food literature thus expressed an inherent redemptive quality and took the path of virtue that it follows as fervently though less ideologically in culinary memoirs today. At the beginning of the twentieth century, with the evolution of cookbooks into manuals on domestic science, that elevated the position of women from domestic slave to culinary technician, women's personal stories were lost, and discerning even discreet stories of women's lives within recipe books may only be achieved with historical hindsight. Cookbooks limited women's creativity as well as striving, according to Laura Schenone, to eliminate ethnic demarcation (Schenone, 243). Cookbooks sought to adopt male-associated traits of scientific rigour and logic while comprising or negating sensory awareness, pleasure and even hunger. This engendered an affective disconnection—a theme that is forefronted in contemporary self-writing—as well as a rupture with previous generations, such that homely practical advice, from a maternal figure was dismissed as archaic, unsophisticated and sentimental. Culinary memoirs promote the importance of the domestic ethic, inspired by the essentially feminine influences of instinct and folklore, which were marginalised with the undermining of traditions and their transmission. Even within the most mundane and prosaic of domestic cookbooks, Hasier Diner observes "[w]omen and the foods they prepared articulated society's deepest-held values" (Diner, 5). The association of domesticity with moral virtue has been translated into a literary framework in contemporary memoirs. Molly Wizenberg makes home virtues the leitmotif of her

memoir: "That's why this book is called *A Homemade Life* (2009). Because in a sense that's what we're building—you, me, all of us who like to stir and whisk—in the kitchen and at the table. In the simplest acts of cooking and eating, we are creating and continuing the stories that are our lives." (*Homemade Life*, 6). Wizenberg importantly correlates "creating" and "continuing" as associated, mutually-supportive activities in the kitchen and in self-writing about food. We will return to how home cooking, homeliness and *Heimat*[26] are advanced as an inclusive formula to cure modern social dysfunctions.

Cookbooks, as repositories of social mores, capture foodways at a given moment, and also embody the symbolic force of ostensibly immutable traditions, thus serving the communication needs of. women by enabling them to promote the importance of their communities. With late nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century mass immigration, the form of women's writing became more complex as displacement emerged as a motivating factor in transcribing recipes. Community cookbooks, which gave women a space in which to write their own stories and those of their community, were often motivated by the need for assimilation, an existential preoccupation of diasporic contemporary memoirists. Ethnic recipes introduced local communities to the foodways of immigrant groups, while regional specialities inversely helped newcomers learn local traditions,[27] enabling immigrant women and their families to enter American society through the kitchen. Such cookbooks were a shared alliance within a community, in the same spirit as contemporary memoirs, in which authors share with a virtual community of readers, using the medium, as Janet Theophano describes twentieth-century culinary literature, of a multi-faceted vehicle "for constructing, defending and transgressing social and cultural borders" as "points of departure for reflection" (2001, 139).

This process of assimilation persists today in ethnic-focused food memoirs staged through stories of ostracization and integration, expressing the conflicts of identity that emerged in immigrant kitchens, and which are epitomized in memoirs such as Elizabeth Ehrlich's *Miriam's Kitchen* (1997). Ehrlich describes her confused identity using food

[26] *Heimat*, a German word for which there is no direct equivalent in English, denotes, in this context, the narrator's relationship toward the spatial social unit, identified as homeland, or the notion of home in general.

[27] Janet Theophano writes that "[t]heir modest presences were assertions of the self that embedded them in a cultural context and social network" (2001, 141).

metaphors, as "an onion roll amongst cupcakes. [whereas] [i]n Brooklyn,[28] I was among my own kind, yet almost a cupcake myself." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 34). She struggles to understand conflicting anchor points, using strong imagery of imbalance that seeks coherence as its counterweight: "I teeter on some intermediate balancing point. On one side there is kashrut, on the other, citizenship in the regular world [...] The pivoting plank, unstable, leans to the kosher end." (53).

While immigrant women, such as Ehrlich's grandmother, did not question their role as family nurturers, American women, from the mid-twentieth century, were expected to provide for their families in new and inventive ways. Laura Shapiro writes: "generations of women were persuaded to leave the past behind when they entered the kitchen and to ignore what their senses told them while they were there." (2008, 204). The war required that women relearn their grandmothers' kitchen skills, but were thwarted by the artificial conjuring of authenticity through manufacturers' fictional characters such as Betty Crocker, a stereotypical matriarchal figure, similar to those found in culinary memoirs, but void of personal filiation. She displaced the real woman at the stove, usurping her voice with an omnipresent visual image, while recounting contrived food narratives. It was with this world that M.F.K. Fisher had to contend, refuting the diversely manipulated image of the domesticated woman as a pillar of the American culinary tradition, and reinstating spaces for emotion, acknowledged hunger and pleasure in eating at the table.[29] She expressed a food ethic centred on the sensual pleasures that food could bring to morally and socially stifled mid-century women: "The food was full of enchantment to my sister, after her gray meals in the convent, and she ate with the slow voluptuous concentration of a *dévouée*." (*Gastronomical Me*, 102). Fisher moved the culinary autobiography out of the kitchen and into the realm of philosophical reflection on the art of eating and female desire. Under her pen, food becomes "a structural metaphor for female identity and informs an aesthetic engagement with the surrounding world." (McLean, 2). Her stories were more than

[28] Brooklyn was a Jewish immigrant landing point for those arriving in New York from Europe.
[29] We will discuss later in this chapter how British writer Elizabeth David was driven by the same desire to give room to pleasure and express emotion in eating, although her adversaries were post-war trauma and austerity rather than a rampant consumer society.

elegant poetic anecdotes of food; eating was central to her travel adventures and the development of a philosophy of life focused on the defence of sensual pleasure.

This ethos paved the way for the call for equality that came in the 1960s with the first feminist manifestos, while food writer and traveller, Julia Child championed that cautiously in a carefully crafted narrative. She defined the audience of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (1961) as enjoying occasional liberties: "the servantless cook who can be unconcerned on occasion with budgets, waistlines, timetables, children's meals or anything else which might interfere with the enjoyment of producing something wonderful to eat." (Child et al., vii). Child, an ambiguous proponent of both tradition and convenience foods, illustrates the non-linear evolution of culinary practices and literature, that passed tangentially from the gastronomic essay via food journalism, paying court to traditions without necessarily adopting them, before arriving at the memoir. American food writer and journalist, A. J. Liebling, whose references were literary, gastronomic and historic, wrote a memoir of Parisian eating in the 1920s, *Between Meals, An Appetite for Paris*, an 'education sentimentale', that nevertheless lacked some of the 'sentiments', and sensuality of *A Moveable Feast* to which James Slater compared it (Liebling, xv).

Child's discourse implies choices and an enticing association between poetry and creativity: "If you wish to serve a rich home-made consommé, jellied soup, or aspic, you should clarify your stock so that it is beautifully clear and sparkling." (2001, 100), a form of expression which above all, conveys an art to which one applied rules, as well as artistic flair. In contemporary memoirs, cooking as an art is a given assumption, and part of its literary aesthetic. Narrators look rather at how that art, which transcends sustenance, can serve them individually. M.F.K. Fisher made this her credo. She found freedom and beauty in cooking: "I saw food as something beautiful to be shared with people instead of a thrice-daily necessity" (*Gastronomical Me*, 7).

The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook (1954) and the books of Fisher, whose anthological work *The Art of Eating* was also published in 1954, contributed to what Hélène Le Dantec-Lowry refers to as the "gourmetization" of the American food culture (Le Dantec-Lowry, 262), bringing a new literary approach to bear on traditions. Of Alice B. Toklas, Fisher's contemporary, Alice McLean writes that Gertrude Stein's lifelong companion dissolved the boundaries separating gastronomic literature from the

domestic cookbook (7), in the writing of what can be read as a scarcely disguised memoir. She weaves myth, anecdote and intimate history around memorable meals, into a tale that extends beyond the kitchen, inspired no doubt by Gertrude Stein's avant-garde literary and artistic salon that was her home. For Toklas, who wrote of her life from the perspective of the table, food could not "be divorced from the circumstances in which it has been prepared, discussed or encountered" (Humble, 159), a philosophy echoed in the works of Fisher. Dijon women returning with heavy bags from market "were tired but full of a kind of peace too" (*Gastronomical Me*, 99). Food becomes a subject worthy of analysis, an art and also a moral and social issue.

This gradual progression towards the literary recognition of pleasure in eating occurred in parallel with the dawn of the ethnic food era in American society and the democratised travel adventure that began in the 1960s. It would take several decades more before ethnic food writing gradually became associated not just with exoticism but also with authenticity,[30] a value once extolled by American cookbooks, tied to family cooking and eating as a way to wholeness. Authenticity was expressed in eclectic narratives from diverse but coherent culinary traditions. A sense of moral and social awareness arose around food, with the opening up of American society to other cultures and cuisines. Mollie Katzen and Alice Waters,[31] figureheads of the natural food movement that represented a point of reference for gastronomic writing, incarnated a food ethic of sophistication and social change. Alice Waters' restaurant, Chez Panisse, which became the iconic nexus for the West Coast American food revolution, was inspired by her life-changing stay in France, and the works of Marcel Pagnol that represented for her a romantic ideal, the story carrying the hallmark of authenticity. These author-cooks became life-style mentors, in the same way as Frances Mayes in *Under the Tuscan Sun*, and Fisher in *The Gastronomical Me*.[32]

The preparation of homemade food emerged at the end of the twentieth century as a dominant moral message, offering a key to emotional stability. Recipe instructions

[30] Authenticity will be later explored in relation to questions of narrative reception.
[31] Mollie Katzen of East Coast Ithaca Moosewood Restaurant used fairytale-like book titles, such as *The Enchanted Broccoli Forest* (1982) and *Still Life with Menu Cookbook* (1988). Alice Waters' were more prosaic: *Chez Panisse Menu Cookbook* (1995) and *Chez Panisse Vegetables* (1996).
[32] We will return to the question of the transmission of values in our discussion on narrative reception.

constructed a semantic link between women's personal development, domestic duties and the ruptured matrilineal heritage, central to the emotional quest of many modern memoirists. In the 1997 edition of *The Joy of Cooking*, Irma Rombauer's voice is lost to her daughter's editorial criteria of efficiency and practicality. In the first edition in 1943, Rombauer had written: "this book reflects my life, it was once merely a private record of that which the family wanted, of what friends recommended and of dishes made familiar by foreign travel and given an acceptable Americanization". It was remarkable for its personal voice, echoed in the subtitle, *A Casual Culinary Chat*. Rombauer turned food into a means and not an end to writing and opened it up to becoming a vector for women's voices.[33] Susan Leonardi pinpointed the familiarity created by the cookbook writer in the role of narrator: "In the earlier *Joy*, the establishment of a lively narrator with a circle of enthusiastic and helpful friends reproduces the social context of recipe sharing—a loose community of women that crosses the social barriers of class, race, and generation." (Leonardi, 342). Laura Shapiro highlights the importance of what was lost in the 1997 version in her review of the 2006 edition. "That book [...] provoked such anguish among *Joy* devotees that the publisher, Scribner, [wrote] 'This *Joy* is a return to the traditional 'friend in the kitchen,'" (2006, n.pag.). However, Shapiro believes the newer edition fails to concoct the aura of home cooking, the implication in her argument is that such a mission requires a respect for past and present. She writes: "you can't go home again, at least not if you're planning to eat there [...] One reason *Joy* is still around to celebrate 75 years is that its founding writer, Irma Rombauer, let past and present mingle comfortably at her table" (Shapiro, 2006). Rombauer implies that home cooking has been ousted from the kitchen. The need to 'go home' to eat, to return to a multi-faceted, symbolic ancestral kitchen, became of primordial importance to diasporic writers like Joyce Zonana, Elizabeth Ehrlich and Shoba Narayan. For Americans, food-making slowly evolved into a thoughtful practice, mingling pleasure with respect for a past, in narratives of female liberation, rather than female subjugation.

[33] The dust jacket of the first edition however depicts Martha of Bethany—patron saint of cooks—taming the Tarasque, a horned Galician dragon, said to represent kitchen drudgery. The covers of contemporary memoirs often represent images of domesticity. For example, Elizabeth Ehrlich's memoir displays a photograph of Ehrlich with her mother and, behind, her grandmother, both in aprons, emphasizing the transmission of traditions and their values.

The English culinary writing heritage

In nineteenth-century England, several influential cookery books gave instruction extending beyond the kitchen to the entire domestic sphere of genteel households, such as *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management* (1861), a planned abridged version of which extrapolated cooking from the broader domestic sphere and focused on food preparation as the core of a woman's existence.[34] Eliza Acton published the best-selling *Modern Cookery for Private Families* in 1845, which still garners respect from critics today. Elizabeth David called *Modern Cookery* "the greatest cookery book in our language" (Bee Wilson, n.pag.), while cookbook author Delia Smith acclaimed Acton "the best writer of recipes in the English language" (Smith, 2004, n.pag.). Their emphasis on language vests the work with a literary relevance. Acton is considered by some to have invented the 'memoir' form of the recipe, with a detailed personal commentary preceding a precise list of ingredients, wherein the author's experiences and culinary knowledge are of equal importance.

Nineteenth-century gastronomes gave guidance to purchasing and consuming foods: Alexandre Balthazar Laurent Grimod de la Reynière and Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin were considered the founding fathers of European gastronomy, whose reach extended beyond France with the translation of the latter's work.[35] They intellectualized food, emphasizing the importance of a discerning palate, while celebrating the sensual pleasure of satiating a healthy appetite. In *L'Almanach des Gourmands* (1803-1810), Grimod de la Reynière romanticised French peasant food, while Brillat-Savarin's *Physiologie du Goût* (1826) expressed what Adam Gopnik describes as the great adventure of desire, designating the table as a place where a need becomes a want, where "we eat with our minds" (*Table Comes First*, 42). They promoted authentic food of humble origins, like Elizabeth David, whose regional Mediterranean cooking—paradoxically until then the reserve of refined taste—became the fascination of Anglo-American writers. Carol Bardenstein cites the privileged classes' cultural identification

[34] Despite the influence across Europe of *L'Art de la Cuisine au XIXe siècle* (1833) through which Antonin Carême elevated culinary art to a science (Mennell, 1996, 134), English cookbooks demonstrated an early concern with passing on culinary traditions, rather than recording fashionable trends.

[35] M.F.K. Fisher's translation of Brillat-Savarin's *The Physiology of Taste* was published in 1949.

with 'peasant' food as symptomatic of the "fluid formations and reconstructions that proliferate around food" (2002, 355). These formations are reflected in modern narratives that mingle personal stories with food tales.

Earlier, at the turn of the century, Elizabeth Robins Pennell had sustained this deference to continental cuisine at the expense of British cooking in her book *The Feasts of Autolycus: The Diary of a Greedy Woman* (1896), much as Elizabeth David was to do fifty years later in *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (1950).[36] A compilation of her culinary essays was re-issued in 1901 as *The Delights of Delicate Eating*, the title transitioning diplomatically for her sensitive Edwardian audience, from "greedy" to "delicate". Pennell was one of the first to present a cookbook in an overtly literary form. Her "Diary" was a celebration of good food with sufficient detail on the elaboration of specific dishes and menus to constitute a form of cookbook, haphazardly organized around meals, seasons, or ingredients. Adam Gopnik describes her lyrical composition as "short stories of mixed emotions" and intimate prose poems (*Table Comes First*, 69, 82); in her own terms: "It is rather a guide to the Beauty, the Poetry, that exists in the perfect dish, even as in the masterpiece of a Titian or a Swinburne." (6). Her place in the literary history of food has recently been reappraised, as she "paved the way for food writers that followed," according to Jacqueline Block Williams' introduction in the 2000 reprint of the work (Williams, 2000). Arguably a traitor to cooks of her day, she denounced women's incompetence in the kitchen, denigrating their lack of skill and taste, reinforced by her unconventional style and form, neither wholly recipe book nor domestic manual, nor diary.

Above all, Pennell showed no fear of appetite, taking a marked moral stance by denouncing the idea that gluttony was a "deadly sin", foreshadowing the works of Fisher. Her food descriptions emphasise its aesthetics and sensuality, to the point of romanticism. Each dish is a flight of fantasy, decrying the limits of British culinary imagination, unable to soar above "veal and ham pie" (*Feasts of Autolycus*, 1900, 69): "Let rosy radish give the touch of colour to satisfy the eye [...] still in its first virginal purity, tender, sweet, yet peppery" (19). Pennell takes us on exotic travels, leaving behind

[36] An exploration of the influence of Mediterranean culture on food writing will be made in part III.

"dark and sunless England", for the Marseille bouillabaisse born of Mediterranean light, anticipating Elizabeth David's siren call and embracing a modern idea of authenticity that "food should be in harmony with place and season" (137). Her book is romantic and impractical, its force lying in the imaginative evocation of foreign foodscapes.[37]

English society's curiosity for foreign food that developed in the inter-war years amongst intellectuals, artists and wealthy travellers, was extinguished by Second World War food rationing.[38] British women, like their American sisters, turned back to home cooking, but preparations became random as social and cultural norms were shaken. Nicola Humble explains that recipes were cut loose, no longer embedded in a signifying discourse, often without national or historical roots (Humble, 93). A symbolic association with rootlessness may be drawn in culinary memoirs with the apparently random interjection of recipes in personal diasporic stories, either within the narrative, as in the works of Abu-Jaber, or Narayan, or in paratextual appendices, as in Zonana's *Dream Homes*.

After World War II, ground-breaking writers propagated enlightened ideas about the thoughtful creation of gastronomical pleasure. The aesthetics evoked sensual food experiences around preparation, eating and sharing food, emphasizing the importance of the commensal experience in self-understanding. They changed the course of food writing as well as that of the female domestic voice, raising modern food writing to the level of literature through their attention to language, their promotion of universal values that were not limited to the question of food and eating, and which intentionally sought an association with a literary genre rather than cookery books. This is exemplified by Elizabeth David's inclusion, in *A Book of Mediterranean Food*, of sixteen literary passages, from canonical authors such as D. H. Lawrence, Lawrence Durrell and Arnold Bennett. David's election as Fellow of the British Royal Society of Literature in 1982 in recognition of her exquisite prose—her most prized honour, according to David—is illustrative of the literary heritage that precedes contemporary writings.

[37] Foodscape is a composite term borrowed from art history to indicate a metaphorical landscape of foods and their production methods and cultural associations (*Wiktionary*).
[38] The publication of guides, such as the Michelin Guides (1900), *La France Gastronomique* (1921), and the Gault and Millau Guides (1972) that created a literal and imaginary association between food and travel, were slowly heralding in the era of the itinerant gastronome.

Elizabeth David followed the tradition of food scholarship, travel writing and elegant self-expression, while elaborating the sensual pleasures of gastronomy. She revolutionised food tastes and habits, creating myths in a form of 'fantasy' literature as she introduced her homeland to Mediterranean food with luscious ingredients that were virtually unattainable in ration-stricken Britain: "in individual clear glass wine goblets, this fig salad is one of the most beautiful as well as one of the most exquisite of all fresh-fruit dishes" (*Mediterranean Food*, 170). Humble wrote of David's prose: "Her finely wrought, highly evocative style brought the glories of the food of the South alive for a significant group of food writers and enthusiasts at a moment when the imagination had been ground to a pap by the dreary realities of seemingly unending food shortages" (Humble, 127). Myth and fantasy colour the often idealized and sometimes poignantly nostalgic food descriptions memoirs offer. Steve Jones and Ben Taylor argue that it was David's, and contemporary writer Jane Grigson's, erudition and vision that went beyond the daily meal that raised their writing to food literature: "It was this desire to take food seriously [...] an appetite to explore the culture of food beyond the confines of domesticity, which enabled David and Grigson so successfully to occupy the 'ill-defined margin' between gastronomic literature and the cookery book, and to gesture towards the myths, histories and memorable meals which lay beyond the home. (Jones and Taylor, 178).

Although published more than thirty years after David's book, a work similar in culinary rigour and authenticity, though written with far greater freedom of style and expression—perhaps even eccentricity[39]—is Patience Gray's *Honey from a Weed: Fasting and Feasting in Tuscany, Catalonia, The Cyclades and Apulia* (1986). Angela Carter, writing in her review of Gray's books asserted: "Patience Gray helped to instigate the concept of the cookery book as literary form—part recipes, part travel book, part self-revelation, part art object. Now, some thirty years on, she has assembled what may be its culmination. *Honey from a Weed* is less a cookery book than a summing-up of the genre of the late modern British cookery book." (Carter, n.pag.). Like David, she accumulated the experience of multiple journeys and residences in the Mediterranean,

[39] Gray even defines eccentricity in relation to experience, in her case, essentially that of travel: "[...] living according to priorities established by one's own experience." (*Honey from a Weed*, 111)

as well as an intimate knowledge of its culinary traditions. Gray had published a recipe book of Mediterranean food shortly after David's work, yet while it sold more copies than *Mediterranean Food*, it did not embody the same universal message of David's manifesto, addressing "foreign" rather than "Mediterranean" food, and therefore did not achieve the same fame.[40]

Gray's heterogenous mix of chapters in *Honey from a Weed* weave a memoir comprising places of residence, landscapes and myths, classical food categories and specialities, making reference to the travels of other writers including Gertrude Stein—whose 'autobiography' of Toklas, she praises—David herself, to whom she refers for culinary expertise, and D. H. Lawrence, who celebrated the sensual Mediterranean past as "creatures of substance and not reminiscence" (*Honey from a Weed*, 109). Even the naïve line drawings are reminiscent of David's woodcuts with their mixture of pantheistic mysticism in which vegetation invades living and cooking spaces in a naïve exotic fantasy. Similar to David she also promotes authentic cooking and simple living that celebrates both fasting and feasting: "Abstinence, enjoyment, celebration, all have nature's approval; if you practice the first, you maintain what is priceless—enjoyment, and its crown, celebration." (*Honey from a Weed*, 327). During her travels she learns the true nature of classical, or traditional food "in which all forethought, selection, trouble, timing—the mechanics of creation—were erased by the disarming simplicity of the outcome, precipitating pleasure and delight." (109).

If David's leitmotifs were also pleasure and taste, her inflexibility concerning quality and ingredients and her criticism of English food and culinary tastes can be interpreted as some of the same cultural arrogance that Elizabeth Pennell demonstrated: "In England the spurious is preferred to the genuine." (*Feasts of Autolycus*, 1900, 254). David refused to: "translate each dish into the stuff of the local supermarket, robbing it of the particularity that gives it its dignity." (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 6).[41] Theirs were voices of defiance, articulated in the form of an aesthetic intransigence. David, nonetheless, kindled a spirit of culinary excitement that grew in the 1960s and crossed

[40] Patience Gray and Primrose Boyd. *Plats du Jour, or Foreign Food* (1957).
[41] That said, David does give indications of equivalent ingredients available in specific supermarkets, in certain of her articles, for example that from which the book's title is drawn "An Omelette and a Glass of Wine" (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 39).

class boundaries. Her style is both lyrical in her descriptions of places and atmospheres, and rigidly controlled in her injunctions, the meticulousness of her research, the precision of her instructions, and her careful evasion of intimate revelations: "The rice should be a beautiful yellow colour, and although moist, each grain should be separate." (*Mediterranean Food*, 96). Considered by Paul Levy to be the first of a class of what he called 'scholar cooks' in the 1970s and 1980s that included Claudia Roden and Madhur Jaffrey (Levy, 1986, 31), David set a standard of cultural counter-sophistication in the form of authentic 'peasant' fare.[42] As Julia Child summarized in the title of her encyclopedic *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* (Child et al.), cooking was an art and readers were called to the mastery of it (*Table Comes First*, 66). Their prose was crafted to be equal to the task.

Madhur Jaffrey has been described as the Elizabeth David of India, although respect for her country's traditions, and even adapting them for an English audience, makes her culinary and literary intentions antithetical to those of David who decried her country's cuisine and ineptitude in the kitchen, seeking to replace it with a cuisine of alien geographical origins and ingredients. Of Jaffrey's work, Nicola Humble writes: "Issues of history, regionality and tradition are dealt with lightly and a heathy balance is struck between the desire for authenticity and the need to create usable recipes." (191). Jaffrey is emblematic of the crucible of multiculturalism which England has formed since the 1980s, that has opened creative food to other cultures.

Claudia Roden's memoir-styled ethnic-specific cookbook, *The New Book of Middle Eastern Food* (1968, 2012) was written in a personal yet professional voice that made the unfamiliar not just appealing but also desirable and inspiring, as did its equation with travel to exotic places, citing culinary traditions as a form of access to personal and collective self-understanding that had a universal relevance, offering a literary frame of reference. While her main scholarly impulse is anthropological and diasporic, Roden's book is an example of an autobiographical cookbook, exemplified in her description of the traditional Egyptian dishes she prepared in Paris to recall her family's homeland: "Every dish filled the house with the smell of our old homes." (5).

[42] Scholar cooks are considered not only thorough and exhaustive in their research and rigorous in their approach to documenting a cuisine, they are also attentive to the quality of their writing and the narrative they create around their cooking story.

Cultural ambiance and personal history are elaborated through anecdotes, poems and proverbs that intersperse recipes. Her approach was academic yet personal: "I sought out people from all over the Middle East for recipes. I put down every word they said. If they said, 'Toast the hazelnuts in the frying pan [...]' that is how it went into the book [...] I have kept in the descriptions of ceremonies, rituals and myths" (5, 6). As the figurehead of a movement of writers of diasporic origin who dominate the culinary memoir genre, and an authority on Middle Eastern cooking, Roden makes an overt association between extended ethnic communities and foodways, weaving a narrative from her own culinary identity. Humble writes of Roden's community, once deeply-rooted in Egyptian culture and henceforth uprooted and dispersed:

> Her book is the virtually palpable record of the pain of a community cut off from its past, writing and re-writing its cultural self in the dishes it proposed. It is also an act of rescue, recording for posterity the essentially oral culinary traditions of her extended family of Egyptian—once Syrian-Jews (187).

Travel literature: foodways and spirit of place

> In food-song and travel-song the scene, the characters, and the opening dialogue are familiar enough: the inn is humble and is situated close to the banks of the radiant Loire [...] The cook-proprietress is where she should be, in the kitchen, cooking lunch. (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 203).

For Elizabeth David, an ode to an inn on the Loire serving good quality fresh food, was both a "food-song" and a "travel-song"; one went in search—in more ways than one—of such satisfying experiences. We will make a selective appraisal of the way in which culinary memoirs can be located on the same continuum as that of travel memoirs. Asked by journalist Rachel Cooke about the ambivalent importance of food in David's life, her nephew responded "[s]he was quite an ascetic person. Not at all greedy. She must have had her sensual side [...] The nearest I've got to an answer is to say that food conjured up other times, other places." (Cooke, n.pag.). She was motivated by revisiting travels around the Mediterranean. In contrast to the preceding inclusive history, food and travel come together in an inn on the Loire. Claudia Roden's is an example of the many memoir-cookbooks that have at their core, an exilic journey and diasporic condition. The evolution of food literature manifests a dichotomy between the

inertia of culinary traditions and institutions and the flux created by exilic movement and new forms of cuisine. To understand the notion of displacement and dislocation in culinary and cultural trends within food writing, we turn to the early twentieth century, and autobiographical travel books that evoke food. D. H. Lawrence's aphorism in *Sea and Sardinia*: "If one travels one eats" (131), is at the heart of a perceptible intersection between travel books and culinary memoirs. Food is at the centre of travel experiences, and travel, whether endotic or exotic, is at the heart of food, for equally true is the retort, if one eats one travels.

The works to which we will refer describe extended stays or periods of residence as well as of travel, by authors intent on capturing the spirit of place that Lawrence Durrell identified in his eponymous work, rather than communicating practical details. They evoke foodways as representations of mythical landscapes, spirituality, culture, interpersonal relations in the form of hospitality, and social communion. The narrator explores himself as he explores alterity: Diner writes that memoirs "include food as material items and symbols of identity, and the history of a group's ways with food goes far beyond an exploration of cooking and consumption. It amounts to a journey to the heart of its collective world." (Diner, 9-10). The community is a shaping force with which the individual—insider or outsider—must contend to make sense of her own identity.

Self-searching is a twentieth-century phenomenon, with roots in the cultural adventure of the Grand Tour undertaken by wealthy Americans and British on the 'Old Continent'. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the mystique of travel no longer fully resided in its exoticism, but henceforth also in the self-interrogation it incited. The myth of travel as a form of evasion began to expire, disenchants Michel Leiris, and exoticism provoked questions rather than seducing the traveller.[43] Food is observed, playing a predominantly illustrative role; it emerges as landscape, a form of natural cultural architecture, constructing metaphorical communities. In E. M. Forster's *The Hill of Devi* (1953[44]) as in D. H. Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia* (1921), food has an illustrative role. Forster describes his periods of residence in the Indian state of Dewas Senior in

[43] "Le mythe du voyage comme moyen d'évasion s'expire. L'exotisme interroge plus qu'il ne séduit" (Musée de Valence). See also Michel Leiris. *L'Âge d'homme*. Paris: Gallimard, 2014. 891.
[44] Although *The Hill of Devi* was published in 1953, the work describes Forster's travels to the remote Indian state of Dewas Senior in 1912, and again in 1921.

1912-1913 and 1921. As well as the descriptions of food in religious ceremonies, Forster includes an annotated diagram of a banquet tray filled with exotic dishes, to understand and recall, citing the flustered Miss Bates in *Emma*: "My tray was arranged somewhat as follows, but 'Jane, Jane, however shall we recollect the dishes?'" (*Hill of Devi*, 34). Similarly, Lawrence, in *Sea and Sardinia*, describes an iconic image that serves the narrator as a window to understanding the spirit of place and its people: dark and wretched, "night-stricken", earthly yet touched by an immanent grace, "delicate" and "luminous": "How the dark, greasy, night-stricken street seems to beam with those vegetables, all their fresh, delicate flesh of luminous vegetables piled there in the air" (24).

In later memoirs, the narrator eats in order to understand his connection to his origins through those of another culture. In Ernest Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast* (1964), and Lawrence Durrell's books of residence,[45] the narrator accesses the culture and its people, by sharing indigenous food, allowing him a critical distance from his own. Both Hemingway and Durrell are itinerant exiles, ambivalent about the importance of their origins. Although Durrell wrote for the English, he refused to write about the English (Brigham, 23). Similarly, D. H. Lawrence states: "I am English, and my Englishness is my very vision. But now I must go away if my soul is sightless forever, let it then be blind, rather than commit the vast wickedness of acquiescence" (Letter, 1915, quoted in Niven, 92). Durrell, Hemingway and even Lawrence seek a primitive metaphysical continuity in their places of exile that they consider has been lost in their societies of origin, like memoirists who seek connections in foodway traditions. It is the notion of continuity that food writers through time have sought to vehicle and that we find at the heart of their self-questioning.

In these works, there are no recipes nor a desire to discover a culinary heritage as such, yet food is presented as a deliberate strategy of exploration. Together they elaborate three stages of assimilation, in terms of place and people as well as food cultures. Forster's brief encounter with food describes an object that is presented as exotic, yet scarcely palatable. For Lawrence, food, an allegorical image of otherness, is

[45] We will focus essentially on Durrell's three island travel books: *Prospero's Cell: A guide to the landscape and manners of the island of Corfu* (1945), *Reflections on a Marine Venus* (1953), *Bitter Lemons* (1957; republished as *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus* in 1988).

rarely a shared experience beyond alimentary necessity and therefore precludes what Campanini et al. describe as reciprocal emotions that create a sense of belonging and identity.[46] Lawrence describes food as occupying two worlds, of us and them between which there is no bridge. Hemingway and Durrell, however, appropriate the 'other's' food as their own: they eat like their 'hosts'. Hemingway goes one step further in self-confrontation, assimilating otherness through eating and drinking, in a context of residence.

These observations lead us to a consideration of how these works may be interpreted as memoirs that weave contemplations of food into their narratives. Forster describes his experiences in India in meticulous detail, yet while it is undeniably a documentary account of his periods of sojourn, two aspects of his narrative hint at a more intimate and self-seeking memoir than his quaint tableau of a picturesque, eccentric society leads us to imagine. The first is his intimate focus on sensual detail, that of clothes, the coifing of a turban, the colour of a sari, for example. The second is Forster's construction of a narrative from his personal correspondence, mostly to his mother and other relatives. He chooses not to present his experience from the historical vantage point that thirty years' hindsight offers, but to share the fresh immediacy of the experiences he captured in his letters, with a dose of irony afforded by the lapse of time. The book is an experiential rather than a historical text, with the primary aim of capturing sensations and reactions. In collecting and annotating these letters into a volume and constructing a narrative around them, he reinhabits the young Forster who claimed that his time in India was "the great opportunity of [his] life" (*Hill of Devi*, 1953, 8). He returns to the past through his sensory recollections, including gustatory and emotional first impressions of a character-forging experience.

Unlike Forster who was anchored through family, as well as his academic and literary stature to his home country, England, D. H. Lawrence is a voice of rootless self-imposed exile, a condition that would become symptomatic of the literary landscape of recent memoirs.[47] In *Sea and Sardinia*, he discovers a people in search of a society

[46] "Partager les habitudes alimentaires [...] des préférences et aversions alimentaires, apporte le même sentiment d'appartenance et d'identité." My translation. (Campanini et al., 2011, 96).

[47] Forster recognized in Hemingway what he himself was trying to achieve, heralding Hemingway's work as, according to Alistair Niven "betokening the break-up of a shared assurance about permanent values in society" (92).

"outside the circuit of civilization" (Niven, 9) living in an industrially-backward society of peasant communities. The work is an observation of ethnographic quality against a backdrop of subjective experience. As R. P. Draper indicates, *Sea and Sardinia* allows us to observe the idiosyncratic Lawrence over a short period, against the Sardinian landscape, in which he finds a perpetuation of traditions, drawn by the continuity of a primitive society, connected to its past and the land, unaffected by the force of change that his home country has been unable to resist. His thirst for beauty and authentic spiritual communion with fellow man are frustrated by his severely denigrating personal judgement. Yet, in the moments when the force of his experience dominates, the reader receives as "keen a sense of actual experience as any traveller ever gave." (Draper, 173).

"The spirit of the place is a strange thing" says D. H. Lawrence (1923, 62), anticipating Lawrence Durrell's credo. It is the magnetic pull of this spirit that draws him, like Durrell, to seek self in other cultures.[48] Lawrence evokes a set of antithetical ideas around food, punctuated by an exaggerated repetitive pattern of hunger and eating: food that is alternately visually tantalizing and physically disgusting, local food that is sometimes delicious, more often, repulsive, and 'home' cooking with the *kitchenino* that he has his wife bring with them, the food which is either comforting and satiating or wholly unsatisfactory, the desire to discover disputing with the need to bring provisions from home, including a phial of melted butter for parsnips. The repeated opposition of warm and cold reflects his volatile spirit with which he accosts the Sardinian landscape and its people. He writes a memoir of contestation as well as self-confrontation that places the travel narrative on a secondary level. Ironically, in his anguished, self-preoccupied narrative, he finds to admire in Sardinia's café culture a sense that interactions are "all familiar and easy, without the modern self-consciousness" (*Sea and Sardinia*, 67), in other words, all that he seemingly strives but fails to attain; his memoir is a testimony to this struggle.

The apparent facility with which Ernest Hemingway integrates into French society, or at the least its peripheral expatriate artistic circle, suggests that he, himself, is not encumbered by that modern self-consciousness; however, his narratorial

[48] Other of Lawrence's travel books take him to Italy in *Twilight in Italy* (1916), and Mexico in *Mornings in Mexico* (1927), *Etruscan Places* (written in 1927 and published in 1932).

nonchalance belies a rigorous, even painstaking composition. We know that the project of *A Moveable Feast* and its writing composition involved a long maturation and remained central to his authorial aspirations throughout much of his career, dilemmas over historical accuracy and literary perfection preoccupying him for many years, most intensely in the completion of the text in the months preceding his death in July 1961. Its literary importance is undeniable, but, for Hemingway, it represented above all the autobiography that he would leave behind of his life. When Hemingway talks about writing his memoirs in several pieces of correspondence, Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin evaluates that we can safely assume Hemingway was referring to *A Moveable Feast* (Tavernier-Courbin, 14). Despite the evidence that Hemingway wrote, or at least revised, *A Moveable Feast* close to his death when both his creativity and clarity of mind were diminished due to his disturbed mental state, it is nonetheless curious that he chose to represent his life by a description of those brief years in Paris as a young writer.

This work, a small but intensely-lived fragment of his early life, is, in effect, a memoir. Indeed, his correspondence leads us to understand that Hemingway presaged in the 1920s, as he lived those short, intensely vivid years, that they would be the happiest period of his life[49] (Meyers, 31). He chose a fragment to represent the whole. In exploring the travel book tradition, it suffices here for us to understand how *A Moveable Feast* came to serve as both travel book and memoir and exhibit some of the elements that we observe in culinary memoirs. What he had found in Paris in those early years of his writing career was of sufficient importance that over time it had come to represent a form of eternal satisfaction. Hunger is central to the work and was seemingly satiated physically, spiritually and emotionally.[50] *A Moveable Feast* shares certain traits with culinary memoir, without recipes certainly, but in which food plays a healing role for Hemingway and his displaced compatriots in search of post-war comfort, and a bonding role amongst those suffering trauma and *mal de siècle*, that Gertrude Stein called the 'Lost Generation'. *A Moveable Feast* is the memoir of a quest for happiness, identity and a sense of belonging, themes that are central to recent memoirs. Hemingway retains a nostalgia for Paris and for French life that was focused not just on place, but also food

[49] The claim is reminiscent of the same emphatic statement by Forster about his time in India.
[50] We will return in later sections to the interpretation of *A Moveable Feast* as a trauma memoir, as well as to the notion it embodies of food as literary and literal nourishment.

and drink, represented by modest restaurants, offering abundant good food.[51] (Hily-Mane, 81). The travel memoir was part of his literary conscience for many years, satiating several cravings, including hunger:

> There is never any ending to Paris and the memory of each person who has lived in it differs from that of any other. We always returned to it [...] Paris was always worth it and you received return for whatever you brought to it. But this is how Paris was in the early days when we were very poor and very happy. (*Moveable Feast*, 211).

These closing lines seal a myth around the memoir and Hemingway's artistic creation, which Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin, has attempted to demystify. Similarly, culinary memoirs often seek to create myths around family foodways and culinary traditions as a source of self-understanding about questions of individual and collective identity.[52] Peter Messent sees Hemingway's work as a memoir that constructs the myth of a man confronting his artistic integrity and creativity alone in a foreign land. He writes: "*A Moveable Feast* represents the writer in a state of original grace" (1992, 166), a state recognizable in the gustatory cocoons of childhood tales such as those of Jaffrey and Narayan. However, Tavernier-Courbin's research into correspondence and the commentaries of contemporary critics dissipated discrepancies in the myth around the uncompromising artist that Hemingway sought to portray.

That Hemingway evolved the book, so the myth goes, from lost manuscripts retrieved from a trunk found in a storage room at the Ritz on a trip to Paris in 1957 was unlikely, as manuscript studies reveal that it was the work of his later years. Also, the reality of his financial situation indicates that he was not the poor writer struggling to make ends meet in an artist's Parisian garret that he describes, His correspondence did however reveal that he was ambivalent about the quality of his travel memoir, finding it alternately "damned good" and "unreadable". That the myth might have lent authenticity to what he wrote and argued for the purity of his motives, does not detract from the beautiful, sensual descriptions of the places he stayed in during his Paris years and the food that satiated his hunger. Hemingway was clearly conscious that *A Moveable*

[51] "une telle nostalgie des restaurants charmants et simples de Paris où on pouvait manger juste ce qu'on voulait, de la quantité qu'on voulait et boire avec le vin qu'on voulait" (Hily-Mane, 81). My translation.

[52] We will return to the notion of myth in the second section of part 1, in deconstructing discourse and again in our analysis of travel and displacement in part III.

Feast would be his "literary testament" (Tavernier-Courbin, 5), and one of the answers to why he chose this period may lie in its correspondence to a sensual awakening, coinciding with his first marriage, the exoticism of initiatory foreign travel, his discovery of French culinary delights and his immersion in the literary hotbed that Paris represented at that period for intellectual expatriates and artists, that spurred his writings in those early years.

Like Hemingway, the American nomad, eternally searching for roots, not necessarily his own,[53] and for whom travel was a means rather than an end, Lawrence Durrell was also a castaway whose self-imposed vagabondage gave birth to a collection of Mediterranean travel books. They contribute to the lineage of culinary memoirs, through their sensual pursuit of all that nourishes body and soul in Durrell's search for self through his literary exploration of the landscape with a profusion and intensity of poetic images. His writing resonates with D. H. Lawrence's *Sea and Sardinia*, which Durrell considered to be a rare "gem" for its evocation of place (*Spirit of Place*, 232). In the same article, "Landscape and Character" (1960), he analyses how to understand a place and its people through the spirit of place, in sensorial interaction with a dynamic landscape, "tasting the wines, cheeses, characters of the different countries" (231). His hedonism belies an underlying self-seeking, based on abandoning oneself to the influence of place and landscape: "travel with the eyes wide open and not too much factual information" (240), "which positively stifle[s] the growth of the soul" (237).

Durrell makes clear that the "magnetic fields" of the landscape (*Spirit of Place*, 238) communicate with his personality through sights and smells, like the omnipresent blue, and the scent of sage; however, key elements in his essay suggest that Durrell's island books are as much memoirs of inner journeys, as the travel logs of his sojourns around the Mediterranean. He stated that he was not so much a "travel writer" as a "residence writer", which required one to "reside and work your way through the ancient crust [...] of daily life" (*Spirit of Place*, 235), part of that "ancient crust" being the gathering, preparing and eating of the lands produce. In an article in 1974, he writes using an alimentary allusion: "In the real sense it is what is at stake—the peace of this

[53] "La passion d'Hemingway, c'est celle du nomade américain convaincu d'être chez lui de plein droit où il peut exercer son droit au bonheur." (Hily-Mane, 171). My translation.

magnetic island and the happiness of its inhabitants, of whom I was one. Is it too much to hope for? Must the lemons remain always bitter?" (Gifford and Durrell, 47). He became totally immersed in island life, ostensibly to understand its people who themselves are "reflections of their landscape" (*Spirit of Place*, 238), but also to explore his own "personal landscape of the heart" (237). These books of residence, abounding in sensorially rich, mystical details of the Mediterranean panorama, are an attempt to draw the map of his own inner landscape, with its hinterlands of dark recesses, some of which are merely suggested as part of a macrocosm, where the painful absence of a homeland resides—his lost birthplace in India, and his unadoptable British homeland. Stefan Herbrechter writing on the ethics of alterity in Durrell's works, claims that he was searching for his spiritual home, a parallel that we can draw with many contemporary narrators, notably Ehrlich and Zonana. The landscape throws Durrell's own inner labyrinth into relief: "Places are deeply emotionally important to a poet like Durrell" claims Frank Kersnowski, (147), for Durrell was preoccupied with all that he had lost, childhood, innocence, relations, expanding to embrace all of mankind: "His motive is to regain what has been lost and thereby not only to restore a heaven but also to give it a meaning it would not otherwise have merited" (Pine, 1994, 7). Memories are his personal and unutterable terrain, evoked through his "total sensual apprehension" as George Steiner describes it in Durrell's *New York Times* obituary.

Pine's assertion that the overriding theme of Durrell's world is anxiety is coherent with the existential and spiritual questioning that is inherent in Durrell's boundlessly lush descriptions of place and landscape that occupy these memoirs and dissimulate his troubled self-searching. The term 'memoir' might give cause for debate, for there is little of Durrell's emotional response, but like Elizabeth David, who offers similarly lush descriptions of the Mediterranean, one senses it through the fruit-laden landscape descriptions without revealing the author's private experiences. Durrell fervently explored the landscape through his pen, seeking in the mysticism of words what was missing in his life, associating nature with spirituality in "grey-gold fields of cherries and oranges and the delicate spire of Kasaphani's mosque" (*Bitter Lemons*, 52). Durrell and David were friends, David sending Durrell a copy of *A Book of Mediterranean Food* (1950), while Durrell considered David one of the "great religious pioneers" for having

introduced confidence and adventure into British post-war cooking (Timko, 83).[54] After an ecstatic description of the Saturday market at Uzès written in 1986, David recalls with irony that Durrell, a neighbour in the region, had reminded her how she had berated a similar market in Nîmes 30 years earlier vowing never to return (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 78). Durrell's association of religion and food confirms the sacred and numinous power with which he vests food in his life-writing. David, caught by the same mysticism, quotes from *Prospero's Cell*, his black olives tasting "as old as cold water" (*Mediterranean Food*, 149), using Durrell's experience as a surrogate for her own.

Durrell's trip with Panos in Cyprus, in which the latter is guided in his exploration of the countryside by his visual and olfactive recollections, is symbolic of Durrell's apprehension of nature in which "our journey was sharpened at every turn by the expectations of his memory" (*Bitter Lemons*, 246). Subconscious memories act as guides, creating what the Count in *Prospero's Cell* describes as "a portrait inexact in detail, containing bright splinters of landscape" (107). Durrell wrote in *Prospero's Cell*: "History with her painful and unexpected changes cannot be made to pity or remember; that is our function." (133). He created in his island works, a series of memoirs that record his inner wanderings and sensual reactions, that had haunted him since he left India by force, and England by choice. Memory's action and the writer's art work together to create discreet memoirs that tell of the reconciliation he discovered for body and soul on his travels.

Travel in residence memoirs takes the author to food, while in culinary memoirs, food takes the author on a journey, or stages an earlier journey, always endotic and often exotic. The exploitation of food by travel writers is more than an attempt to heighten local colour; it can be understood as a way of connecting with people through food in a search for one's own identity, as much as an act of commensality.

[54] The relationship between Durrell and David, spanning more than fifty years, was based on their mutual interest in cuisine and literature and took the form of numerous literary exchanges through books, prefaces and reviews. These exchanges and their friendship are detailed in Merrianne Timko's article "Lawrence Durrell's *Alexandria Quartet*: A Culinary Perspective".

2. Diverse forms of self-writing with food

> [T]o write about food is to write about the self. (Heller and Moran, 8).

In establishing the legitimacy of the claim of a literary heritage for culinary memoirs in the history of food writing, we traced its roots to the evolution of the cookbook, in its most poetic form, the gastronomic essay, and to examples of travel writing that correspond to a period when food became part of cultural and personal landscapes. The comparison is not binary however, for there are broad and diverse forms of culinary- and self-writing that comprise the genre of culinary memoirs, manifest in the contradictions inherent in many works and the essentially feminine authorship which brings with it its own diverse writing structures. These works are identifiable as culinary memoirs in their narrative structure, their discursive style, and the author's implicit or explicit literary intention. We will explore these aspects in the following chapters with a focus in section B on their literary quality through form, language and structure.

Composite forms

> Cookbooks can be used for practical matters, but for the most part they serve other purposes—reinforcing class identities, establishing communal historical narratives, providing, like other kinds of fiction, a diversion from the reader's personal experience of the usual. (Elias, 239).

Cookbooks, as we have seen, are the homeland of food writing, creating close colonies in the form of gastronomic writing. Culinary memoirs may be seen as one of many forms of literary artifice that discuss food, including letters, diary reminiscences, stories, oral histories, and journals, each one potentially representing a sub-genre in its own right. Julie Rak states that the genre is categorical, a "powerful organizing set of principles, preconceptions, and practices that without calling attention to itself, drives much of the way memoir is produced, consumed, and received" (Rak, 2013, loc. 418). Hybridizing, on the other hand is a breaking of genre boundaries (2013, loc. 432). David Duff, in a more constructive vein, defines generic hybridization as a melding: "The process by which two or more genres combine to form a new genre or subgenre; or by

which elements of two or more genres are combined in a single work" (Duff, xiv). We observe both definitions in memoirs, as literary innovation, and as an accidental blending of autobiography with self-inquiry. In the course of this study, we will discuss other works that resist simple categorisation.

Certain works are composite structures, made up of more than one literary genre. One such is *The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook*. Although it can be aligned with Traci Marie Kelly's category of autobiographical cookbooks, it remains nonetheless a work harbouring unique characteristics. Entitled 'cookbook', it is, in effect, a series of recipes, yet a linear reading also plunges one into the intimate world of Alice B. Toklas and Gertrude Stein with whom she lived and kept house in France for thirty-seven years, while describing their experiences in interwar Paris and wartime provincial France. Her work is an anthropological document of culinary traditions and inventiveness, over a period of wartime hardship, a memoir of food as a celebration and a vector for communication and even defiance from within their circle of artistic friends. It is also a treasury of anecdotes and personal memories in what emerges as rather less recipe book than life history. She writes, one senses, to reconcile past and present; some recipes are historic (101), some traditional French (113), and many personal, framed in rich, reminiscent details (117). Writing in the chapter "Treasures" on recipes that evoke special memories, she refers to an "underlying past" in the rejected recipes:

> [...] my collecting of treasures commenced so very, very long ago and that many of them, consequently, are no longer treasures [...] If taste is a matter of choice, the quantity of rejections for this book is neither flattering or encouraging. The wastepaper basket is too small. But if there are amongst the discards proofs of an underlying past, there will also, I hope, be signs of more recent perspicacity in those that are offered here. (*Toklas Cookbook*, 98).

The work crosses the boundaries separating gastronomic literature from domestic cookbook, while confounding the personal domain with an impersonal recipe format. It is an example of a hybrid recipe-memoir, like that of Elizabeth David, neither wholly recipe book, nor obviously memoir. Alice McLean's identification of Toklas' work as a gastronomic tour guide, a travelogue merged into cookbook (11), is an interpretation central to this thesis. She goes on to classify Toklas' work as on the border of several genres—cookbook, autobiography and literary experiment. It revolves mnemonically

and organizationally around recipes which are interwoven with a log of travels and dining adventures in France and America (92, 93).

Toklas' work has none of the universal gastronomic or philosophical authority of David's anthology, casting itself in the guise of a classic cookbook. However, its interpersonal dynamic offsets the façade of a quintessentially gendered cookbook, shifting it towards a work that fulfils the definition of a culinary memoir, with its mixture of memories, recipes and associated reflections, woven together to tell the tale of a segment of life. Toklas' work is interpreted by Barbara Will as an example of an inventive form of modernist autobiography. Although her first chapter is entitled "The French Tradition", and Maureen Duffy in her Preface, rates Toklas' work as one of her two all-time *classic* cookbooks,[55] Toklas experiments with both cookbook and autobiographical narrative within her diffident and self-effacing style, syntactically merging narrative and recipes. Toklas organizes her recipes around reminiscence of relationships, rather than any culinary logic, running the narrative into the recipe without any formal syntactical break: "Toklas so fully embeds her recipes in prose that the effect is almost that of fiction" (Humble, 159). Toklas invokes a stream-of-consciousness style of recipe writing as a continuous unpunctuated syntactical form, in which the title and recipe description are part of the sentence that precedes them, emphasising the symbiosis of the recipes with the narrative discourse, in a seamless link between narrative and text:

> we had our first meal without restrictions
>
> Quiche de Nancy
>
> Prepare the evening before baking a pie crust… (*Toklas Cookbook*, 66).
>
> Our hotel was on the Seine, its cooking was famous. It was there we had
>
> Sole de la Maison
>
> Poach gently in milk the fillets of sole with salt and pepper. (73).
>
> It was a woman who cooked, quietly and expertly. She showed me how to make
>
> Rillettes
>
> Grind in meat chopper … (84).

Toklas also disrupts paragraph structures with the use of one-sentence paragraphs to highlight the importance of a dish she has elaborated:

[55] The other is *Mrs Beeton's Book of Household Management*, whose only point in common with Toklas' work is the insight into domestic interiors that accompany the recipes. (*Toklas Cookbook*, vii). (My emphasis).

This is a royal dish.
It was a lunch to be remembered. (19).

The work raises the question of Toklas' role, as submissive cook or repressed writer. Toklas finally reveals something of herself at the end of the book, dropping her speculation on cookbook writing as real literature, as well as allowing herself to conceive that she herself might, in that case, be a writer:

> And now it amuses me to remember that the only confidence I ever gave was twice given, in the upper garden to two friends. The first one gaily responded, How very amusing. The other asked with no little alarm, But Alice, have you ever tried to write. As if a cookbook had anything to do with writing. (*Toklas Cookbook*, 280).

Toklas' work is both an intimate journal of her life with Gertrude Stein, her personal experience and emotions carefully dissimulated with the frequent use of indirect speech: "[…] she asked why we had Lavaret for dinner every evening. Gertrude Stein told her that it was the most carefully prepared dish on the menu" (93). It is also a practical book of recipes, each one as detailed as the anecdotes themselves. Despite her casual, matter-of-fact style, Toklas also insinuates a fantasy dimension. She dismisses a book she is invited to read as impractical, no doubt for its archaic recipe composition, yet she herself gives little consideration to the feasibility of making her recipes that list ingredients unknown or unobtainable for her American audience, as she explains in her introduction, "A Word with the Cook". Linda Simon, her biographer,[56] like critic Paul Levy, favoured the anecdotes that pepper the recipes, more than the recipes themselves, not forgetting her attention-seeking Haschich Fudge recipe (*Toklas Cookbook*, 259).

Like Toklas' work, Elizabeth David's corpus and, in particular, *The Book of Mediterranean Cooking*, require what Janet Theophano describes as "an imaginative leap" to read the author's life through a collection of recipes (2002, 118). John Thorne wrote of David's corpus: "Few food writers are so relentlessly anti-autobiographical […] except in the incidental or often luminous use of herself to build up the texture of understanding, self-revelation serves her no purpose." (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 7). Demonstrating the inventiveness inherent in the genre, David, like Toklas, uses intertextuality to dissimulate her private experience of Mediterranean exile, more self-consciously, using literary quotes and extracts from other people's travel adventures to

[56] Linda Simon. *The Biography of Alice B. Toklas* (1977).

encode her own experience, while her recipes capture the essence of her years of exotic vagabondage from England. The intertextuality, which adds a depth of dimension to the book, is precisely what encourages us to make that "imaginative leap", drawn in by the luscious descriptions that we know were a mirror reflection of her own experiences.

The Book of Mediterranean Food can be seen as an anthology of Mediterranean writings through the quality of her literary citations rather than a cookbook *per se*. Yet David invents a form of autobiographical writing, like Toklas, in which she writes about herself and her experience almost literally, between the lines of recipes and through the vicarious experiences of others, using her recipes as a means of self-expression (2012, 119). In her preface to the 1988 edition of her book, David reveals the extent to which this ostensibly impersonal book was an intimate memoir; it was her "personal antidote to the bleak conditions and acute food shortages of immediate post-war, ration-stricken England." While she hoped her readers would find solace in her words as well as spiritual sustenance, David's reconstitution of her Mediterranean experiences through recipes was a therapeutic self-writing experience anticipating the modern genre. The spirit of defiance with which she revisits her periods of foreign residence, stimulates her to write about herself in a covert form, choosing a classic domestic genre, deftly merged with an earlier male tradition of gastronomical scholarship and travel writing,[57] offering literary, historical and cultural context.

> Those who made an occasional marketing expedition [...] can buy Greek cheese and Calamata olives, Tahina paste from the Middle East [...] Egyptian brown beans, chick peas, Armenian ham, Spanish, Italian and Cypriot olive oil [...] even occasionally Neapolitan Mozzarella cheese, and honey from Mount Hymettus. How right Elizabeth Nicolas has been about the 'ignoble compromise with expediency' which I had not made. (*Mediterranean Food*, 12).

Each ingredient is a memory, a place, an experience, hidden in the recipes that she pains to describe with meticulous attention to authentic detail.[58] David's *Sunday Times* reviewer, Elizabeth Nicholas, on the occasion of the book's publication, praised it above all for its authenticity and uncompromising rendition of her memories. They were not so much recipes that her audience could cook, as an evocation of a richly sensual

[57] All of David's intertextual quotations are by male authors.
[58] Authenticity is key to questions of origins and identity, particularly regarding transparency and intention. We will explore this concept with regard to reader reception in section C.

and happy experience. She compares the British post-war ration of "flour and water soup seasoned solely with pepper; bread and gristle rissoles; dehydrated onions and carrots; corned beef toad-in-the-hole" (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 21), with her own basic Mediterranean pantry:

> [A] supply of elementary fresh things like eggs, onions, parsley, lemons, oranges and bread and tomatoes [...] an improvised meal [...] may be just a salad of anchovy fillets and black olives, hard-boiled eggs and olive oil, with bread and a bottle of wine [...] white beans or brown lentils for slow cooking, and usually a piece of cured sausage or bacon to add to them, with onions and oil and possibly a tomato. (24).

The publication of *Mediterranean Food* depended on the enlightened trust of one man, John Lehmann, who saw it for what it was, more than a cookbook, a true culinary memoir. The reader embarks on a unique journey of hinted intimacy and exotic culinary adventure. Her work is the quintessential model of the travel-food memoir that inspired future works.[59] David's single-handed achievement in revolutionizing food habits and tastes with her startling and uncompromising revelation of southern European food to the English (Humble, 128), did much in recasting the personal memoir into a unique form of culinary fantasy literature that sees its influence reflected in contemporary culinary memoirs such as the works by Frances Mayes.

Unlike most contemporary memoirs, Toklas and David omit stories of childhood, but express, nonetheless, an intensity of experience associated with childhood recollections, from which the authors also have sufficient distance at the time of writing to be able to exercise a degree of detachment. Their stories describe experiences of forced or self-imposed exile and displacement, in which food is correlated with strong emotions. Frances Mayes, like David, adopts a culture and culinary tradition in Italy, writing a memoir about integration in a small Italian village. However, talk of food traditions inevitably evokes sensorial childhood experiences, such that elements of Mayes' new life provoke memories of infancy, her mother and their traditions: "the Tuscan melons rival in flavor those Sugar Babies we picked hot out of the fields in South

[59] Nicola Humble categorizes the works thus: "While her first two books, particularly *The Book of Mediterranean Food*, were primarily travel memoirs, recalling sights, sounds and tastes that seem already lost, so powerful is the nostalgia with which they are viewed, the later books, especially *French Provincial Cooking*, are guides for travelers, full of advice about where to go and how to eat well when you get there" (Humble, 172).

Georgia when I was a child [...] I'm seven again, totally engrossed in shooting seeds between my fingers and spooning out circles from the dripping quarter moon of fruit" (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 63).

We can inventory other nuanced culinary self-writings as diverse as diaspora stories like *Miriam's Kitchen* by Elizabeth Ehrlich, who explores her Jewish roots in order to find herself and build a spiritual foundation for her children; homespun tales, or *A Homemade Life* by Molly Wizenberg, a memoir which proposes that emotional healing and well-being reside in home life and in particular, its culinary core. There are gastronomic odysseys that describe food as an art form, and chronicle self-transformations through eating, as in M.F.K. Fisher's *The Gastronomical Me*, which describes the aesthetics of female desire grounded in gastronomic pleasure.

The memoir landscape also includes stories by professional chefs, such as Gabrielle Hamilton's *Blood, Bones & Butter* (2012), Marcus Samuelsson's *Yes, Chef: A Memoir* (2012), and tales of culinary tourism such as *Eating Up Italy: Voyages on a Vespa* (2005), a culinary travelogue by Matthew Fort whose title summarizes the book's ambition. The latter culinary odysseys are not rooted in childhood or an intensely lived period, but recent culinary adventures, orchestrated and motivated by intellectual, academic or even financial aims. Julie Rak explains that genre provides the terms of recognition, organizing knowledge such that it responds to a market (2013, loc. 438). The text is itself a locus for a genre, situating it: "within the complex interrelations between texts, industries, audiences and historical context." (2013, loc. 589).

The term 'foodoir', used to define a memoir focused on a food adventure rather than memories, corresponds more precisely to this latter category of books in which the narrative centres on the exploration of current or recent experience, without pursuing roots or personal origins, essentially looking forward rather than backward. Examples of such books are *Eat, Pray, Love* (2007) by Elizabeth Gilbert, evoking healing post-divorce travels, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle, One Year of Seasonal Eating* (2007) by Barbara Kingsolver, describing a year of locavorous eating, Tracey Lawson's fascination with rural Italian lifestyle in *A Year in the Village of Eternity: The Lifestyle of Longevity in Campodimele, Italy* (2011), and Kathleen Flinn's Paris gap year love life in *The Sharper Your Knife, the Less You Cry: Love, Laughter, and Tears in Paris at the World's Most Famous Cooking School* (2007). The adventures are intense, but short-lived, often lasting

a year, and inspired by the modern fascination with food lifestyles, in a short-term, challenge-driven project. They associate travel, and the exploration of culinary cultures with a psychological challenge, in a varied, though less noble, display of food writing such as Julie Powell's *Julie and Julia: My Year of Cooking Dangerously* (2005), chronicling her personal challenge to cook Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* recipe collection. Powell made a compelling tale out of a relationship with a book rather than food in itself. (Elias, 240). Her melodramas: failures, frustrations and relationships form an uninhibited part of the culinary narrative. Cookbooks that once stood out as works of art or repositories of tradition have become celebrities by the way in which memoirists such as Powell have diverted the narrative for their own personal end.

Gender traits

Many of the forms of literary expression are feminine, raising questions about the place of women in the corpus. Historically and culturally, women have long been associated with domestic, private cooking, as well as with home and nurturing and their associated values. Contemporary writers, including journalists, academics and food writers, have re-appropriated the cookbook form, negotiating a new relationship with food than that with which they have been vested socially and culturally, combining it with the memoir as a space in which to share intimate questions about cultural integrity. Although written with hindsight, culinary memoirs adopt the confidentiality of a surrogate diary form, reinventing the traditional women's journal, which Virginia Woolf deemed capable of capturing the "loose drifting material of life" (Waugh, 1989, 99), that which is difficult to express without a literary device such as food writing. Stories and affiliated recipes allow women to anchor their self-exploration to a mainstay of traditional female competences, like Ehrlich does with the knowledge and memories of her mother-in-law. We explore their role as vectors of aesthetics, a role that is often jeopardized by the connotations of oppression and submission associated with the domestic status of the female cook.

Culinary memoirs are not feminist manifestos but rather expressions of feminine awareness centred on the value of women's experience and identity and their historical role within the domestic sphere. This is coherent with Linda Hutcheon's notion of lived

knowledge: "Besides the postmodern self-consciousness here about the paradoxes and problems of historical representation (and self-representation), there is also a very feminist awareness of the value of experience and the importance of its representation in the form of 'life-writing'" (1989, 167).[60] Roles that emerge in memoirs include homemaker, provider, nurturer, and agent of transmission.[61] Arlene Voski Avakian in *Through the Kitchen Window: Women Explore the Intimate Meanings of Food and Cooking* (2006) gives space to women writing about food experience, each vignette a form of micro-foodoir, the whole interwoven with recipes and poetry. The shortness of the pieces contributes to the creation of a narrational web that connects each writer, uniting their voices. These cameo food memories celebrate women's changing relationship to food, negating historical subservience: "Cooking becomes a vehicle for artistic expression, a source of sensual pleasure, an opportunity for resistance and even power" (*Through the Kitchen Window*, 6). The memoir is a trope for cooking itself, individual morsels contributing to the creation of a cohesive whole, as well as a medium for artistic expression around food and a space for sensual awareness. Sharon L. Jansen, in her piece entitled "Family Liked 1956: My Mother's Recipes", tells of her mother's recipe recording in letters full of annotations and implicit self-searching. The recipes are a discreet autobiography and literary work in themselves: "her special genre is the recipe [...] for my mother, a recipe represents an opportunity to experiment with composing as well as cooking. Her recipes are exercises in narration, description, analysis, even argument [...]" (*Through the Kitchen Window*, 55-56). The use of the letter form serves as a paratext providing comment and context. Recording recipes provides access to and analysis of distant memories: "the recipe has become a part of my mother's reminiscence and reflection [...] the text has become part of a larger whole, an occasion for comment at least, more often for a story into which the recipe has been inserted." (58). Her

[60] Postmodernism, as we can apply a definition to culinary memoirs, is a label related to aesthetic and cultural forms that displays characteristics such as reflexivity and self-consciousness, often mixing popular and 'high' art forms. (Natoli and Hutcheon, 1993). It is defendable to argue that culinary memoirs are both a popular genre and, as we hope to show in this study, also worthy of critical study. James Donald asserts that: "[l]iterature has been institutionalized as the point of reference around which relationships of difference and similarity within the field of writing were organized." (Donald, 168). He also advances the idea that popular literature is the residue that is left after true literature has been defined, or what people choose to read. (Donald, 169).

[61] We will explore the role of women in the transmission of traditions in section B of part II on origins and identity.

mother's dated observations of the family's appreciation turn the recipe recording into a living diary.

The informal written (as well as oral) tradition that women perpetuate serves to sustain memories, bond communities and create invisible ties to lost homelands. It can also be perceived as an act of courage and resistance. Fisher wrote in her war-time memoir-cookbook *How to Cook a Wolf*: "I believe that one of the most dignified ways we are capable of, to assert and then reassert our dignity in the face of poverty and war's fears and pains, is to nourish ourselves with all possible skill, delicacy and ever-increasing enjoyment." (1990, 350). As a genre, the works represent a collective voice in the face of an adversary. Gabrielle Hamilton in *Blood, Bones & Butter* and Ruth Reichl in *Tender at the Bone* describe the choice of a career in food following childhood trauma, while Anna Del Conte in *Risotto with Nettles* (2009) and Elizabeth David gain distance from war trauma by submerging themselves in recipes from happier times. For Fisher, cooking represented resistance and power: "The stove, the bins, the cupboards, I had learned forever, make an inviolable throne room. From them I ruled; temporarily I controlled. I felt powerful and I loved that feeling." (*Gastronomical Me*, 18).

However, the domestic female figure occupies a complex place in memoirs. Madeleine Kamman glorifies her female mentors, while Samuel Chamberlain sketches a voiceless fictional caricature of family cook. While the culinary memoir remains dominantly feminine, the intimate soul-searching memoir is also capable of being light-hearted and self-deprecating in such works as *A Homemade Life* by Molly Wizenberg, or *My Berlin Kitchen* (2013) by Luisa Weiss. The following quotations each express admiration for a female culinary role model, illustrating the divergence of style between men and women authors. The men express objective respect for women's savoir-faire, be it institutional from Samuel Chamberlain's perspective, or homely in the case of Marcus Samuelsson:

> [W]hen the final blessing of a perfect French cook appeared to make our domestic picture complete, we became utter sybarites, frank worshippers of the splendours of French cuisine. (*Clementine in the Kitchen*, 3).
>
> My grandmother's food was my introduction to rustic cooking. It had more levels of flavour than a twelve-year-old boy could understand. She didn't know how to build texture the ways chefs build texture, but she got it. In her body, she knew how to create those levels. (*Yes, Chef*, 23).

Their different language styles are a reflection of the fifty-five-year time-lapse between the two. They allude to transmitted knowledge that other women, notably cooks and professional writers recognize, acclaiming the keystones of culinary traditions. Zonana makes a personal, non-judgemental observation about her mother that she relates to her own intimate experience, highlighting the significance of food for her mother, so intimate and precious that she describes it in sacred terms, an "art", a "sacrament", a "dream": "Cooking was my mother's art, her sacrament. She dreamed food, lived it, even as today I dream words, seeking sustenance." (*Dream Homes*, 25).

Alice McLean identifies in Alice Toklas' work, what she defines as characteristics of the male food literature tradition, including mixed genre, gastronomic tourism, the aesthetic appreciation of food and table as art form, reverence for hospitality as mutually nourishing and a sense of humour (McLean, 102), in sum, a more social, more liberal and less intimate approach to the exploration of foodways, which mitigates the potential capacity of food traditions to shape individual identity. Not only was Toklas experimenting with a genre style when she fuses memoir, travelogue, cookbook and humorous anecdote, but also with a role model, anticipating that the devoted 'wifely' companion, cook and housekeeper becomes an avant-garde writer on Stein's death.

Few non-professional male cooks or food writers share or even engage, to the same degree as women, in an intimate search for identity through culinary traditions. The literary and aesthetic intentions of male authors that engage in culinary self-writing provide important insights into the genre as a whole. As well as a food-focused travel literature, and memoirs by chefs who recount their rise to the top, only a few works by male authors embody the intentions of culinary memoirs, confronting questions of identity in an exploration of personal foodways. The traditional separation between domestic and professional cuisine, family cooking and gastronomy still influences contemporary food writing in gender issues, tabling questions of intimacy and self-questioning.[62] When a woman writes about herself she is immediately engaged in "a double process of writing and rewriting the stories already written about her as a woman, as being passive or hidden" writes Nawar Al-Hassan Golley (2003, 61). This

[62] Gastronomic French chef Hélène Darroze wrote a unique pseudo-fictive memoir-cookbook, that asserts hers and the memoirs' femininity in a male-dominated world. (Darroze, 2013).

opposition has contributed to gendered memoir styles, in which passivity is confronted and overcome. The assertive style of blogger and restaurant owner, Molly Wizenberg waivers between a male and female posture, writing with an insistent frankness that implies more than sharing or confession, but rather a desire to create a public figure out of a private story. This idea is supported by the extended public display of intimate life events in her memoir and blog *Orangette*. Madeleine Kamman's intensely feminine memoir of her female mentors *When French Women Cook* (1973), written in a pre-Internet era resounds like a battle cry of women's creativity and resilience. The women remain private figures, characters in a play.

This lingering dichotomy between an intimate confessional style and an assertive show of force, offers the opportunity for women to reclaim the domestic food arena for themselves, and exploit its essential feminine force to create a space for female questioning. The situation is no doubt evolving for men too, offering an inverse scenario wherein expressions of sensibility and self-revelation are possible and able to surpass the images of rebel-to-fame chefs such as Anthony Bourdain[63] who evoke a violent, macho arena of professional cooking, void of respect for co-workers, consumers or the food itself. Interestingly, Bourdain in the 2007 edition of *Kitchen Confidential* notes that, in the predominantly male restaurant domain "Times have changed" (2007, 311). However, he considers the volatile, sensitive, socially inept personality of the typical chef, "people with appetites that go beyond food" remains unchanged (Bourdain, 311). For all his male posturing, the declaration of his own dysfunction in human interactions is poignant:[64] in the no-man's land of an airport lounge, he feels at home, "free, as it were, of the complications of normal human entanglement, untormented by the beauty, complexity and challenge of a big, magnificent and often painful world." (312). Bourdain's confessional tone approaches the essence of many female culinary memoirs.

Known for his comfort food recipes in books and food columns, food writer, Nigel Slater's memoir *Toast: the story of a boy's hunger* (2003) picks up the refrain of hunger, coming close to the spirit of the feminine corpus by exploring that hunger in association

[63] Although his brutal truth memoir *Kitchen Confidential: Adventures in the Culinary Underbelly* (2007) is a typically masculine text, Gabrielle Hamilton's *Blood, Bones & Butter* is proof that the style is not exclusively masculine, but reflects the male-dominated world in which she worked.
[64] A poignancy heightened by the author's suicide in July 2018, in an anonymous hotel room in France.

with emotional deprivation. Although a minority male voice within the genre, Slater's work suggests that the culinary memoir has the potential to move the male narrative towards a gendered middle ground that could be shared with women's stories. Although a food professional, he delimits his memoir of childhood trauma, ending his story at the threshold of adulthood. He uses his food memories to provide a situational anchor for poignant landmark moments. The resulting association of unassuming food anecdotes, with vivid trauma accompanies a discreet trail of emotional devastation. They are described with childlike naïvety and adult discretion, and the resulting emotions are hidden in what could be interpreted as male reserve or cultural restraint.

Slater's narrative is a litany of nostalgic recollections of the foods he ate as a child, associating nostalgia with banality, veiling pain of loss, in a form of homesickness, not for a physical place, but for the love and comfort of the functional family that he lost or, scarcely knew. Each food item is dwelt upon just long enough for the reader to taste it, but not penetrate the depths of the associated pain. In an interview, Slater has called *Toast* "the most intimate memoir that any food person has ever written".[65] To satisfy his emotional starvation, Slater must consciously make, what Barbara Waxman describes as, "an emotional home in food" (376), a state of grace often acknowledged by women in their role as provider. The typically female association of food and affection is reiterated throughout Slater's book, his descriptions marked by a disturbing mixture of tenderness and stark emotional honesty: "You can't smell a hug. You can't hear a cuddle. But if you could, I reckon it would smell and sound of warm bread-and-butter pudding" (*Toast*, 7). When his ailing mother tells him he must stay to school lunches rather than come home for her lunches, "It was like she had just taken a gun out and shot me" (82), and he admits that the three "fluffy, sugary marshmallows" that his father left by his bedside every night for two years after his mother's death as a gesture of surrogate affection did not come close to his mother's kiss that he so missed (102).

Two further male memoirs concerned with culinary traditions and questions of displacement and deprivation, were written in the 1940s: Samuel Chamberlain's, *Clementine in the Kitchen* (1943), and Angelo Pellegrini's *The Unprejudiced Palate:*

[65] AfterElton.com, 10 January 2005. AfterElton was a gay cultural website started in 2005 that was dissolved in 2015.

Classic Thoughts on Food and the Good Life (1948). Chamberlain was concerned with the preservation and transmission of the culinary traditions he discovered during a period of residence in France. However, in order to give the discourse credibility to his American audience, he creates a fictitious female character as the 'authentic' channel for his recipes. Chamberlain is thus respectably distanced from the kitchen, as befitting a man in the mid-twentieth century, while still expressing a certain scholarly gastronomical knowledge as the head of a well-to-do American family with a French cook as status symbol, whose social value as that of a prize possession increases when he flees the start of World War II in France to return to America with cook in tow. He depicts Clementine as a competent, discreet, angel-in-the-kitchen, (*Clementine in the Kitchen*, 7), both modern and traditional, only 'heard' in recipes. Chamberlain, her benevolent employer, speaks for her (91), but maintains credibility by giving ultimate culinary authority to iconic Clementine. Chamberlain even concocts a fairy tale happy ending for her, finding a suitable husband from her social class.

Angelo Pellegrini, teacher and early prophet of the Slow Food Movement,[66] published his work just five years after Chamberlain, but, as an Italian immigrant in America, his discourse was radically different. For Pellegrini, the kitchen was a gendered space which he occupied with his father without contradiction as an "enlightened peasant gourmet" with a "catholicity of taste and an instinctive appreciation of all that is good to eat and drink" (*Unprejudiced Palate*, 113). We will have come to our culinary senses, he claims, when we expel the idea of refinement and cooking as an art and forget Brillat-Savarin (17). He preached a parable of frugality, contrasting scarcity with the abundance that the immigrant encountered in America: 'The reality was more fantastic than the dream" (31).

Pellegrini was an ambassador of the 'Good Life' and his memoir, a mission: "the garden, the cellar, the simple pleasures of the dinner hour, a scrupulous husbandry in the home, the quiet joy of modest achievement" (*Unprejudiced Palate*, 233), involving humble hard work, performed with pride and dignity. He offers proof that even though women were historically the guardians of domestic moral values, within an immigrant

[66] The objective of the Slow Food Movement is to save and resuscitate individual gastronomic legacies, encouraging the pleasure of food in harmony with nature. It shares notions of respect for 'terroir' and tradition with culinary memoirs.

diasporic context, the banner could also be carried by a man. Much of his culinary traditions are centred outside the kitchen, in the garden he cultivates; they involve not just the preparation and the cooking but also the production of food.

His memoir, opinionated and personal, invites the reader to try his suggestions, and join him on forages, in cooking and at his table. The narrative is inflected with patriarchal Christian symbolism, which elevates the food he describes to religious stature, contrasting with the humility of many women's narratives that treat food with the same respect as Pellegrini, but also with female discretion. His father presided in the kitchen once a week like an "officiating priest" (*Unprejudiced Palate*, 101) at his woodstove altar. Of all the sermons he had ever heard, none had impressed him more that his father's "reverent care for the food that sustains our body" (101). He refers to "culinary self-development" (125) for cooks interested in culinary ideas rather than recipes. Apart from M.F.K. Fisher and Elizabeth David, few contemporary women writers take Pellegrini's audacious step of presenting their cuisine as a panacea, even though most culinary memoirs extol home cooking to be the solution for many moral wails and the conclusion to cautionary tales.

Although published in 1948, Pellegrini's work exposes modern questions around gender and food. Dichotomies serve to expose new realities, providing keys to understanding the genre, and enable memoirs to emerge from ambiguous, yet flexible and inventive forms. Certain are related to the form of the memoirs themselves, to be developed in section B, and include such opposites as autobiography interwoven with elements of fiction, the coexistence of poetry and prose, intimate narrative tales supported by recipes, narrative flow opposing fragmentation. Other paradoxes are concerned with content, including tradition and innovation, displacement and immobility, the role of women, portrayed through stereotypical profiles of kitchen-bound cooks, both submissive and assertive, central and peripheral in a patriarchal society, tacitly authoritative and obliging servant, like Narayan's grandmother, whose place was unquestionably in the kitchen, a nurturing presence for her grand-daughter and also "[a] proud, passionate cook [who] took no advice and brooked no questions" (*Monsoon Diary*, 16). Memoirs represent the immediacy of sensorial experience and the atemporality of traditions that represent personal experience and universal truths, offering both constraints and freedom for narrators.

3. Autobiography and memoir

This unique form of self-writing draws, as we have seen, on diverse influences and embraces multiple paradoxes. It is necessary however to understand the influence of the canonical definition of the autobiographical and memoir genres. We will review the genre's autobiographical dimension, to identify the traits of an established corpus, and highlight the unique characteristics of a mutating multi-form genre which draws on diverse textual practices. Philippe Lejeune considers this potential morphing an inherent part of the genre:

> Un genre littéraire est une catégorie en mouvement combinant une force d'inertie et de répétition (modèle canonique, horizons d'attente, que le définisseur tente de fixer…) et une force de changement : la pratique autobiographique s'inspire de l'ensemble des autres pratiques textuelles […] (Lejeune, 1988, 73).

Lejeune offers a definition of autobiography as a "Récit rétrospectif en prose qu'une personne réelle fait de sa propre existence, lorsqu'elle met l'accent sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur l'histoire de sa personnalité." (Lejeune, 1975, 14). According to Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, autobiography is the traditional discourse of the public sphere, while memoirs are the new more focused and penetrating form that has emerged as the rhetoric of the individual, personal and private (Smith and Watson, 2010, 2-3), importantly connecting the interior life of an individual story to the human condition (Larson and Fetherling in Rak, 2013, loc. 303).

Beyond exhibiting and conserving the traces of an individual life, autobiographical writings have other far-reaching ambitions that motivate authors to foreground memories and make them tangible, serving to assuage loss and rediscover wholeness, as a spiritual salvation through memory recall. Jean-Pierre Carron defines the role of autobiography as instilling harmony in discord[67] through the poetry that emerges from the 'creative' structuring of events. This impulse exemplifies the vital impulse to order, as well as alleviating the anxieties of disintegration, the overwhelming fear of not being able to put the pieces of a life together. Julie Rak confirms the bonding notions of sisterhood and community: "Memoir makes many people feel connected, and

[67] "La poétique, à travers la notion de 'l'agencement des faits' parvenait à instaurer une certaine concordance dans la discordance […]" (Carron, 129).

it connects individual feelings to group ideas. Therefore citizenship—and not narcissism—should be as key ways to understand the popularity of memoirs with many American readers at the present time." (2013, loc. 722).

Autobiographies are often more clearly rooted in a verifiable history, while memoirs focus on selective personal memories. Food offered in the form of recipes proposes, in some senses, the only verifiable element; recipes can be tested and tasted, serving as an anchor to the present. The more exotic the stories, the more important are the recipes that tie the narrative in a space accessible to the reader, such as the Indian fairy tale narratives of Madhur Jaffrey and Shoba Narayan, the other worldliness of Madeleine Kamman's vignettes of the discreet women in her life, or the larger-than-life trauma tale by Gabrielle Hamilton.

The unreliability of memory is part of the author's creative material: "autobiography is not a simple recapitulation of the past; it is also the attempt and the drama of a man struggling to reassemble himself in his own likeness at a certain moment of his history" (Gusdorf, 43). Culinary memoirs are frequently comprised wholly, or in part, of details of the narrator's childhood and her nascent personality which evolves with the food she eats. Colette Rossant's *Apricots on the Nile* is an example of the weaving of narrative elements of relative importance, childhood emotional trauma and interconnections with her family though food. Exiled from the kitchen, the stage for her emotional education, she relives the abandonment of which her mother is guilty. (*Apricots on the Nile,* 91). Her childhood represents an emotionally charged and intertwined set of memories that are primarily recalled as sensual experiences. The drama of the first chapter unfolds around attempts to feed her sick mother in a New York hospice and the tantalizingly fragrant and off-limits kitchen of her grandparents' apartment in Paris, highlighting the importance of food as a trigger and vehicle for connecting with a previous self.

For other authors, such as Elizabeth Ehrlich, constructing memories through an active respect for traditions was a way of recreating a link to the past. Her literary artifice is a form of diary that spans the Jewish religious calendar. She reflects, every month, on her call to stricter religious observance, sharing her innermost doubts with the reader. "Does this force me into a little sphere, the kitchen? I am only interested in the symbolism, so what if things get mixed up?" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 143). While her questions

are rhetorical, they are sincere, temporally anchored doubts about her spiritual journey, motivated by the sense that she cannot "bear to finally cut the string connecting those lives to those of my children." (53).

> Drawn to ritual, I may perhaps draw nearer to meaning. First principles are becoming interwoven in the fabric of daily life. I like this dimension, this reminder, this presence of something timeless, as my own clock ticks. Random, sparkling, incredible, the world can hold both reason and awe. (351).

Ehrlich uses the opposing terms of reason and awe to reflect the tensions that exist in her pursuit and her desire to show the complex scope of her questioning with absolute honesty, this latter quality becoming a leitmotif in contemporary memoirs. The autobiographical intention takes the form of a confession, as life-writing creates a space for vital self-exploration (Buss, 14): "With freedom and opportunity came new undreamed of choices—to believe in your grandparents' religion, or to believe in nothing […] or to embrace the trappings with all your heart, and make a corned beef sandwich on 'Jewish' rye the only religion you need." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 53). Ruth Reichl's *My Kitchen Year* also follows the progression of a year, beginning in the autumn, tracking the seasons with their subtle changes. The handwritten-styled text that introduces each recipe reveals intimate thoughts, notes on food, the landscape and its seasons, an informal, yet confessional commentary. Using these devices, memoirs avoid superficiality with an exploration of sentiments, and above all doubts.

Memoir as a genre

What then is specific to the memoir if opposed to autobiography? Helen Buss claims that "Autobiographies are written by famous people while memoirs are written by anonymous people (7). Although many culinary memoirists are previously unpublished and unknown authors, some have degrees of renown, as cooks, journalists or academics. Julie Rak discusses the amateur authorship of memoirs, citing Ben Yagoda: "[u]nder its auspices, voices and stories have emerged that, otherwise, would have been dull impersonal nonfiction tomes or forgettable autobiographical novels, or wouldn't have been expressed at all" (Yagoda quoted in Rak, 2013, loc. 288). [68] These critics argue,

[68] Ben Yagoda. *Memoir: A history*. London: Penguin, 2009, 240.

justifiably, that memoirs offer a unique and adapted forum of expression for self-enquiry especially in the context of diasporic or immigrant populations.

The relative anonymity of the authors, however, does not imply literary naïvety. On the contrary writers demonstrate an awareness of the way that culinary memoirs and food writing in general can serve their self-understanding, as a scenario in which food functions as an attractive or useful literary device. M.F.K. Fisher expressed her "gastronomic liberty" which "often saved [her], and [her] reason too" (*Gastronomical Me*, 183). Linda Furiya provides a form of meta-narrative, commenting the personal and collective purpose of memoir as a way of conveying a spiritual message about foodways and identity. In a chapter whose title evokes the newly-arrived diasporic condition in America, "The Hungry World", she describes how her grandfather had taught her father to eat: "Not the mechanics of eating with a dinner knife, but the spiritual aspect of eating thoughtfully, mindful of the source, and pacing oneself as in meditation or prayer [...] a smorgasbord for the senses, a boost to the spirit, a conduit of memories" (*Bento Box*, 45-46). She makes explicit the role of food and gives a moral justification to the memoir itself. Japanese home cooking was vital to their survival. It "symbolized something greater than sustenance. It was like a comforting familiarity that assured [her parents] they could make it through the daily challenges of living in a country not their own." (*Bento Box*, 95). Cooking was also vital for Sasha Martin's childhood survival, the word "knit" reflecting her writing enterprise: "In those days, food was never just sustenance: the very act of cooking knit our disparate lives together." (*Life from Scratch*, 49).

A number of critics[69] converge in defining autobiographies as introspective, and memoirs as evidential stories about people and events. Taking an opposing stance, the presence of food, that evokes archaic memories, generates a psychological complexity that surpasses the linear autobiographical narrative and promotes the idea of immersion in the private rather than the public sphere. Leslie Li's work is an example of this complex ambiguity, straddling the public life of her grandparents and the intimate difficulties of her relationship with her father. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson note that memoir is both a popular and a scholarly term, used often by publishing houses for

[69] Including Roy Pascal, quoted in Estelle C. Jelinek (1986), Marianne Gullestad (1996), Linda Anderson (2011) and David Rubin (1995).

works that target one moment or period of experience. While culinary memoirs are undoubtedly self-focused, they avoid the plunging narcissism of autobiographies by the presence of recipes that turn the focus of the narrative intermittently from the author to the reader. The self-absorbed tales of many authors are paused to describe recipes. The intense chapter on Wizenberg's love affair with a Frenchman, is followed by a recipe for *tarte tatin* with the blithe and telling comment "Don't be intimidated by its length. Its surprisingly simple. And I'm pretty verbose." (*Homemade Life*, 108).

Elizabeth David's corpus is exemplary of the association of professionalism with literary and culinary (not to mention artistic) aesthetics. Her discreet recipe book memoir of her years in Mediterranean countries, is interwoven with gustatory and sensual memories, in which she conveys a strong sense of self while evading autobiographical revelation. One can liken it to the contemporary literary and filmographic notion of *slice of life*, which focuses on a single period or aspect, and lacks complex plot development. Several childhood-centred memoirs demonstrate similar traits taking the narrator to the threshold of a new beginning and tying inconclusive knots in the narrative such as that of Madhur Jaffrey. Others such as Fisher offer the "density of language and self-reflexivity about the writing process yoking the authors standing as a professional writer with the work's status as an aesthetic object" that Smith and Watson discuss (2010, 3). Should memoirs be considered a secondary form of self-writing, half-fledged autobiography, the expected linear discourse impeded by the fragmented nature of women's lives and their deconstructed narratives? This supposition is implied in Estelle Jelinek's appraisal written in 1986:[70]

> Women's self-portraits are still classified as memoirs or reminiscences because of their episodic and anecdotal nature, their non-progressive narratives, their fragmented forms, their focus on others, and their lack of heroic self-assertion, all of which are considered obstacles to the shaping of a true autobiography. (Jelinek, 1986, 188).[71]

The defence perhaps lies in the uniqueness of culinary narratives that tell stories at several levels, of finding ways to satiate hunger, facing challenges of social and emotional alienation, and confronting existential questions, such as in works by

[70] Jelinek's publication precedes the memoir boom that Rak refers to (2013, loc. 120) and the frenzied ascension of culinary memoir publications.
[71] We will return to the idea of narrator as hero in part III on the aesthetics of the genre.

Hamilton, Martin and Rossant, which contradict Jelinek, demonstrating heroic self-assertion in the face of traumatic rootlessness. Elizabeth David's works, precursors of culinary self-writing and dissimulated examples of the same, bears none of the self-consciousness of culinary memoirs, such as that of Shoba Narayan: *Monsoon Dia*ry intimates personal as well as exotic revelations, 'monsoon', a euphemism for her Indian origins, and 'diary' suggestive of an intimate, personal recitation.

We are drawn to culinary memoirs by the same pull that draws us towards autobiographies, yet culinary memoirs typically sit alongside recipe books and not autobiographies in bookshops, suggesting that the pragmatic nature of recipes makes them incompatible with introspection. As a counter-argument, we can assert that not only do narratives of culinary memoirs provide practical guidance like cookbooks, offering physical as well as spiritual provision, nurturing values associated with family rituals, and formulas for understanding one's self, but also recipes, which give the narrator access to memories through the senses that relate to an inner landscape. Joyce Zonana's mother's repeated claim, "I have no memory" is counteracted by the sudden burst of recollection provoked by a sensual encounter with food. Gathering and preparing fallen mangoes from a Miami street: "'I loved the mangoes in Egypt', she says, and a reverie begins. She recalls the flowers, the scents, the sweetness in the air [...] the tangy green flesh recalling my mother's youth." (*Dream Homes*, 114-115).

Autobiographical in intention, culinary memoirs nonetheless share generic traits with cookbooks. They have evolved into inventive vehicles of transmission extending the scope of recipe books, telling intimate stories, offering moral guidance and reconnecting with living communities or even previous generations in a quest for identity. Like cookbooks, memoirs become palimpsests, "the original text overlaid with personal meanings and experiences" (Humble, 3), creating intimacy within an impersonal discourse that legitimizes the autobiographical dimension.[72] Between the title and the ingredients of each of Narayan's recipes, there is a story: *Inji Curry*: "[t]he story goes like this [...]" (*Monsoon Diary*, 95), *Okra Curry*: "[t]here is a legend [...]" (108), *Soft Idlis*: "[m]y grandfather fell in love [...]" (57). Other writers like Wizenberg and

[72] The dynamic relationship that is created between cook, text and food that is created will be discussed in section C of part I.

Weiss favour a personable blog-inspired style, coming closest to the translation of an oral tradition into a written discourse in declarations of complicity with her reader. The expectations of dialogue within the narrative and peritextual contract replicate those of Wizenberg's blog, a forum which, for her, was like "opening a window" onto the world:

> What started as a lonely endeavor came to feel like a conversation: a place where like-minded people could swap recipes and dinner plans, a kind of trading post where cakes and chickpeas are perfectly valid currency. I'm not the only one, I learned, who believes that the kitchen, and the food that comes from it, is where everything begins. (*Homemade Life*, 5).

Jean-Pierre Carron purports that the focus of autobiographical writing on events is to the detriment of intimacy.[73] While culinary memoirs are constructed around a selection of memories, their focus is on the emotional experience that they evoke. Far from being compromised or diminished, intimacy is the leitmotif of food memoirs. It aligns them with the self-focused intention of journals and diaries, the piecemeal nature of which can be found in the recipe snippets which punctuate the narrative as an invitation to cook. It ties the narrator and reader to a gesture and an occasion, imposing a structure that is symbolically linked to the quotidian task of creating meals, without adhering to what Carron highlights as the temporal disorder of journals. The paradoxical oscillation between fragmentation[74] and order is also in synergy with travel works associated with movement, including displacement and immobility, voyage and insularity.

Memoirs offer open-ended, rather than the accomplished stories of autobiographies, the narrative often bringing the narrator and reader to the point of a new beginning, on the brink of adulthood and professional life, such as in the works of Nigel Slater, Shoba Narayan and Madhur Jaffrey, while the narrative remains well-defined and the direction clear and intentional. Despite the apparently inquiring nature of culinary memoirs, the memoirist makes choices, defines objectives, and writes with hindsight, in contrast with the diary writer who explores as she writes.[75] Memoirs offer a linguistic space for two narrative activities, the narrator's task as observer and

[73] "L'accent est porté sur l'évènementiel au détriment de l'intime" (Carron, 2002, 26).
[74] Fragmentation will be elaborated in section B of part I.
[75] "Là où l'intimiste hésite et tâtonne, le mémorialiste fait des choix et marche vers un but très précis. Sa personne n'est pas en question." (Girard, 1963, 23). My translation.

participant. "Through its continuous weaving of self and world, self and history, self and significant others, the memoir sets up the 'meaningful narrative'" that Helen Buss explains provides freedom through clarity for complex identities (63).

Culinary memoirs also offer a form of collective cultural memory of foodways, places and people, but while they are more flexible in form than autobiographies, they scarcely adhere to Marianne Gullestad's claim that "autobiographies focus on the inner life of the narrator, memoirs focus on people or events" (1996, 11).[76] Philippe Lejeune insists on the collective memory that unfolds in memoirs,[77] and indeed, culinary memoirs offer repeated examples of individual stories told against the backdrop of community history. Although Elizabeth Ehrlich's story is highly personal, her mother-in-law's holocaust tale is a fragment of a tragedy shared by an immigrant community. This characteristic lends force to the argument of women's stewardship of culinary and other traditions, a sense of commitment that emerges in memoirs not only towards the close ethnic community but also towards the readership.

Feminine authorship

The formalizing of female experience into memoirs moves women's narratives from the margins of society, with domestic-focused amateur writings, to centre-stage where we typically find a male-focused master narrative performed. Analysing the autobiographical dimension as a female-dominated genre allows us to make a gender distinction with regard to the formative nature of self-writing. Male authored food memoirs are often written by chefs analysing their road to success, or writers employing narrative artifices, such as Chamberlain's depiction of a fictional voiceless heroine, against a backdrop of major world events.

The literary marginalization of women's memoirs can be related to the relative anonymity of the authors, for whom the memoir often represents an isolated work which diminishes literary credibility.[78] However, memoirists do not perceive themselves as

[76] See also Anderson, 2011, 113.
[77] "Le sujet traité fait défaut ou s'étend à l'histoire collective, on parlera de mémoires et non d'autobiographie [...]" (Miraux, 17)
[78] Philippe Lejeune explains that if the author has not written other non-autobiographical texts, the "anonymous" subject of the discourse loses an element of credibility in the autobiographical space (Lejeune, 1975, 23).

inferior autobiographers, unable to sustain a consummate piece of self-writing in the autobiographical tradition. Rather, they celebrate womanhood, affirming the hybrid memoir as a new form of self-writing. Their tone is generally marked by literary modesty, honesty and determination, which translates into a variety of styles, marked, for the most part, by transparency. Elizabeth Ehrlich lists the emotional states that she explores: "I inventory layers of translucent recollection evoking food, love, home, apocrypha, anger, ritual, laughter, conflict and regret. The result is a collage but also a way of life. That collage is my religion and it is what I am passing on." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xiii). Wizenberg is audacious and affirming: "That's why this book is called *A Homemade Life*. Because, in a sense, that's what we're building—you, me, all of us who like to stir and whisk—in the kitchen and at the table. In the simple acts of cooking and eating, we are creating and continuing the stories that are our lives." (*Homemade Life*, 6). Discreet women memoirists counterbalance the question of literary credibility by defining a genre that creates a new aesthetic around traditional female domestic roles that interplay memories with fictional narrative constructs.[79] The language of cooking gives women voice and credibility in an autobiographical space that Domna Stanton characterizes by notions of alterity and non-presence. (1987, in Anderson, 2011, 82).[80]

The idiom of textual fragmentation is, in effect, symbolic of the plurality of women's lives. Elizabeth Gilbert's memoir, *Eat, Love, Pray* (2006) is segmented into three distinct parts, each one describing a sojourn, the whole unfolding a voyage to three corners of the world in search of self, one part dedicated to eating, the whole dedicated to finding physical, emotional and spiritual healing, multiple parts to find a complete whole. She strings together one hundred and eight tales representing the one hundred and eight prayer beads in the Hindu and Buddhist *japa mala* necklace, a way of using fragmentation to structure her story, the purpose of the whole being, she says, to find balance: wholeness through the threading together of multiple elements and journeys, representing the multiple aspects of a woman's identity. Ruth Reichl in *My Kitchen Year*, threads together—with the yarn of a simple survival narrative—136 recipes that span the

[79] The fictional dimension of culinary memoirs will be explored in the section B of part I.
[80] Domna Stanton coined the term autogynography in her work *The Female Autograph: Theory and Practice of Autobiography from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century* (1987) to designate female authored autobiography that was excluded from canonical considerations of the genre.

course of a year. Madeleine Kamman in *When French Women Cook*, discreetly—in Elizabeth David fashion—tells the story of her early years in France using the cameos of women who shaped her moral character and culinary heritage through their nurturing cooking. Women represent a multiplicity which cannot be captured within a singular 'I'. Kamman's is not a single, but an eight-part polyphonic voice, a necessary entanglement of narratorial identities. Elizabeth Ehrlich repeats the notion of a "voyage of discontinuity and connection"[81] (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii): "The cadence [...] reflecting the differences, finally, between refugees like Miriam, and those like my grandmothers who emigrated at least somewhat by choice, and those who, like my parents, leave their immigrant homes to seek their own Americas." (xii).

This association of discontinuity and connection can be seen in memoirs in the mix of the personal with the contextual, the autobiographical narrative intersecting with history. In culinary memoirs we witness this double act of self-discovery and self-making, in the form of self-reading and self-writing. Ehrlich gives us the idea of a journey to shape her self-making. Her year-long spiritual itinerancy concludes with a reheated bowl of barley soup in a kosher-chaos kitchen; she concludes "It was as good as any soup I ever have had." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 361). The departures to the West for Narayan and Jaffrey are preceded by a negotiation and reconnection with their origins. Shoba Narayan writes: "I was ready to embrace Indian food, using childhood memories and hastily written recipes as my guide." (*Monsoon Diary*, 194). Smith and Watson explain that in secular communities, self-writing became self-making" (2010, 116). Kate Christensen's first memoir began as something seemingly *ad hoc* and unconnected. She writes "[I] started to write short essays about my life—ostensibly centered on food as a lifelong passion and favorite pastime but, in a deeper way, addressing my own experiences and memories". Seeing the reactions of her readers, she realized "I was offering comfort, somehow, simply by revealing truths about my own life." (*Blue Plate Special*, 4). Julie Rak explains that memoirs, particularly of non-celebrities, have the potential to change the imagined relations their readers have with the lives of others, wherein lies the source of their power and fascination (2013, loc. 140).

[81] Ehrlich's idea of a voyage of discontinuity and connection is central to that of narrative construction and we will return to in the course of this study.

Culinary memoirs propose creative mechanisms for feminine self-searching through their focus on food preparation and eating. They occupy a place within the evolution of the culinary imagination, as described by Sandra M. Gilbert in her eponymous work (2014) allowing for infinite imaginary possibilities within a codified imaginative space. Maureen Duffy, in the 1984 edition of The *Alice B. Toklas Cookbook* describes the work as a classic that takes our imagination down culinary lanes even if many of the dishes were inaccessible at the time of publication in 1954. Toklas herself often associates good food and abundance with fantasising, recalling arriving in Strasbourg after the Armistice, where food "was more like a dream than a reality. We were now in the land of plenty." (*Toklas Cookbook*, 67). Likewise, reading the cookbook Gertrude Stein gives her as a gift, was "abundantly satisfying [...] imagination being as lively as it is." (215). With her contemporary, Hemingway, and successors Fisher and David, Toklas gestures towards myths, histories and memorable meals which lay far beyond domesticity. They (re)define home and identity, while inviting the reader to experience the author's foodways through descriptions of food preparation and recipes as first-hand experience.

This first-hand experience enables women to constitute themselves as the subjects of literary discourse, from an ideological perspective, in order to resist being determined as objects, and escape the danger of dissolution through the fragmented plurality of their lives. Ehrlich expresses this fear several times in the meta-narrative that precedes each month, in itself symbolic of the menstrual cycle that associates women's identity with their power to (pro)create life:

> What is a woman? What is a woman supposed to be? My bubbe's life in the kitchen was a life of hard work [...] but there is more to life than soup [...]
>
> I resist assimilation, but that is a negative image, not a positive one [...] I follow the ritual, but at a distance [...]
>
> Like a mad escapee from an unknown century, I explain myself to myself, hoping for the right answer. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 147, 171, 293).

Linda Anderson proposes that autobiography offers not a universal model of subjectivity but constitute "local uses of the self" arising from the situation (2011, 85). Truth, as we have already considered, is less an issue than the purpose the autobiographical statement makes in the life of the author and readers**.** For Virginia Woolf, whom Anderson quotes, it is impossible to separate lives from their

representation. What we think of as true or historically-given is an ideological construct, that is, fiction (2011, 90). We can evoke, in particular, immigrant tales by writers such as Leslie Li, who struggles to understand her family history within the context of the unspoken, a conspiracy of silence even, broken only by scarcely translatable foodways: "Little did we know we were also ingesting Chinese cultural concepts and values. Eating our words if you like." (*Daughter of Heaven*, 25). She describes Chinese food and the act of eating as "one of intense yet subtly nonverbal communication" (186). Recipes can be a way of breaking the silence and making 'verbal' communications, although, paradoxically, in traditional recipe writing there was little use of the 'verb', absent from the list of ingredients and often in an impersonal infinitive form in the instructions, excluding the subjective position of the cook, typically a woman. This explains why many memoirists write recipes in an informal, inclusive and conversational style.

The autobiographical discretion of early memoir forms, such as those of Elizabeth David, M.F.K. Fisher and Madeleine Kamman, is symbolic of a resistance to the reductionist categorization of food narratives as of oppressed women. Anne Goldman in her critical work on autobiographical innovation, writes of the cookbook as autobiography (Goldman, 1996, chapter 1): "The very title of Fisher's autobiographical foray insists that to write about food is to write about the self" (Goldman, 1996, 4). Kamman expresses the sentiment of finding one's voice in her *Dedication*: "This book, in its own way a feminist manifesto, is dedicated to the millions of women who have spent millennia in kitchens creating unrecognized masterpieces" (*When French Women Cook*), while her work is a collection of memories with a call to join the ranks of women who have gone before. Kamman writes in an overture of intense nostalgia about the power of women to protect and convey community values:

> Nowhere but in the folds of my memory, and, in the pages that follow, I shall woo you [the France of her early years] and recreate you, bring back to life your women so that you know, dear readers, that there was once a civilization that was human, tender, enjoyable and loveable. (*When French Women Cook*, Introduction).

Culinary self-development: self-writing for survival

While women use the memoir for self-searching, Pellegrini's term "culinary self-development" describes the association of individual and collective values with the

production and consumption of socially and personally responsible food. For some writers such as Ehrlich, David, Li, Martin and Zonana, the act of writing is vital, a mechanism for working through and understanding their origins and identity. "The task of autobiography is first of all a task of personal salvation" claims James Olney (1980, 39).[82] Indeed, Francis Russell Hart notes that confessions abound in times of soul-searching and repeats that "memoir is the autobiography of survival" (1979, 195). He redefines life narrative as a drama of intentions that "interact and shift: offering three categories of autobiographical intention: confession, apology, memoir" (197). Confession and memories coincide in food memoirs, notably in the writings of the diasporic community. Telling the story of one's life, and answering existential questions in order to rewrite history in a way that appeases and makes sense enables narrators to move beyond trauma. As the only Asian family in her Indiana hometown, Linda Furiya's story of her alienation, for example, is one of ethnic solitude, arising less from her family's clumsy interactions with Midwestern American society than with the self-imposed isolation in which her parents chose to live, to preserve their link with their homeland.

Conserving artefacts from the past is, for the diaspora or displaced person, a gesture of reassurance, a tool for planting roots, for consolidating a fragmented identity, as Ehrlich attests in her need to create a moral and spiritual foundation. It is a curatorial act in which, in the case of culinary memoirs, recipes and their associated rituals are recorded as a way of preserving the past, specific and personal events and community traditions. The social upheaval engendered by wars precipitates an urgent quest to recreate social and individual order that has been challenged or destroyed. As in many ethnographic cookbooks, recipes and their associated rituals are recorded in a gesture of preservation. Links are created that transform notions of space and identity creating new possibilities and more importantly, new pleasures that counterbalance regret or nostalgia.

The quest takes the narrator to food, and food engenders a sense of belonging to which the narrator associated herself with varying degrees of satisfaction. Cooking, for example, saves the older, first generation immigrants, from loss of hope, salvaging pride

[82] In this current discussion, the use of the term 'autobiography' is understood and used to mean 'autobiographical writing'—about the self—that also embraces memoir.

and dignity and tying them to a living family and a present community. Ehrlich's mother-in-law is:

> A keeper of rituals and recipes and of stories, she cooks to recreate a lost world, and to prove that unimaginable loss is not the end of everything. She is motivated by duty to ancestors and descendants, by memory and obligation and an impossible wish to make the world whole. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii).

The culinary memoir offers the possibility of documenting a set of foodways that serve as a testing ground for questions of cultural affiliation and an emotional safety net. The act of writing down recipes extracts the rituals from the grips of nostalgia, introducing logical and cultural codification and personal re-appropriation. While Zonana's autobiography is a coming to terms with contradictory and anachronistic aspects of her family's identity that she had previously rejected, her recipes gradually become, for her, a family legacy, albeit held with some reserve and trepidation, particularly given the fragility and ephemerality of her material inheritance, made vulnerable by multiple house moves and even natural disasters. She associates herself with her family and community in her food tales with the plural personal pronoun: "Need I say, we like it lemony, salty, generously spiked with cumin" (*Dream Homes*, 209, 218). Throughout a nomadic existence in which she trails and finally loses her meagre diasporic vestiges of exile that embody remnants of her inheritance, she learns to cook her favourite childhood dishes, such as *tabbouleh*, and, above all, take sensual pleasure in their preparation, as well as acknowledging gratitude: "When I had finished, I would gratefully lick my fingers, savouring the bits of bulgur and parsley, the tang of lemon, and the warmth of the cumin." (137).

The idea of hybridity is imbricated in the discursive positions and material locations that are in constant movement throughout Zonana's personal culinary narrative as in many others. She describes her starting point as "fragments of stories and tiny pieces of moveable property [...] These are my heirlooms, my relics of the past" (18). Food becomes something that transcends property and locations, an immaterial possession, symbolized in memories of foodways that are preserved in recipes, rituals and sensorial recollections, that she rediscovers and which enables her to locate her true identity. At the end of her narrative journey, she is able to welcome her family for her

first Rosh Hashanah meal that represents her hybrid identity, uniting Egyptian origins and American assimilation.

Many culinary memoirs move irrevocably towards a positively charged denouement. They fall undeniably into the category of feel-good literature[83] which procures feelings of satisfaction for the writer as well as for the reader, within a narratorial agenda tracing origins. Although often only scraps of life, the ensemble ends at a point where the circumstances point to a favourable future for the narrator. Narrators have typically found cultural and familial well-being; Narayan and Zonana conclude their memoirs with a meal, in which harmony and satisfaction reign. Narayan writes, "I spooned the dal-rice into my mouth and licked my lips, perfectly content [...] I had a glass of wine and Ram by my side. For now, this was enough. For now, this was bliss" (*Monsoon Diary*, 223). Zonana's Rosh Hashanah meal is, we must believe, the end of her present odyssey: "When my family arrives, I am ready to lead the prayers with assurance, gratitude, and joy" (203). The values endorsed, while related to family foodways, generally embrace universally accepted responsible and benevolent conduct, and the idea of making sense of an inherited piece-meal identity. It is a sign of the inconclusive, if satisfactory, nature of memoirs that certain authors have published a second memoir to take the story further into adulthood, revealing new complexity and nuancing earlier assumptions and conclusions.

By the mere juxtaposition of culinary and personal histories, culinary memoirs can be considered a hybrid genre, exploring a combination that has been little studied in literary analysis. The crossover between the memoir genre and food writing can be seen as a reflection of a postmodern preoccupation with fluctuations, movement and social change. Simon Malpas describes "[e]clectically piecing together patchworks of images and signs to produce our identities" (Malpas, 1), that he associates with a certain cultural permissiveness. Culinary memoirs are more selective than permissive, choosing memories that anchor or define identity from a set of family traditions suggesting the "informed naïvety" and "pragmatic idealism" that Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker describe in relation to meta- or post-postmodernism (2010). As such,

[83] Literature offering a positive and optimistic vision of life, that we will explore in more depth in part IV.

memoirs can be seen to constitute a neo-romantic discourse which focuses on authenticity, and a preoccupation with the individual in relation to her past, in contrast with the negation of the individual in globalized societies.

The hybrid nature of culinary memoirs emerged as food writing evolved with self-writing that, by nature of its introspection, draws the form towards the realm of travel literature. The memoirs describe the discontinuities, mobility, and transcultural hybridity of subjects-in-process (Smith and Watson, 2010, 125), those who are seeking their identities, often across hybrid spaces such as borders. Their diversity of literary and discursive style is similar to that of travel literature in the plasticity with which it draws form and inspiration from other genres. Vanessa Guignery writes of travel literature as a genre of divese works which: "brouillent les codes, font fi des frontières ontologiques et jettent le trouble sur l'origine de la voix" (Guignery, 33). As much as "[t]ravel writing is the beggar of literary forms; it borrows from the memoir, reportage and, most important, the novel" (Buford, n.pag.), culinary and travel memoirs are both products of a geographically-specific culture, creating a hybrid mix from genres such as autobiography, documentary, historical narratives, fiction and essays (Graves, 183), expressing a form of escapism from an unstable world, as well as the pleasure of a story well-told.

In this section, we have exposed the complex hybrid nature of the genre. It could be argued that the presence of multiple paradoxes destabilises the genre. If more fragile, it may be susceptible to transformation and absorption by other genres or even simply dissipation. Also, is the blurring or dissolution of generic boundaries an indication of postmodern realism or a unique form of self-writing that will grow into a solidly anchored genre? A textual analysis of the form and quality of the genre's discourse in the next section, and the influences that it assimilates, will help answer these questions. The memoir, at the least, with its fluid transitions between literary boundaries, acts as a microcosmic representation of the genre itself, which can only achieve perennial credibility as a genre if it succeeds in weaving diverse literary elements into a coherent discourse around ostensibly antithetical and paradoxical themes, such as that of rootedness within displacement, finding wholeness within fragmentation.

B. Discourse analysis

> The thing that makes these texts autobiographical is the reflexivity of the authors, and the literariness of their texts (Rak, 2004, 308).

Julie Rak draws our attention to the fact that a narrative is not autobiographical simply by nature of the author's tendency to and capacity in self-examination, but also by the literariness of the text, its skill in enthralling its readers with stories of personal origins, self-development and reflections on their present lives. In this section we will analyse the ways in which three aspects of culinary memoirs, form, language and narrative structure, reveal the degree of literariness[84] of culinary memoirs. We will explore the literary intention and quality of the genre in terms of the characteristics that distinguish them from autobiography and pure food writing, notably their fictional dimension and use of narrative as a vehicle for moral values. While the culinary memoirs cannot be considered purely fiction, myth, diary, practical manual or travel essay in any pragmatic sense, they contain something of all of these genres from specific perspectives. With their focus on episodes and fragments of lives, memoirs highlight their relevance as autobiographical productions of their time within an often-splintered social context, and also their popularity as a vicarious readerly experience. However, their status as a fashionable sub-genre of autobiography as well as a form of popular literature, at least for a certain population of *foodies*,[85] suggests that the literariness of the genre could be compromised.

As discussed, the memoir genre adheres to certain rules. While the particularities of culinary memoirs fall within the definition of these rules, these memoirs are evaluated as examples of a specific genre, yet considered inferior literature within the larger corpus, or as "a marginal form of a marginal discourse" (Buss, xv). A hybrid genre is necessarily non-mainstream before it acquires a substantial corpus and becomes recognized as such. The multiplicity of themes addressed in culinary memoirs, from

[84] Literariness is defined as pertaining to, or of the nature of books and writings, in which carefully composed expression and form, in connection with ideas of permanent and universal interest, are essential features of poetry, novels, history, biography, and essays.
[85] Foodies have a keen and refined interest in food that surpasses basic needs for sustenance.

questions of origins and identity, diaspora and displacement to those of memory recall and its artifices, invites us to situate and evaluate their literary relevance.

1. Literary form

> Passionate, contrary, innovative, undefined: memoir today has the energy of a literary movement, recalling past artistic innovation that initiated new ways of seeing [...] indeed, we might be living in the age of memoir. (Larson, 2007, 21).

Thomas Larson acclaims the energy of innovation in contemporary memoirs that gives it the vitality of a new literary movement that challenges existing genres. Culinary memoirs are, for the majority of works in our corpus, ostensibly more memoir than cookbook if one considers the small proportion of pages dedicated to food descriptions and recipes, compared to the autobiographical content. They scarcely stand comparison with seductively illustrated cookery books, for they include few images or food photography. If they are less than cookbooks, they are, undeniably more than memoirs in the traditional sense. They articulate myths around food and origins and vehicle values related to the affirmation of identity. The memoir, as a life-writing practice, is typically associated with history rather than literature, considered, according to Helen Buss, a historical resource rather than historical discourse (Buss, 2): "It bridges the typical strategies of historical and literary discourses in order to establish necessary connections between the private and the public, the personal and the political" (3), which is often a history from which women feel their experience has been excluded. The memoir, according to Francis Russell Hart is "the personalizing of history; the historicizing of the personal [...] the personal act of repossessing a public world, historical, institutional, collective" (1979, 193). Memoirs bring together diverse discourses, especially in the blending of literary and historical narratives, the inclusion of psychological and sociological concepts, and, notably, the use of both factual and imaginative language. They are also an attempt to position a self-defining discourse within a shifting cultural context.

Through the eclecticism of the genre, one identifies three dominant axes for considering culinary memoirs as literature: the aesthetics of the culinary art, with

traditions and values they embody; their autobiographical nature that incites empathetic reading, in which other people's narratives are guides to self-understanding, self-improvement and self-healing, creating order and soothing diasporic anxiety; and the vicarious exploration of roots and identity that evoke the need to assuage emotional and spiritual hunger, be it conditional on women's situations, on post-war hunger or of familial dysfunctionality. The quintessence of these elements, including an attention to aesthetics, an intimate autobiographical confession and a focus on roots, is found in a passage in M.F.K. Fisher's *The Gastronomical Me*, in which she recalls a moment of intense emotion as a child when she finds herself alone with her father and her sister for the first time. The event is recalled with vivid sensual detail: "And still the warm round peach pie and the cool yellow cream we ate together that August night live in our heart's palates, succulent, secret, delicious." The meal was simple, unpretentious, "the three of us in the deep-green twilight". It represented the generous, sensual pleasure that became Fisher's credo. It was "one of the nicest suppers I have ever eaten." (*Gastronomical Me*, 8). The commensal act and sensual experience turn remembering into an active process as well as a creative leap of the imagination, confirming Buss' claim that "[t]he writing of memory is a literary enterprise" (Buss, 19), one that creates narratives of fictional, mythical and poetic proportions from memoirs' two-branched roots, those of autobiography and of cookbooks. Although we have seen that this heritage is historically hierarchical, our study reveals that the creativity of form suggests a horizontal rhizomatic approach[86] that branches out laterally absorbing elements from various literary genres.

Histories and childhood memories – truth or fiction?

> [N]o memoirist writes for long without experiencing an unsettling disbelief about the reliability of memory (Hampl, 22).

[86] The term is used by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in the 'Capitalism and Schizophrenia' series of *A Thousand Plateaus* (*Mille Plateaux*, 1980) to describe the multiplicities that are not simply attributes of an assumed unity, such as 'multiple identities', opposing the rhizome to the root-tree, arguing that this Western notion of binary division excluded the creative deterritorializations and connections that help us to describe multiplicities beyond the botanical realm, of the type that we discover in the hybrid form of culinary memoirs.

At the core of culinary memoirs and their creativity is the need to reveal, order and understand childhood memories. As discussed in the Introduction, the majority of culinary memoirs have either a partial or total focus on childhood. The representation of these memories is an artful attempt to capture fragments of memory and weave them into a coherent story often of exile and displacement.[87] It is within this creative space that Salman Rushdie's imaginary homelands are born (1991, 12), offering a metaphor for half-remembered experiences. Imaginary homelands are more than nostalgically recalled, idealized, geographically-inspired locations, they can also be temporally located, morally reassuring memory locations such as childhood anecdotes. A significant part of culinary memoirs is dedicated to recalling, in short, non-linear extracts, memories of childhood that evoke the intimate family sphere and through which community identities are also transmitted through stories, myths, and cultural practices. Marianne Gullestad writes: "Being in touch with the "child within" can imply the reinvention of family practices and the reinforcement of the group identities that went along with them" (Gullestad, 9). Reinventing family foodways often occurs through the recreation of recipes. The examples are numerous: Molly Wizenberg revisits each dish corresponding to childhood memories of moments with her late father. In a summer of reconciliation with her mother, Sasha Martin starts a recipe journal while "reaping the recipes of [her] Italian and Hungarian relatives" (*Life from Scratch*, 155). In it, "[r]ecipe by recipe, the food gradually became less Julia Child and more like that of my childhood" (156), less dependent on culinary guides and more on her mother's influence. Childhood memories thus comprise several sources of imaginative construction, as Helen Buss describes it, a dialogue between the self and others (2002, xvii). Reminiscing becomes a socio-interactional activity, revealing interpersonal relatedness through the construction of shared activities. "Sharing our past experiences with others is an important part of creating shared histories and interpersonal bonds" explains David Rubin (356), giving us the possibility to draw sense from fragments.

[87] Boris Cyrulnik describes this narrative construction based-memory selection, as a necessary act for the diaspora and one that renders memories construction ultimately fictional. "Qu'elle soit collective ou individuelle, la mémoire est intentionnelle : elle va chercher dans le passé les faits qui donnent forme à ce qu'on éprouve au présent." (Cyrulnik, 188).

Childhood can also be associated with a previous identity in the case where displacement represents a detachment from a former self that is lost or compromised. The culinary memoir can then be seen as a sort of Bildungs-memoir, in which identities must be reset with each consecutive and often devastating move. Diana Abu-Jaber, Sasha Martin and Luisa Weiss endure the vagaries of their parents' volatile emotional circumstances, moving house, state and country too often for them to grow roots. Leslie Li's story of traditional China and modern America (*Daughter of Heaven*, 175), a symbolically charged vacillation between biography and autobiography, highlights the disparity between the child her father wanted her to be and the woman she becomes. She talks about telling the story of her grandfather, while the narrative tips and sways between his story and that of her grandmother, and ultimately foregrounds the troubled relationship she had with her father. She describes a childhood humiliation when she and her sister are made to dress fancily and take an extravagant gift to a friend's party. Her own shame is amplified by that which she feels for her father who is belittled and infantilised by the neighbour's explanation of correct American etiquette: "I could feel the box of chocolates I gripped in my hand melting in the heat of my shame to have a grown man, an American man, tell my father, a grown man, a Chinese man, what to do and what not to do [...]" (*Daughter of Heaven*, 70-71). He was at that moment, no longer her father, but a child. The foreignness of their immigrant experiences is diminished by revisiting childhood traumas and foodways to reconnect with, and reconcile, previous identities.

Reconciliation with one's earlier identity is correlated with the importance of creating a coherent story. While some early memories evoke what appears to be idealized childhoods, such as the never-ending gastronomic feasts described by Madhur Jaffrey and Shoba Narayan, narrators' origins are often sufficiently multi-faceted to sustain a collage of realistic impressions, such that these memories do not need to be nuanced. Luisa Weiss, for example, is able to marry her extremely disparate cultural origins into one credible harmonious existence by drawing on the most nourishing aspects of her childhood, in terms of place and lifestyle, manifested in the recipes that she recreates. She proposes the tomato sauce that she claimed was her father's and about whose origin her parents would argue, drawing the best from that portent of failure, at least for her: "it was nice hearing their voices in the same room" (*Berlin Kitchen*, 17). The

recipe has elements she needs, simplicity, mellowness and sweetness (18). In returning to their childhood, authors seek a single irrefutable image that will serve as an anchor to make sense of their lives. Amplifying aspects can serve to create a balanced picture: on a microcosmic level, winding up a chapter with a recipe creates a conclusion to the preceding story that is coherent with the genre. This reminder of a pursuit for coherence is somewhat lost when recipes are grouped at the end of the memoir. The two authors in our principal corpus, Jaffrey and Zonana, who wrap up the book, rather than each chapter, with recipes, also illustrate their narratives with family photographs as though the pictures served a similar role of anchoring in reality, punctuating the narrative in the place of recipes.

Colette Rossant also includes photographs, some personal, and others of cultural and imprecise relevance, reflected in the approximate placing of recipes which appear uniquely in boxes around which the text flows. The spatial and temporal approximation suggests a disconnection with the poignancy of childhood experience. Positioned as such, recipes also have the potential to be overlooked. They are disconnected narrationally and emotionally, matching a disconcertingly blithe tone and an avoidance of self-analysis. Together with the photographs they suggest a graphical organization of the narrative in which landmark memories are sketched through imagery and impressions. Rossant's sharp emotional response may have been attenuated with time, and her childhood culinary landscape is punctuated with dreamlike, caricatural recollections such as the incident which ends her shopping excursions with her mother, when she plunges her hands in the lusciously inviting butter, or when she eats the "hot, sweet and crusty" *semit*, from her grandfather's hand, a 'forbidden fruit' in the eyes of her strict European nurse. Time has softened the pain of the negative food experiences as memories of more recent positive ones replace them. Humour also attenuates trauma, as in her recollection of her mother as "a large lump of butter, except her smell was not as pleasant" (*Apricots on the Nile*, 5). Some authors thus maintain a balanced and equally weighted reenactment of their story, such as the measured tones of Zonana, others like Reichl, nuance, amplify, or simply exaggerate, to mould an image corresponding to their contemporary reality. Reichl writes of her mother's cooking with melodramatic humour:

> She liked to brag about 'Everything Stew,' a dish invented while she was concocting a casserole out of a two-week-old turkey carcass. (The very

> fact that my mother confessed to cooking with a two-week-old turkey says a lot about her.) […] That night I set up camp in the dining room […] I stared at my favorite people as they approached the buffet, willing them away from the casserole. (*Tender at the Bone*, 5).

In manipulating childhood memories, authors allow them to shape their stories. Philippe Lejeune sets the stage for a discussion about truth and fiction in *The Autobiographical Pact* (1975) when he places the theoretical debate around autobiography at the level of poetics describing it as a retrospective prose narrative constructed around the experiences of a real person,[88] with elements of truth about human nature and fantasy about individuals. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson identify this dichotomy as a recent evolution in autobiography, occurring in the past two decades, with the emergence of innovative forms of self-writing that move between the fictive and the autobiographical (2010, 8), while Boris Cyrulnik describes fiction as the twin sister of the autobiography (168).[89]

Culinary memoirs use experiences from the past to redefine the present. Sidonie Smith identifies four marks of fictiveness in memoirs: memory, the subject 'I', the imagined reader and the story. On an individual level, autobiography can be understood as a cultural and linguistic fiction that Smith sees as "constituted through the historical ideologies of selfhood and the processes of our storytelling […] Self-interpretation emerges rhetorically from the autobiographer's engagement with the fictive stories of selfhood" (1987, 45, 47). From a cultural and community perspective, the memoir is a space for constructing family history around chosen memories and historical facts. Sasha Martin admits in her "Author's Note": "Memory is an imperfect companion at best, and so these pages portray the events of my life only as I remember them. Still, I've done my best to be objective. I've made sacrifices for narrative flow: Certain minor characters are composites, and the occasional scene has been reordered or collapsed." (*Life from Scratch*, 11). Through composition, reordering and collapsing memories and moments in time, the return to her childhood, is marked by an emotional, moral and ideological

[88] "Récit rétrospectif en prose qu'une personne réelle fait de sa propre existence lorsqu'elle met l'accent sur sa vie individuelle, en particulier sur l'histoire de sa personnalité." (Lejeune, 1975, 14). My translation.
[89] "La chimère nommée 'Fiction' est sœur jumelle de 'Récit de soi'." My translation.

chaos, enabling Martin to rationalize her present, while the sacrifices she makes concerning truth are, she claims, for literary, not emotional purposes.

Historical truth, as far as it can be ascertained, shapes narratives but is beyond the author's control. Madhur Jaffrey, in describing her family within the historical and social context of her birth, provides a metaphor for the contradictions or at least the paradoxes in her culinary memoir as a whole and in the genre in general, using terms such as "borrow" and "veneering", as a sign of her construction and "reordering', as well as an expression of awareness that only men made it into her history books

> In the India of that time you were what your family was (I borrow shamelessly from Brillat-Savarin) and my family was hybrid: it was Hindu by origin but heavily veneered by Muslim culture and English education; it considered itself very liberal but lived by the ancient rules of the joint family system where men dominated, where only men made it to history books, and where all marriages were with other Kayasthas – more ink pot and quill. I may have been born with honey on my tongue but I was also born squirming against the status quo. (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 24).[90]

Jaffrey makes two literary references to food, paying respect to a culinary literary heritage and her family's caste as scribes, in her mention of the father of gastronomic literature, Brillat-Savarin, and the tradition of writing her name with honey on her tongue at birth. She explains that there existed two versions of her family history, citing fables and hearsay:

> There was the documented version that sat properly in my grandfather's office. But there was also the undocumented version consisting of fables, family customs and hearsay passed along by my grandmother, Bari Bauwa, and the other women of the house. This version had begun seeping into us since birth, very subtly with the honey on our tongues. (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 5).[91]

We note that the family fables pass through the female line in the oral tradition, the documented and undocumented history infiltrating Jaffrey's imagination as an heir to the lineage of ancestors who, like her, can symbolically rewrite their history with their quills. Jaffrey presents the dichotomy of formal and imagined history, the autobiographical and the fictive, wherein autobiography is located on an imaginative

[90] The allusion to the "inkpot and quill" refers to the writer-warrior caste of scribes, known as the Kayasthas, to which her family belonged.
[91] Jaffrey describes how the Sanskrit word 'Om' is traced on her tongue at birth with honey. (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, xi).

axis "somewhere on the line between fictitious narrative and historical truth" (Al-Hassan-Golley, 2003, 59); the story is a production born of a blend of real and subjective history.[92] Raphael Samuel states that even history itself "is an organic form of knowledge and one whose sources are promiscuous, drawing not only on real-life experience but also memory and myth, fantasy and desire [...]" (1994, x). The family customs to which Jaffrey refers are documented as almost exclusively culinary in her memoir, which like her family history is a blend of chronicled history, symbolized by the recipes, mixed with legend and unsourced traditions. Speculating on the origin of a daily beauty ritual involving fresh cow's milk imposed by her mother Jaffrey writes that "[s]he never explained, you never asked and in India, you never know" (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 34).

In the still lifes of food and meals that Mayes paints in *Under the Tuscan Sun*, factual truth is also subordinated to an instinctive inner truth, this time about the place and its people captured in an aesthetic of timeless poetry: "I succumb totally to the magic of this place [...] the balance it restores to my life" (77). Despite the immediacy of the recollection, Mayes admits that she carries a travel journal with her because she forgot so much over time, "[m]emory is, of course, a trickster" (144), implying that her memoir itself is not necessarily accurate. Jason Wilson's critique of the book on its twentieth anniversary in 2016, described it as "a real-life fantasy about a rural Italian villa in melodious decay" (Jason Wilson, n.pag.), no doubt based on reality, but in which certain romantic dimensions are accentuated.

Women who need to redefine the present, practice auto-definition through literature; their life story becomes an conscious act. Ehrlich defines her own history from selected memories, shaping the past in the present: "I chose my own history, deciding which snapshots, decades, recipes, versions of arguments and events are to be discarded and which will stand for the whole. That history is my own little temple where I measure my own life against a reliable standard. Increasingly I find meaning there." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii-xiii). The memories are based on facts, but her particular patchwork of memories, links to the past that reach into the future; it corresponds to the journey she

[92] Refer to Cassin, 2013. "La force rétrogradée du vrai qui construit l'histoire via le récit qu'on en fait, history et story, comme un performatif du passé [...]" (65).

undertook and the story that she chose to tell around that rite of passage. The use of the term 'temple' implies that however selective the memory construction, the core is a sacred source of truth that grounds her whole existence, and that the real truth is known only to her.

As Sidonie Smith summarizes, "the autobiographer has to rely on a trace of something from the past, a memory, yet memory is ultimately a story about, and thus a discourse on, original experience [...] Autobiography becomes both the process and product of assigning meaning to a series of experiences, by means of emphasis, juxtaposition, commentary, omission." (1989, 45). Once again, we bring to the forefront the centrality of original experience as the pivotal pursuit of memoirists; it is paradoxically accessed through creative representations and the practice of foodways, recipes symbolically replacing that original experience. Sometimes the reenactment is successful as when Sasha Martin makes her mother's German Tree Cake for her family: "when Keith and Ava ate it, I smile, knowing I have not only fed them: I have kept going" (*Life from Scratch*, 297); at other times less so, for example, when her mother remakes the Apple Pie she and her brother had loved as children, she asks with disappointment: "Was I expecting too much of my mother? Or had my memory been nothing more than wishful thinking?" (188). Diana Abu-Jaber tells the story of her larger-than-life, comic hero father, Bud, a Jordanian immigrant, for whom the nostalgic pull of his homeland impedes his integration into American society. We follow two stories, that of Bud, and also that of Diana who struggles to piece together her identity torn by loyalty to her father's vision of home that infused her childhood, woven with stories of experiences impregnated with conflicting ideals and cultural contradictions, and her desire to become an integrated American. Bud captures lost language in flavours and smells, for whom food itself is a story. She writes "My childhood was made up of stories—the memories and recollections of my father's history and the storybook myths and legends that my mother brought me to read." (*Language of Baklava*, Foreword).

Memoirs comprise fragments of personal stories and recipes woven into narratives of fictional dimensions, charting an aesthetic that is both poetical and mythical, and impregnated with the magical realism that Salman Rushdie evokes. They use poetic constructs and imaginative artifices in which culinary traditions engender family legends and community tales. Narayan's mother "recited complex rules, Indian

rituals, and her own beliefs whenever she got the chance [...] Every feast should have the three P's: *papadam*, *payasam*, and *pachadi* – lentil wafers, sweet pudding, and yogurt salad. A new bride should be able to make a decent *rasam*. If you can't make *rasam*, don't call yourself the lady of the house. And so it went." (*Monsoon Diary*, 50). The story of her grandfather who disguised himself as a woman to grind the *idli* batter next to his sweetheart is of fairy-tale dimensions: "They gazed into each other's eyes, didn't say a word, and together made the fluffiest *idli* batter imaginable." (49, 57). The stories are framed by historical truths and cultural realities, encapsulating an essential paradox in memoirs that questions whether the works are successful in associating memory and creative writing, or simply a disordered approximation of the truth. As a genre that is sensitive to commercial intentions, the desire to read and accept the stories as truths contributes to their acceptance and credibility. The reader believes them to be true, notably because of the use of detailed cameos, fragments woven into a coherent, entertaining picture. In *Critical Essays*, Roland Barthes captures the essence of the dichotomy between the narrative's inherent fiction, and the memoir's intrinsic narrative, that allows the narrator and reader to expose the important issues: "La littérature est toujours irréaliste mais c'est son réalisme même qui lui permet de poser souvent des bonnes questions au monde" (1964, 154).[93]

Within postmodernism, memoirs, as Linda Hutcheon explains, are constructed and narratively understandable as fiction (1989, 67). Culinary memoirs touch the realm of fiction in both language and content. On a primary level, food narrative descriptions are vivid, lively, perspicacious, engaging, and above all sensual. Although based on tradition, they are, in essence, invented. Poignant family histories, from idyllic evocations to trauma tales, often mutate into tales of travel or myth, offering emotional and moral depth, as well as cultural, and culinary enlightenment. Taking the cookbook as a starting point, Adam Gopnik explains how the food is by nature storied and food narratives inevitably become chronicles, relating it to questions of existentialism and consumer realities, and above all, linking it to the "hearth", the place in the kitchen of a home where all food tales begin:

[93] The reader's implicit trust and the narrator's often unconscious efforts to secure that trust, will be the topic of section C.

> [T]he old question 'What's the recipe for?' gives way to 'What's the cookbook for', and this existential crisis has moved the cookbook [...] towards the memoir, the confessional, the recipe as self-revelation [...] The pull towards story-telling is perhaps more than a reaction to the crisis in book publishing or even to our personality-driven culture. It may be a clue to the origins of the form [...] As it grows, the recipe book is always reaching back towards the hearth, towards telling a story. (*Table Comes First*, 65, 67).

These stories touch our spiritual sensibility and our senses, draw us in to a complex literary equation where the reconstruction of food memories is a fantasy that tell us stories of our own origins.

Stories around food sustain this postmodern "erosion of the boundaries between literature and other forms of discourse" (Jay Clayton quoted in Bower, 30). Cookbooks employ narrative elements without always engaging in narration. Gopnik writes that "Even cookbooks are finally more book than they are cook, and, more and more [...] for every novel that contains a recipe, there is now a recipe book meant to be read as a novel" (*Table Comes First*, 220), emphasising the cross over at the narrative level around the elaborate storying of food. Recipes create both cohesion, as a common thread woven between layers of stories that binds the work together, and textual fragmentation which reflect this postmodern dislocation. Authors announce in the subtitle that the narrative and recipes have an equal status, carrying the story line in association with the narrative: *Monsoon Diaries: A Memoir with Recipes* (Narayan), or *Daughter of Heaven: A Memoir with Earthly Recipes* (Li). The most compelling are those works in which recipes conclude each chapter, as though there is a physical urgency to recreate and taste, anticipated: "When I'm home alone, it's often the only thing I want to make [...] when it's all gone, I lick my knife until it sparkles" (followed by Roasted Eggplant Ratatouille) (*Homemade Life,* 123). During Ruth Reichl's remedial cooking year, she anxiously turns every food encounter into a cooking experience: "I've been so happy in the kitchen [...] I was thinking about recipes all the time now [...] as I moved from one abundant stall to the next, I allowed it to seduce me. Before long I was cooking in my head." (*My Kitchen Year*, 165, 173, 13).

Memories are not encoded and retrieved as chains of events but rather reconstructed using imagery and emotions. The detailed episodes of Colette Rossant's childhood read like a commentary on family photographs, examples of which scatter the

text, like recipes, and may have been used as a memory trigger. They are rendered poignant by the recollections of sensual details, tastes and smells that seduce or repulse, associated with acceptance or forbiddance, love or rejection: "She used a heavy carnation-scented perfume that turned my stomach. I would push her away, saying, 'You smell terrible.' 'Well, you stink of garlic!' my mother would answer." (*Apricots on the Nile*, 5). Ruth Reichl's memoir is humorous, caricatural and richly anecdotal. In the Preface to *Tender at the Bone* she claims that story-telling was highly prized in her family and adjusting the facts was always preferable to boring the audience. She promises to tell a good story, and a series of incredible culinary adventures follows: "this book is absolutely in the family tradition. Everything here is true but it may not always be factual" (*Tender at the Bone*, x), and she begins telling her eccentric mother's poisoning drama with "This is a true story" (3). Reichl's narrative is infused with understated emotion, employing foreshadowing and timely suspense to tell a tale that is so close to fiction in its use of literary devices that one tends to forget the autobiographical dimension. Following her teenage trip to France, with the taste of tantalizing dishes still lingering, she says "my mother sent me to Mars" (52), which transpires to be a French boarding school, the destination of her mother's whim. Shoba Narayan echoes Reichl's honesty and narrative intentions, with the ultimate intention of embroidering a story that will allow the immigrant condition at the heart of her story to emerge:

> At its heart, a memoir is a recollection [...] There are some events from my childhood that I remember vividly. Other incidents are but a feeling. From that feeling I have tried to recapture the context. I [...] have compressed time for the sake of storytelling. I have exaggerated certain characters or dramatized events. What is unchanged, however, is the immigrant dilemma that is the heart of this book. I hope this truth will resonate with the reader, even if the individual incidents sound forced or fake. (*Return to India*, 6).

Memoirs as moral wails and cautionary tales

> [K]itchen and dining room, are where we can truly learn life's lessons, and we learn them through trial and error. [...] what follows are

> stories about cooking and entertaining [...] And after that are one hundred or so of my favorite recipes. (Whaley, 4, 6).[94]

Memoirists expose the devastating effect of their parents' impulses on their personal integrity. The aesthetics of culinary memoirs are couched in an ethical framework within which food experiences present moral lessons, through representations of self-transformation. Many of these stories are what we may call 'moral wails' or 'cautionary tales' that express ethical or existential dilemmas, or messages of caution and advice about paths to survival, self-understanding and wholeness. We discover themes that include war trauma, displacement, familial dysfunction, diasporic identity loss, to which stories around food, its preparation and rituals, are presented as answers that are anchored in tradition, authenticity and family bonds. Elizabeth Ehrlich talks of building something that is a compromise, "patched", but "coherent":

> I can tie up my past, and transmit to my children something that, if not broken, is patched and coherent. They will receive the tradition. It is something to leave behind, perhaps—that will be their choice, later—but also something on which to build [...] I want to create a home of rightness and wholeness, to establish the percussion beat of work and Sabbath, Sabbath and work. I want to infuse the minutiae of everyday life with something more—meaning or history or awe—and to experience it without too much sentimentality, or irony. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 261, 291).

Her intentions are exemplary and seductive even, employing notions of transmission, choice, rightness, wholeness and meaning. Like cookbooks that put forward the author's "vision of the good life, one predicated on an aesthetic of fresh food that is well prepared, hospitality, family and building community through the sharing of food" (Theophano, 2002, 270), we are mentored by food memoirists through life experiences (Waxman, 379), whether, for example, those adventures are discreetly embedded in Reichl's romanticised experiences around eating, or openly articulated in Narayan's fairy tales of respectful obedience to family.

Loyalty to family, ancestors, homeland, traditions, is a dominant value and common to many memoirs, yet the messages are complex and ambivalent.[95] Declaring

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[94] Emily Whaley's book, *Mrs Whaley's Charleston Kitchen* (1999) associated food and moral takes in its subtitle *Advice, Opinions, and 100 Recipes from a Southern Legend*. This book was preceded by the companion title *Mrs Whaley and her Charleston Garden* published in 1997.

[95] Questions of loyalty are raised in section C of this part at the generic level concerning the sincerity of the author's intentions with regard to culinary traditions.

loyalty to community roots by sharing one's culinary origins gives authenticity and legitimacy to a narrative at one level. Diasporic autobiographical tales, such as that of Ehrlich, contain 'stories within stories' about assimilation, integration and adaption from different perspectives of American society. Diana Abu-Jaber's *The Language of Baklava* looks back to her father's homeland from America, through the lenses of her complex devotion to her father who oscillates between Jordan and his host land, both physically and in terms of his loyalties. Shoba Narayan, evokes the struggle between the pull of her Indian homeland in *Monsoon Diary*, and the lure of America. Ruth Reichl, in *Tender at the Bone* tells her coming of age story marked by her 'disloyal' rejection of her mother's influence, in favour of good food and independence. This disloyalty to her mother's memory contributes to her survival and transmits the message that good food is the key to balance and happiness.

Narayan's loyalty to her family traditions nourish and protect her, while constructing her identity. However, as we have seen in Narayan's 'fairy tales', the same food enables her to forge an uncharted path, towards new freedom. The complete, spiritually balanced dishes of her ayurvedic culinary tradition provide her with perfect sustenance (*Monsoon Diary*, 12): "[a] feast with the perfect balance of spices and flavours." (105). The narrative woven around the recipes is itself a traditional moralizing fairy tale, in which Narayan must face food-related challenges to attain her dreams. Food is vested with special powers that enable her to win her ticket to America. She cooks a meal to prove to her family that the traditions are ingrained (*Monsoon Diary*, 106). Faithful to the happy ending of fairy tales, the heroine succeeds and obtains her ticket. Once there, she takes up the challenge of preparing a meal to raise money for her schooling, succeeding only *in extremis* by preparing simple Indian comfort food, to replace the misguided fusion food, a metaphor for the rootlessness that her guests found inedible.

Jean-Pierre Carron explains that the narrative of autobiography offers a degree of comfort to the reader in the form of a constructed and credible scenario (Carron, 133). Yet he also considers that the narrative identity that takes shape within autobiography has a mythical dimension.[96] Boris Cyrulnik suggests that creating a myth is as a form of protection, in which collective trauma, of the type that displaced people experience, can

[96] "L'identité narrative, telle que la dessine l'autobiographie confine au mythe." (2002, 146).

by mythicized to assuage suffering.[97] As we saw in the previous section on the construction of memories, the reciting of myths, is a form of shared cultural tranquilizer.[98] In Shoba Narayan's *Monsoon Diary*, recipes are offered within vignettes, stories within a story, traditional tales or further anecdotes from the author's life. This multi-faceted structure is symbolic of the many faces of American immigrant life. Mythical recipes are offered up to the readers: "R*asam*… a comfort food that perfumes the air and soothes the soul" (*Monsoon Diary*, 19), woven around legends for seductive *Vatral Kuzhambu* (30), Inji Curry, representative of her ancestral home, (95), Okra curry, part of the meal that ensured her ticket to America (108), 'Soft *Idlis'* which brought her grandparents together (57), or tradition-laden *Poha* which grounds her in America (159). Madhur Jaffrey recounts enchanted sacred foods, the winter *daulat-ki-chaat* that the 'Lady in White' brings to the house—ethereal and magic requiring dew in its preparation, "a frothy evanescence that disappeared as soon as it touched the tongue […] the food of angels" (*Climbing the Mango Trees,* 8, 9). The *dahi baras* have "the taste of heaven with many emotional ifs or buts." Her uncle neglects his wife and children emotionally and Jaffrey notices her cousins' "large dark eyes begging for another kind of crumb", food as a metaphor for their emotional hunger (70).

Food and history are miraculously united when Jaffrey's aunt sells the content of her grandfather's library to the rubbish collector who recycles the pages of her history, her family memoir's final fate used to wrap up street snacks—food and history symbolically united. The book, the locus of memory, becomes imprinted with the memory of food, a myth through which we enter her memoir, just as mythology opens up her family history with the story of a boy and a kite (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 13). Jaffrey captures the dichotomy between history and story, part real, part fiction, in her explanation of the role of the women in her family that extended beyond culinary expertise, as a way to transmit family stories and traditions. Her work is also an example of the way in which memories can be reinterpreted through the lens of an experienced food professional, as was Jaffrey when she wrote her memoir, constructed to create an

[97] "Quand une expérience collective est difficile, quand le monde intime est désespéré, le mythe nous rassemble et donne sens à nos souffrances … Dans le mythe … les expériences sont agencées afin de partager une même représentation." (Cyrulnik, 259-260).
[98] Refer to Cyrulnik, 188.

allegory around the role of story-teller. Although the recipes are collected at the end of the book, they embody the idea of a conclusion, a promise kept through the memoir, in which Jaffrey creates a legend around a family, a historical and territorial culture and its foodways. Her final observation and the recipes that follow bring the legend full circle, reminding the reader of the opening scene in which Jaffrey receives sacred blessings at her birth with honey on her tongue. She emphasises the taste memory which is the heritage of her origins: "The innocent Indian honey of my infancy was now mixed with pungent Indian spices [...] each bite, each taste of all I had eaten lay catalogued in some pristine file, ready to be drawn up when the moment was ripe." (231). The pure taste of honey becomes mingled over time with the stronger flavours of spices that serve to preserve that initial memory, like Rushdie's trope of chutnification.[99]

Leslie Li emphasises the allegorical nature of memoirs, her stories like proverbial stones that the poor suck to give taste to their bland rice and cabbage leaves. (Li, 2005, xiii). The same stone metaphor is also used to describe the crumbling and collapse of her relationship with her father. An "unstable and unfinished stone bridge" (*Daughter of Heaven*, 69) spans the two opposed continents on which she and her father stand. With each conflict they would dislodge a freshly laid stone which "dropped off the bridge with a definitive plop" (69). Li cites a series of incidence which contributed to the ultimate destabilising of the critical stone that brings the bridge tumbling down (70).

Often the protagonists themselves are of fabled or eccentric dimensions, becoming vested, like Jaffrey, with seemingly mythical powers. They include Diana Abu-Jaber's poetic, culturally-disoriented father, Bud, Molly Wizenberg's charismatic and endearing father, Burg, Martin's loving but chaotic mother, as well as archetypal female figures—mothers, grandmothers—of few words but assertive moral and culinary lore in the works of Elizabeth Ehrlich, Colette Rossant and Shoba Narayan. Stereotypical 'characters' tend to give the memoirs a two-dimensional quality which suggests a limitation in the fictional reading and narrative elements of the text, but when interpreted within the context of the whole narrative can be understood to represent facets of the yearnings of the narrator, and a succinct expression of the values of home

[99] We will return to this metaphor in part IV in our discussion of the nourishing qualities of memories.

roots and their morally-charged traditions. Madeleine Kamman paints cameos of the anonymous, heroic women who, through their cooking, nurtured her with the values of her homeland, where "women with worn hands, stained by vegetables peeled, parched by work in house, garden or fields, wrinkled by age and experience", rose as a single voice (*When French Women Cook*, Introduction). It is unlikely that her Provencal friend Magaly was, as Kamman claims, always as "happy, cheerful, and rested even though life is one of unending work" (314), but it was important for her to portray these indefatigable heroines in a glowing light in order not to taint the flavour of the recipes, and corrupt the moral tale, constructing her own identity as great chef emerging from humble, but glorious roots.

While female diasporic figures transmit the stories central to myths, they are vectors, rarely those seeking their own identity, often resigned to abandon a paradise. Joyce Zonana writes: "Cooking was my mother's passion, the force that led her, guiding her choices. If we couldn't have the whole of the life she had left behind in Cairo in 1951 [...] we would have the food, all the food, in all its complex, abundant aromatic intimacy" (*Dream Homes*, 24). Those who have experienced a cultural turmoil in the form of exile or displacement seek to make sense of contradictory values and ideals. Zonana's mother could no longer take her daily walks in the Egyptian desert, literal or imaginative, because her homeland was lost to her, but also because her desire to survive meant that she must adopt cultural discretion to conform: "her considerable energy turned inward from public to domestic space, where she now worked assiduously to create an environment that could contain herself and her family" (111).

As well as wanting to rationalize the trauma that their parents and grandparents suffered, authors also seek to imagine the paradise their parents once knew, or at least understand its myth, to decide whether it is what they want for themselves. Some of Bud's restlessness drives Abu-Jaber to Jordan to discover her father's homeland for herself. Paradise is elusive: for her, as for Bud, "the answer is 'out there'" (*Language of Baklava*, 268). Wizenberg celebrates a homemade life and appears to represent a continuum rather than a questioning of tradition or its rupture. Yet she chooses to write a memoir and not simply a recipe book. Recipes are presented in the context of her life story, indicating that her idolized relationship with her father requires some negotiation in order for her to find her own place in the world, also implied in the necessity to

transmit the 'homemade' values that epitomized her father: "I write about my life some, too, since it interacts with food roughly three times a day. I don't think many of us are terribly interested in recipes that have no stories or real-life context. For me, the two are inseparable. One is pale and boring without the other" (*Homemade Life*, 195). In general, writing about domestic rituals in memoirs inevitably both inscribes and interrogates women's housekeeping work and its relation to art, explains Anne Bower (49), as well also to subservience, complexified in the case of writers such as Wizenberg, Abu-Jaber, Furiya, or Li, by the fact that the traditional female role of cook and moral guide is played by a man—their fathers—while the female author plays the role of the scribe whose subjectivity determines the final interpretation.

Abu-Jaber places loyalty to her father and his traditions at the centre of her identity crisis. She understands the importance of her cultural roots, but is also aware that compromise would enable her family to assimilate vital values for survival and integrity. As a child she cries out the hunger of those who "comeover", that her father cannot articulate, hunger for the values shared by the diaspora "for home, for family, for the old smells and touches and tastes" (*Language of Baklava*, 6). In response to her father's distress at his adult children's geographical dispersion: "'Dad—we're happy. We all like where we live. We're Amer—"I don't say it. I turn the spoon in my fingers" (*Language of Baklava*, 298); it is a manifestation of the conflicting values between generations, notably first-generation immigrants and their children. The ironic, poignant and nostalgic adjectives used to describe the recipes in *The Language of Baklava*, some of which we have already evoked, denote the symbolic power of food, transmitting a moral message tied intimately to the story: "Nostalgic Chicken Livers", "Forget-Me-Not *Sambusik* Cookies", "Lost childhood Pita Bread", "Diplomatic *Magloubeh*", and "Sentimental Hot Chocolate". Traditional recipes are celebrated to express the narrator's emotional and moral needs. Their renaming serves as a trope for the appropriation of traditions and their values and their adaptation to contemporary social and personal circumstances.

Mythologizing foodways by storying traditions is a way of expressing loyalty such that the memoir becomes a trope for commitment. Allegiance is a manifestation of the respect for traditions which ironically does not always translate into a respect for the family or representative of those traditions. Ruth Reichl's descriptions of eating are

moments of autobiographical intimacy when she lets drop the literary artifice of suspenseful fiction to convey the inherent value that pure tastes bring, "I took one bite and then another, savoring the crispness of the exterior and the softness of the interior." (29), "[w]ith the first sip I knew I had never really eaten before [...] I took another bite and it began all over again. I ate as if in a dream." (*Tender at the Bone*, 65). The key revelation in these episodes is that Reichl is not eating traditionally, but something she "had never really eaten before"; she is seduced by a new experience. The solicitation to experience something new is another paradox in culinary memoirs. Recipes, that for the majority of memoirists represent ritual and institution, are equally an invitation for the reader to experience something typically unknown. The celebration of traditional foodways for one person, is an incitement to try new dishes and embrace alterity for another, in this case, a strangely disparate, and potentially ambiguous relationship between narrator and reader. Authors are themselves seeking a single irrefutable image that will serve as an anchor from which to transmit values. The reader, however, is discovering new experiences, new traditions and perhaps also even new values.

Romanticism and culinary traditions

We read in Reichl's vivid descriptions an example of the aesthetics of literature that emerges in culinary memoirs, as well as travel literature, aligned with Raphael Samuel's claim that "'[l]iving history' though practiced in the name of verisimilitude, has its hidden aesthetics" (Samuel, 192), with the emphasis on first-hand experience. Rich and sensual food descriptions are the stage for questions of fidelity to family and community. As well as the recovery of the historical past, there is also the creation of an imaginary past, surrounding recipes and their rituals, in which fragments of personal stories and recipes are spun, into narratives using poetic constructs and artifices that build culinary traditions into family myths through physical and emotional responses associated with cultural identity, family, ethnic community and cross cultural experiences. We respond to pleasurable emotions, familial wisdom and insights into cultures, as well as to what Barbara Waxman describes as the "vividly descriptive, emotionally dramatic and often lyrical prose of culinary memoirs" (Waxman, 364). Memoirs offer meaning in themselves in terms of their artistic value, often presenting a

romanticized vision of a life through which selective narratives confirm James Olney's claim that "[t]he literary artistic function is thus of greater importance than the historic and objective function." (1980, 42).

Elizabeth David was proud of her cuisine, uncompromising on quality and ingredients, yet equally focused on writing a rigorously beautiful prose for the initiated, making no concessions to her audience. Discussing bouillabaisse her language is elegant and authoritative, with an undercurrent of sensual self-indulgence, denoted here by the use of words incongruously related to fish, such as "lavishly" and "perfume":

> It is well to make it as lavishly as possible in order to use as many different kinds as are available. Several of these fish have a characteristic taste, a unique perfume. It is upon the combination of all these different tastes that the success of the operation depends. One can, it is true, make a passable version with three or four kinds of fish, but the truth of the foregoing observation will be generally agreed upon (*Mediterranean Food*, 59).

She is notorious for her gastronomic and linguistic authority with which she talks about flavour, asserting, for example, the impossibility of confusing kid meat for those who have travelled and know their meat. She dismisses the gastronomically ignorant with a few immaculate sentences, establishing, in the imagination and on the plate, an uncompromising and undeniably romantic Mediterranean foodscape (*Mediterranean Food*, 87). The literary poise of the early culinary writers marked the later generation who drew the comparison between the romance of foreign food with other arts, including literature and music. Kate Christensen is inspired by the mythical clambake through a Hammerstein song: "this a New York Jew inspired a romantic yen for clams in the heart of a teenage Arizona girl who eventually, finally, moved to Maine" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 135). Lobster Thermidor captures her imagination with the idea of a recipe: "I savored the dish's romantic name on my internal palate along with the actual, literal dish itself on my tongue" (142).

Memoir titles with personal pronouns—*The Gastronomical Me*, *My Japanese Girlhood*, *My Berlin Kitchen*—confirm their resolutely personal dimension, yet their stylized book covers are indications that they make no compromise with aesthetics. While they strive to be tales of personal testimony, they follow the lineage of cookbooks which present cooking as a work of art, contributing through their personal voice, to an

image-rich food-inspired landscape. Disjunctive narratives create an aesthetic that pursues elusive, often psychological truths, while resisting a fully prescriptive formula, even though, as we have seen, a certain codification of the genre is emerging. There remains a flexibility and creativity of subject matter "where the author's personality and the form appropriate to both are inextricably one" (Jelinek, 1986, 190), symbolized in the dual position of the narrator treading a path of hesitant self-discovery, while confidently imparting culinary wisdom. The interplay of culinary wisdom with creative memoir writing fosters a romantic image of the past and its foodways, reflected in the creation of fantasy spaces of alienation, often self-imposed and reversible[100] such as we find in Frances Mayes' *Under the Tuscan Sun* and her other Tuscany memoirs, referred to by Carole Counihan as 'Tuscanopia' (2004, 420).

Romanticism, that stresses the importance of the inspired individual within an idealized landscape, is characteristic of certain travel literature. Hemingway in *A Moveable Feast* and Elizabeth Gilbert in *Eat, Pray, Love,* offer us disparate examples of romantically-troubled figures in search of self within dramatic landscapes. This romanticism is manifested in foodscapes as an aesthetic approach to interpreting place such as we have discerned in Durrell's island residence books. The landscape, often representing a paradisiac past both culturally and morally, may be utopic but the immediacy of the sensorial experience that pervades Durrell's as well as Mayes' works, prevents the authors from slipping into easy sentimentality with regard to what can be perceived as a rich landscape. The harvesters in Durrell's Corfu are described as "gorgeous as birds […] [who] shake the rain from their dresses and receive their dole of bread and piercing garlic […] Bread and oil as a diet hardly leaves any margin for thrift" (*Prospero's Cell*, 94, 95), the contrast of "gorgeous" "birds" with a meagre diet of a "dole of bread" anchors the scene in reality, while as the same time perpetuating a romantic image of the heroic peasant figure.

While travel literature eschews the concept of happy endings, culinary memoirs manifest a perpetual concern with the need to bring the narrative to a harmonious and optimistic conclusion, over-idealizing one might say, the positive influence of culinary traditions and their association with sometimes confusing emotional responses. Molly

[100] As opposed to irreversible immigrant situations where return to the homeland is impossible.

Wizenberg's utopian vision of food and cooking offers comfort to herself as much as to her readers. She is vehement that recipes are to be shared, like her stories, because it makes the world a better place and confirms that we are together all part of a bigger picture, a grand scheme of things:

> The way I see it, sharing a recipe is how you pay back fate—in the karmic sense, if you believe in such things—for bringing you something so tasty in the first place [...] And isn't cooking about making people [...] feel good? It seems to me, then, that it only makes sense to give people the means to continue feeling good. By which I mean the recipe. (*Homemade Life*, 177).

But a search for identity potentially takes the reader beyond the happy ending and one is led to question whether Wizenberg ultimately consumes herself, or at least her ideals, in the intensity of her home-centric evangelism. We look beyond the narrator's moral fixation, which suggests that she loses her objectivity rather than finds herself in her kitchen.

Although sometimes overtaken by earnestness if not zeal, adjusting perspectives is an intimate part of the memoir discourse. For many writers their memoirs start as creative writing exercises and become arenas for self-examination. Imaginatively conceived culinary adventures that often begin as blogs,[101] such as Luisa Weiss' *My Berlin Kitchen*, Julia Powell's *Julie and Julia*, or Sasha Martin's *Life from Scratch* turn into book-length stories of personal culinary challenge, sometimes ephemeral best-sellers, motivated by a self-confessed desire to find healing. Their works are intended to be 'wellness' stories, which, for some, have undercurrents of trauma, independently of their volition, if we can take at face value the words of Sasha Martin: "It was going to be an easy book to write—one that wouldn't make me cry, or make my relatives so nervous that I'd be obliged to employ pseudonyms. But try as I might, I couldn't stay within the parameters of such a narrative, the easy truth is as much a lie as any." (*Life from Scratch*, 13). Frequently, the childhood trauma helps to cast the narrator in the role of a romantic heroine. They may also be portrayed as victims, like Colette Rossant who suffers emotional neglect at the hands of her mother. In the opening chapter, she describes her

[101] In the blog, *The Wednesday Chef,* Luisa Weiss recorded the year that she took to cook all the newspaper recipe clippings she had saved over several years. In *Global Table Adventure*, Sasha Martin documented her challenge to cook food from every country in the world. The *Julie/Julia Project* chronicled Julie Powell's endeavour to cook Julia Child's entire cookbook repertoire.

adult relationship with her dying mother, one of silent martyrdom as she tries to provide her mother with the nourishment that her mother was never able to do for her. Rossant's reverie of her separation from her endearing grandfather is interrupted by her son's observation that her mother is dying. She makes no comment as they drive in silence (*Apricots on the Nile*, 15), a silence that is filled by the narrative of her childhood that follows.

The postmodern imagination that we observe in culinary memoirs offers a new form of romanticism which creates ideals around culinary traditions reflecting the nineteenth century romanticism that places the subject within the context of traditions. With their emphasis on the importance of community identity, memoirs often create an idealized image of ethnic clans in opposition to the cosmopolitan influences of urban existence. Frances Mayes describes a stereotypical cliché of her Italian neighbours: "Often the residents are leaning out, two, sometimes three to a window, watching one more day pass in the history of this piazza [...] Past the Piazza Garibaldi—almost every Italian town has one—you come to the proof [...] that this is one of the most civilized towns on the globe" (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 138, 157). Places and people are romanticized as one. Some food memoirs can be associated with what Kevin Robins describes as the heritage boom in the 1980s with nostalgic theme parks and marketing of 'soft' and pastoralized popular memories, impersonal memory locations dissociated from history:[102] "postmodernism is about the renaissance of tradition and the re-enchantment of place" (Robins, 306). Iconic locations, such as Paris, are idealized, as are physical spaces, such as kitchens, which can be seen equally as havens, creative spaces and prisons depending on the woman's status. Robins goes on to define this revival in community and sense of place as a sign of the "increased fragmentation and segmentation of urban life." (312).

Abundant litanies of food descriptions conjure up not just foodways or meals but also places and peoples. To join the ranks of many other culinary memoirist, writer Sandra M. Gilbert in her critical work *The Culinary Imagination*, sketches her own culinary memoir in a chapter entitled "Bitter herbs or the Spices of Life", reaching back to her grandfather's Italian and French origins:

> the farm [...] set among olive and lemon groves, studded with bushes of rosemary and looking towards fields of other herbs—lavender?

[102] See Pierre Nora, 1992.

> thyme?—evoking the greenery of Liguria because really once part of it. His famous stuffing was green with spinach—which I now realize was a stand-in for the wild herbs that Ligurian cooks pack into ravioli—and dense with sausage and salty with parmesan cheese and creamy with mushrooms and lively with garlic, onion, celery [...] (Gilbert, 175).

Each adjective accumulates a sense of vitality specific to that region: 'wild', 'dense', 'salty', 'creamy', 'lively'. Evoking the worshipped sauce, pesto, "a summery sauce that sanctifies greenery in the marriage of basil with olive oil, pine nuts, garlic, cheese and sometimes butter" (175), Gilbert quotes the food and travel writer, David Downie, on the subject "the mere smell of it makes your ears ring with a dialect at once sharp and soft, full of sliding sounds, of whispered syllables, of dark vowels" (176). "[Food] often informs us of significant participants in earlier periods of history as well as of food travels it bears witness of ancient relations and shifting loyalties and it recounts the semantic classifications which underlie the choice of a name [...]" (Mühleisen, 71).

In an idyllic discourse the concept of travel engenders its own romanticism and within the aesthetics of culinary memoirs, embraces both author and characters. Lawrence Durrell and Ernest Hemingway—the latter's life described by Rovit as a romantic series of evasive actions in a continually new or other country (Rovit, 6)—also depict foodscapes. Hemingway was an American precursor, returning to the Old World after the First World War to find in its Bohemian lifestyle, moral and emotional solace for the generation's war trauma. His travels were a means, not an end, explains Hily-Mane.[103] The comfort and pleasure he found in the French food and wine which he describes in *A Moveable Feast*, generated a sense of the opposition between the transient and the eternal, man amidst the gods, perhaps the source of Gertrude's Stein's comment that "he looks like a modern and smells of the museum" (Stein, 216). Durrell, too, was considered a romantic hero figure, what Roger Bowen described as "both Mediterranean resident and castaway" (482). He fled from his culture of origin and from himself, occupying a world whose dominate emotion, according to Richard Pine, was anxiety (1994, 8), the anxiety of a rootless, wandering spirit, trying to find sustenance for his hungry soul, in the nourishing landscape into which he seeks to blend in a pantheistic

[103] The aesthetics of Hemingway's narratives were focused on the journey and not the destination. The feast, both literal and emotional, that he found in Paris, was in itself a journey. "Pour lui le voyage devait, d'étape en étape, avoir sa poétique" (Hily-Mane, 9).

act of faith. The aesthetics of place and food are combined in Durrell's narrative as within other culinary and travel narratives to allay anxiety around trauma or existential questions. Within her genre, M.F.K. Fisher is the ultimate Mediterranean nomad, and romantic figure, crisscrossing the Atlantic alone and each time coming closer to understanding the nature of her freedom and exploiting her full potential as writer and feminist libertarian before her time: "I seemed beautiful, witty, truly loved… the most fortunate of all women, past sea change and with her hungers fed." (189).

2. Language

> Language is a house with a host of doors, and I am too often uninvited and without the keys. (*Book of Salt*, 155).

Writing a letter in a Paris café, analysing his syntax, the weight of comma and its subtle shift of meaning (8), Stein's and Toklas' Vietnamese cook, Binh, could be just any other Lost Generation writer of the mid-war years pouring over his notebook and a drink. However, "[u]nemployed and alone", his life is "distilled into two sad, stinging words" from his tormenting father (*Book of Salt*, 12), the meagre words are "distilled" like ingredients that do not need to be familiar, but comestible at least: "the vocabulary of servitude is not built upon my knowledge of foreign words, but rather on my ability to swallow them" (13). Monique Truong's fictional memoir is woven around choosing, misunderstanding, misnaming or renaming words; the protagonist is himself like salt, common, overlooked, anonymous even, for no one can pronounce his name correctly. He struggles to understand syntax and vocabulary—Gertrude Stein becomes "GertrudeStein" to his ears—to come to terms with his past, while he yet concocts perfectly taste-balanced and delicious food for his "Mesdames".

The analogies between food writing and the crafting of language are multiple. In the choice of words, and their manipulation into literary artifice and figurative language, we find a parallel with cooking[104] that invites us to explore the poetry of memoir prose, its food and landscape descriptions, the recipe names, their preparation, and even the personalities of the cooks. The linguistic style that each memoirist adopts is a reflection

[104] We will explore the tropes of food in relation to reading and writing in part IV B.

of her relationship to food, her literary intentions and her distance from an earlier eventual trauma. Similarly, we are drawn to question the emotional distance that authors have established with their memories that condition the degree of nostalgia with which their prose is infused. The letter Binh carries with him like a talisman is faded with use, ephemeral, fragile, like a memory that has already disappeared: "it was becoming difficult to read. Though in truth, my memory had already made that act obsolete." (9).

The poetry of culinary prose

M.F.K. Fisher's prose articulates Ernest Renan's belief that "what one says about oneself is always poetry".[105] Memoirs are akin to lyric poetry, for in their conception the original event becomes coloured with emotions, often harmonious in construction. The poetry of recollection becomes the poetics of memoirs, inherent in the process of literary creation, for reminiscence comes close to the introspective process of poetry writing, "emotion recollected in tranquility" writes Buss (14). Poetry in food writing allows layers of meaning to accumulate illustrated by the symbolic image of Reichl's hybrid and multi-layered Lemon Pudding Cake: "part cake, part soufflé, part pudding. A perfect snack in fact for someone in an extreme state of indecision." (*My Kitchen Year*, 165).

The poetry in self-writing carries symbolism associated with origins and identity. The narrative condenses emotional experience into vignettes around recipes and foodways. Luce Giard, addressing her grandmother explains that culinary gestures suggest words and that the poetry of words inversely translates gestures.[106] Leslie Li observes the presence of both the poetry of words and gestures in her family's culinary celebrations with decorations and luscious fruit, alterity bridged in translation, symbolic of the role of food itself: "If my family's observation of the Moon Festival on Fieldston Road in New York City was prosaic, celebrating it at Nai-nai's house on Die Cai Lu in Guilin was as poetic as the names of her street address and her natal city translated into

[105] "Ce qu'on dit de soi est toujours poésie" (Renan, ii-iii). My translation.
[106] "Je voudrais que la lente mémoration de vos gestes en cuisine me souffle les mots qui vous seront fidèles, que le poème des mots traduise celui des gestes, qu'à votre écriture de recettes et de saveurs corresponde une écriture de paroles et de lettres." (Certeau et al., 1994, 218).

English: Folded Brocade Road in the Forest of Osmanthus Trees." (*Daughter of Heaven*, 140).

The incongruous adjectives that Diana Abu-Jaber uses with irony and affection to describe her recipes have the rich conciseness of poetry; in one word she summarizes the essence of the emotions evoked in the preceding chapter, their force in the list of ingredients and the preparation steps, including "Poetic Baklava", "Barbaric Lamb *Kofta*", and "Homecoming *Fatteh*"[107], the adjectives tying them intimately to the narrative flow. Shoba Narayan's prosaically delivered recipes are preceded by a description of how and when the dish should be eaten, an anecdote about the associated family tradition, or a community myth surrounding the food. Her recipe for a fragrant drink, *thandai* is preceded by both a poetically-drawn romantic moment, and a cultural detail that explains an aspect of variation in the Holi festival. "Across the crowd, I saw him, tall, tanned and muscular with eyes the color of blackberries. I was entranced. He poured a glass of *thandai* down his throat and slowly made his way towards me. A kiss and he was gone. Was it me or was it the *thandai*?" (*Monsoon Diary*, 78). The recipe that follows this scene is practical, yet carries the poetic flavour of the preceding anecdote, "benign but delicious", with an abundance of seeds and rose water (78). This juxtaposition of poetry and prose, associating inventive recollection with formal recipe descriptions heightens the emotional intensity of the narrative. A poetic passage in *The Language of Baklava* describes a moment of family tension over her "Mad Genius *Knaeffa*", a rose-scented, sweet cheese filled pastry: "And then the room is holding its breath. The night expands and the kitchen ceiling lifts and the taste of the *knaeffa* lingers in memory like a musical phrase" (119-120); it is followed by the canonical recipe.

Frances Mayes' poetry-infused food descriptions connect with her with another writer-traveller, Elizabeth David. She takes one of her recipes and indulges in sensual, even erotic, imagery: "[David] says 'rather extravagant but very delicious', and if Elizabeth David says that, I believe her [...] I drop the peaches into boiling water for a moment, watching the rosy colors intensify, then spoon them out and slide the skins off as easily as taking off a silk slip." (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 73). Frances Mayes' book is as much about the restoration of a house as the Tuscan food that seduces her. She openly

[107] In addition to those previously quoted.

admits that the house is a symbol of the self and as she devotedly and inspirationally restores her new home to a modernized former glory, she is also rehabilitating her emotional stability after a painful divorce: "The house is a metaphor for the self, of course, but it also is totally real. And a foreign house exaggerates all the associations houses carry." (15). She finds herself again in the poetic and sensual descriptions of the ingredients for her foreign dishes, themselves becoming an emotional home for her. She makes abundant food, to match the emotional plenitude she feels in her cradling home: "After drinks with *bruschette* and dry olives, we start with cool fennel soup. I've made a rustic casserole with chicken, white beans, sausage, tomatoes, and onions. There are tiny green beans, baskets of bread, and a salad of arugula, radicchio and chicory." (103-104).

Elizabeth David's poetic descriptions of food capture the essence of place, imbued with nostalgia for a lost paradise. She repeats a sensual litany of Mediterranean ingredients, like a refrain, intended to evoke an Eden that, at the time of writing, was no longer accessible to her. She covers the panoply of foods that represent a typical day in a Mediterranean country from breakfast through lunch and dinner, in literally random order, representing a chaotic cornucopia of colours, flavours, perfumes and textures:

> [...] bright vegetables, the basil, the lemons, the apricots, the rice with lamb and currants and pine nuts, the ripe green figs, the white ewes milk cheeses of Greece, the thick aromatic Turkish coffee, the herb-scented kebabs, the honey and yoghourt for breakfast, the rose petal jam, the evening ices eaten on an Athenian café terrace in sight of the Parthenon [...] (*Mediterranean Food*, 6).

Elizabeth David explains in an article in *The Spectator* in 1963 that her vocabulary was considered 'dubious', 'dirty' even, but, for her, pronouncing them was to utter poetry, a balm in post-war England where only meagre and poor-quality rations were available for purchase. Her use of hyperbole with such words as "furious revolt" and "terrible cheerless, heartless food" conveys the strength of her emotions, and her use of the often-repeated binary rhythm—"olive and butter, rice and lemons, oil and almonds"—that she employs in food descriptions give a relentless force to these tantalizing food items:

> I [...] sat down and started to work out an agonized craving for the sun and a furious revolt against that terrible cheerless food by writing down descriptions of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cooking. Even to write words like apricot, olives and butter, rice and lemons, oil and almonds, produced assuagement. Later I came to realize that in the

> England of 1947, those were dirty words I was putting down. (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 21).

While Frances Mayes' works seem focused on the pleasure principle, many other authors are not able, or do not choose to gain that distance from a painful heritage or experience. For all the poetry that can be discerned in their language, recipes also impose a certain formality, an economical and even reductionist language and a directive tone. This can be reassuring for narrators, such as Ehrlich and Zonana, who seek to contain the past through transcribing and naming. Each of Ehrlich's single-word chapter names evoking origins and identity, spirituality, or personal commitment serve this purpose. For Ehrlich, the poetry lies in symbolism, her food fragrant with memories evoke freedom, fatalism and hopeful self-determination, the ingredients of the peasant dish are the emotions and values that constitute a person, the essence of a life, in effect:

> The taste is not of invention but of a moment lost, a moment recovered, a moment in time … my mother spoke of *cholent*[108] as of lost wealth, a piece of the glistering past […] The year ebbs and flows […] Into the pot went that which she chose to continue. Into the pot went sentiment, homeland and yearning, the ten commandments and the right to decide for yourself what you want to do. (*Miriam's Kitchen* 8, 26, 150).

The kitchen, the cakes, even their preparation are a microcosm of the cyclic rhythm of the universe. They represent a poetic continuity with the past captured in the use of repetition and accumulation: "a moment lost, a moment recovered, a moment in time", moving the text inexorably forward while clinging to a continuity with the past, and the repetition of "into the pot" capturing the patient cooking gestures that are a reiteration of timeless motions perpetuated from the past.

As such, poetry also incarnates progression and movement. Oscillation between places is symbolized in the shift between poetic anecdote rich with descriptions and the prosaic recipes that intersect the chapters.[109] The narrators test and taste, Abu-Jaber moving between homelands, Ehrlich between the kitchens of her family's matriarchs. Distance, whether physical or emotional, measures commitment in the "voyage of discontinuity and connection" (xii) in which poetry defines a landscape shaped by

[108] *Cholent* is a form of stew created for the Jewish Sabbath that is placed in a warm oven to simmer slowly over night to be eaten for traditional Sabbath lunch when cooking is forbidden.
[109] The majority of the works in our primary corpus include recipes within the narrative at the end of chapters. Three works include recipes as appendices, and three use a cookbook form.

words. Abu-Jaber conjectures that without her father's poetic raptures over Jordan, her homeland would not exist even within her imagination: "I half wonder if Jordan would exist if Bud weren't there" (*Language of Baklava*, 218). Narrators, as the objects of displacement, even if of their own volition, perpetuate the incertitude provoked by movement in their lives, in their poetic language and semantic constructions, where meaning lies in interpretation.

Miraux writes that poetry, as the means of expression of one's most inner being, is 'at the service' of autobiography, the channel for finding one's origins, be they cultural or spiritual, that determines one's identity.[110] Tzvetan Todorov confirms the affinity between poetic discourse as a form of self-exploration with a fictional dimension: "La poétique est donc une approche à la littérature à la fois 'abstraite' et 'interne'" (Todorov, 19). Poetry is used as a literary artifice, as a way of denoting uncertainty about origins, marginality, unbelonging, the countercurrent to a traditional culture of which Abu-Jaber's sensitive cousin Sami is an example, called a poet because his homosexuality is antithetical to the archetypal male role model (a stereotype of his Jordanian culture). Ironically, Abu-Jaber's father, Bud, is also described as a poet, sharing a similar sensitivity to Sami—in a realm that is typically dominated by women—in his case, of culinary tradition, capturing lost language in flavours and smells, a storyteller through food (156). In "Bud the poet['s]" stories "the food always turned out to be about something much larger: grace, difference, faith love." (*Language of Baklava*, Preface).

The language of foodways

Story book and recipe book, the memoir oscillates between the formality and professionalism associated with cookbooks, and the informality and intimacy in the autobiographical narrative with recipes, more recently associated with social media. Linguistic scope ranges from the impeccable mastery of language in David's cookbook memoirs, through the gastronomical literary delights and confidentiality of M.F.K. Fisher's prose, to the conversational tone of Wizenberg and Weiss. Wizenberg's seemingly casual tone engages the reader in a compelling conversation all the while

[110] "La poétique se met au service de l'autobiographie parce que la poétique est l'instrument de l'expression lyrique du moi, ce que fait advenir à la présence les minutes enfouies, les actes oubliés et permet d'élucider un parcours en le retraçant mot à mot." (Miraux, 29).

teaching solid home life skills. Wizenberg often addresses the reader directly using the second person pronoun: "It's a lot better, I swear, than it sounds. I'll tell you more about it later." (*Homemade Life*, 42); "[…] there was cake, of course, which I'll tell you about in a minute […]" (302); "You want to keep it nice and hot, but not smoking" (40). Luisa Weiss engages in the same story-pacing discourse. She describes her mother's detestation of cooking in disaccord with the Italian food passions in her family: "Over the years my mother has taken a lot of ribbing for this from her older sister […] (More on this in a bit, I promise.)" (*Berlin Kitchen*, 25). Conversations also imply an ongoing form of communication. Ruth Reichl writes that recipes are discussions not sets of hardset instructions or maps with carefully laid out routes: "recipes are conversations, not lectures; they are a beginning, not an end. I'll hope you'll add bit more of this, a little less of that […] I've tried to write these recipes in a relaxed tone, as if we were standing in the kitchen, cooking together." (*My Kitchen Year*, xix), and she concluded her "Note on the Recipes" with the proposition: "And if you want to continue the conversation—just send me a tweet." (xxi). The written discourse continues beyond the pages of the book.

Anne Bower has described recipes diversely as decorative, private, trivial, even seemingly orchestrated by the cultural tendencies imposed by men (5). Despite a framework of formality, they offer a liberty of expression: a curious dichotomy between stewardship, the quintessence of each recipe, and the creativity in the hands of each cook. Luce Giard talks of the simple language of recipes containing traces of archaism, as a place of conservation and a means via which a relatively stable technical vocabulary circulates (Certeau et al., 1994, 308). Recipes act as a dynamic collection housing traditional recipes that reclaim lost forms of expression: a literal and metaphorical language and associated ritual.

Figuratively, food speaks a language that transcends foreign tongues, embodying a universality. For Claude Lévi-Strauss, cuisine itself is a language articulating a lost identity (1964),[111] which can in the present only be 'expressed' through the senses. However, narrators encounter language barriers: Joyce Zonana writes that nor having learned the language of her homeland represented "a strange lacuna in [her] identity"

[111] These ideas are developed in Lévi-Strauss' *Mythologiques 1: Le Cru et le Cuit* (1964).

an unhealable "wound". For her, the Jewish identity is anchored by growing up eating gefilte fish and eating kosher, but without the language "the Egyptian part remains unfulfilled, incomplete" (*Dream Homes*, 39). Recipes make the language audible, salvaging fragments from a destitute past. In *The Language of Baklava*, Abu-Jaber's father is described as a poet of culinary tradition, capturing lost language in flavours and smells. The *baklava* that is symbolic of her father's foodways is "like a poem about the deeply bred luxuries of Eastern culture." (*Language of Baklava*, 191). *Baklava* is also the cliché of a foodstuff commonly known outside of the Middle East and can be considered a stereotypical metaphor for its culture. Abu-Jaber explores the symbolism of foodways extensively in her novel *Crescent*, describing voluble gifts of food, a "fairy tale" basket of shiny and enticing apples from Han delivered by Aziz, the corrupting snake. The apple core left on the porch next to the basket is a symbol of their adultery (288-290). Han's subsequent peace offerings, also tainted with sin, devil-like fruits from "the other side", speak of his ambiguity towards Sirine: "gorgeous fruits with spikes and horns, edible peels and blood-red seeds, baskets of berries from the other side of the word" (298).

The homeland language can also be an obstacle to ethnic integration. Ehrlich's polyglot grandmother, who spoke Polish, Russian, Yiddish, Hebrew and English, and prepared dishes from as many traditions, could not navigate the city she lived in: "The world outside was the wrong language" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 50). Ehrlich, herself, required more than linguistic skills, for she too tried to "fathom life in the wrong language" (50), the word "fathom" suggesting the complex excavatory nature of the task. She must also learn to interpret the past, in an act of remembering, connecting and selective disconnecting, and even forgetting. Her language and even the vocabulary are challenged and undermined.[112]

Michel Serres, however, asserts that memories pass via the senses and not via language (1985, 213). From this perspective, it can be argued that while language can be an inhibitor, sensorial experience can become a facilitator in memory recall. One must taste in order to understand (1985, 167). The recipes of culinary traditions indeed give the diasporic writer unique access to distant memories. Culinary memoirs endorse the primacy of sensory experience and treat the senses as instruments of discernment and

[112] See Ania Loomba's *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (1998).

pleasure. Diane Ackerman explains that undiluted by language or rationalization, memories trigger unedited emotions and images stored in long-term memory (1990, 7). Ritualized, mechanical physical gestures in food preparation become a form of utterance for the author and communication with the reader. Some authors' recipes are stark, with each action as an item beginning with an imperative form action verb. Other forms of communication, such as Molly Wizenberg's conversational style or Judith Jones' narrational tone, are filled out into descriptive paragraphs in which the actions are choreographed: "bring a large pot to the boil and quickly dip [...] plop one-sixth [...] holding the board above the boiling water, cut off a 1/3-inch strip [...] push it" (*Tenth Muse*, 244).

For Ehrlich's mother-in-law, the sensorial approach is also instructive: "Cooking is by guesswork, heart's leap, memory" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 59), writes Ehrlich, honouring that invisible bond with ancestors. Ehrlich, however, must write down the recipes that she never cared to learn from her mother, to record the traditions for her children. Recording Miriam's instructions as she cooks: "I write. 'Boil 10 to 15 minutes.' It doesn't look or sound right. I'm used to cookbooks, and such terms as simmer and sauté" (45). There is a cultural chasm between oral transmission and the language of food that she knows for recipes are both read and performed. The authors are not content to describe and contextualize dishes but also to document the recipe with often elaborate details for cooking: "This cake is lighter and less spicy than a typical gingerbread with a subtle kick of warmth from the fresh ginger. Be sure to use a standard unsulfured molasses [...]" explains Wizenberg (*Homemade Life*, 75). It is a way of showing that they are able to translate the language of their ancestors.

If language can be used as an anchor, as a way of traveling back in space and time—for language can always be geographically and culturally localized[113]—this must be counterweighted by the notion that "toute langue est hors sol, exil" (Cassin, 114). This paradox is perhaps resolved by the fundamental notion that writing is nomadic and rhizomatic, as elaborated by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1980, 35). The daily practice of a native language is often lost for immigrants but they find a way to continue to speak, by recording foodways, to make themselves heard for their own sakes and for

[113] "[...] le langage vient toujours de quelque lieu [...]" (Barthes, 1973, 47).

that of their communities. Culinary memoirs are about finding connections or ways to assimilate socially and culturally, while retaining enough cultural integrity to support a coherent identity. These ways are not necessarily found in a traditional hierarchical evolution. For example, Ehrlich writes of her mother's culinary rituals "I wasn't trying to keep a flame alive [...] you children had to eat something and I did what I knew how to do." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 151). There is a desire to connect diverse parts of a personal history, to create a whole that is understandable without it necessarily being linear or historically accurate, recipes serving to make connections fluid and the seams invisible between disconnected parts.

Language as a territory—perhaps even more important than the homeland itself—makes connections between places. Through the naming of food, and its transcription in recipes, narrators seeks to re-establish contact with a lost land. English is often not the mother-tongue at least of the author's parents, an element which contributes to existential anxiety, since Barthes claims: "l'écrivain se fait du plaisir et en quelque sorte 'joue avec le corps de sa mère'" (1973, 60), for the recipes may not be written in their original language but the ingredients evoke a pleasure tantamount to that provoked by the maternal intimacy of early childhood. Madhur Jaffrey recalls: "My grandmother always had an enormous tin of *mutthries* tucked away in the storeroom next to our kitchen. We ate them with the sweet, hot and sour ginger-mango chutney... It was one of our favourite snack foods" (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 292). Kate Christensen recalls her mother's "blue plate special" cooking: "Her mashed potatoes rich, lumpy, and buttery [..] haddock filets—firm, white, mild, kid-friendly fish [...] Part of it might have been the romance of eating the food that had comforted and nourished my mother when she was very young and very poor [...]" (*Blue Plate Special*, 42).

Barbara Cassin sets in opposition mother, father, language and land: "C'est la langue maternelle, et non pas la terre des pères qui constitue sa patrie [...]" (2013, 86). This leads us to question the hold of the homeland in memoir narratives, and might explain some of the conflictual emotions that writers like Abu-Jaber experience in relation to her father's homeland, often called the 'fatherland'. The central role of women, as female voices, the matriarchal transmission of language and foodways, has primacy over lost land. Cassin asserts that "[q]uand la terre est perdue il n'en reste que la langue." (92-3). The land and even the language may be lost but a form of translated

utterance is still possible, not into another language so much as into another means of expression, in this case, food descriptions and recipes, a literal and metaphorical language and ritual, a form of journey, giving access to a new form of identity, sought and 'expressed' through the senses. Jean-Pierre Carron describes language in memoirs as giving form and creating a new identity, even if deliberately constructed, like the language from which it emerges. Language cannot return the narrator to a preexisting state, but can shape and accompany the transformation of individual and collective identity (Carron, 135).

In the case of Madhur Jaffrey's birth ritual where she receives the inscription, not in ink, but in honey, of "I am" on her tongue, words and food become one in transmitting identity and a subconscious memory to the new-born. Henry Miller, as though premeditating this ritual, equates honey with language, as his friend George Katsimbalis searches for a dream: "The word, whatever it was, led to language and language led to honey and honey was good for one [...]" (*Colossus of Maroussi*, 41). In the same spirit, celebrations, called "sweetening-of-the-mouth", a symbolic linguistic preparation for life, like the birth tradition, are auspicious occasions, for enjoying mangoes and ice cream: "Sweetening the mouth was auspicious and had the hallowed ring of tradition to it." (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 198-9). The mouth is both the channel and vector for food and language, the recording of memories, and the locus for what James Beard, the American culinary guru, described as taste memory, which for Madhur Jaffrey was also a language when her destiny is written on her tongue, the articulate honey even becoming audible to her: "I could even *hear*[114] the honey on my tongue" (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, xiv).

Culinary memoirs are essentially about seeking to define, in order to recover the past, in order to recreate it in the present, describing food stuffs, techniques, translating and identifying, through written language as well as the gestural language of food preparation and tasting. A chapter in M.F.K. Fisher's *The Gastronomical Me* offers a curious text that sets in tense juxtaposition language and eating. The narrative mirrors the strange sensual force that the reader is able to sense between a servant in a provincial restaurant, sensually possessed by a passion for food, and the disconcerted Fisher who

[114] My emphasis.

finds her autonomy, and the powers she so proudly flaunts in other chapters of the book,[115] disturbingly diminished by this strangely earnest emissary of the chef, 'Monsieur Paul'.[116] Initially called "I Was Really Very Hungry," the chapter was subsequently re-titled when included in *The Gastronomical Me* as "Define This Word", a curious choice, as the word to be defined is never specified.[117] An undertone of sexual tension suggests she may be talking about desire, but perhaps hunger, in its broad sense, a theme central to her life ethic. "When I write of hunger, I am really writing about love and the hunger for it," Fisher wrote (ix). Whatever the definition, the role of food is presented as defining a word, reminiscent of Miller's comment, which Fisher is unable to articulate, left speechless by the experience. While Fisher eats copious amounts of rich food cooked to perfection, the waitress comments each preparation and questions Fisher on her appreciation, to which Fisher often only offers mild acquiescence or a nod, so overwhelmed is she by the rich feast and the relentless insistence of the waitress, leaving one deliberating 'desire' or 'pleasure' as the gastronomic and linguistic preoccupation.

Conjuring gastronomic nostalgia

Nostalgia speaks a global language, if sometimes in clichés, writes Svetlana Boym (351, 353), but importantly it looks sideways to find lateral articulations. Within Fisher's passage we observe the refined pleasure not only of eating but also of controlling, similar to that which we sense in the litany of ingredients in cookbooks and the evocation of dishes whose point of origin is lost. An aesthetics of pleasure has evolved in remembering and naming of foodways. With the discovery of the Syrian and Lebanese food shops on Atlantic Avenue in New York, Colette Rossant named the food stuffs that give her a sense that New York finally felt like home, as though evoking her lost homeland in a spell: "Here were barrels of dried beans, small green lentils, split peas, *ful medames*, all manner of olives, preserved lemons, pickled onions, and *torchi* (turnips

[115] It is worthy of note that eleven of the twenty-six chapters in *The Gastronomical Me* are entitled "The Measure of my Powers", indicating the degree to which Fisher's gastronomic adventures were a measure of her independence, but also her strengths.
[116] The restaurant and chef's name are suggestive of the restaurant of Paul Bocuse although the reference is chronologically implausible.
[117] The story first appeared in the journal, *The Atlantic* in June 1936, as "I Was Really Very Hungry", then as "Define This Word - 1936" in *The Gastronomical Me* (1943), and again as "I Was Really Very Hungry" in *As They Were* (1982) (737-42).

pickled in brine and beetroot juice)" (*Apricots on the Nile*, 165). For Joyce Zonana, it was the trip to the bakery on the same Atlantic Avenue that created for her family "the aura of a pilgrimage." The visit, accents, aromas of freshly baked bread, described in delicious detail that brought peace: "For a moment I knew who I was." (*Dream Homes*, 35). As though a cultural echo, at least with poetic coincidence, Sasha Martin eats fresh fish from a tavern on Atlantic Avenue, this time in Boston (*Life from Scratch*, 72).

Homi Bhabha explains that scattered people come together on the edge of foreign cultures, in ghettos or ethnic eating places, "in the half-life, half-light of foreign tongues, gathering the signs of approval and integration [...] gathering the past in a ritual of revival, gathering the present" (Bhabha, 139-40). In these congregations of scattered people, we observe the evolution of myths and fantasies that translate loss into the language of metaphor expressing the meaning of time and belonging across distances and cultural differences. Abu-Jaber's *baklava*, that gives the book its title, is a classic of Middle Eastern cooking that symbolizes her father's culture. It also communicates to her the suffering as well as the sacred power of tradition, conjuring a community and its foodways:

> When I inhale Auntie Aya's baklava, I press my hand to my sternum, as if I am smelling something too dear for this world. The scent contains the mysteries of time, loss, and grief, as well of promises and rebirth. I pick up a piece and taste it. I eat and eat. The baklava is so good, it gives me a new way of tasting Arabic food. It is like a poem about the deeply bred luxuries of Eastern cultures. (*Language of Baklava*, 191).

The food descriptions and recipes in culinary memoirs offer a linguistic space for drawing together around the vestiges of a language and place of origin. It is a way of finding pleasure in naming what was once common usage, that for Roland Barthes represents daily life, and particularly meals and their preparation: "Le plaisir du texte peut se définir par une pratique [...] lieu et temps de lecture : maison, province, repas, proche" (1973, 88). Within culinary memoirs, language accumulates layers of nostalgia for home, land and food. Barbara Cassin, writing on nostalgia, quotes Hannah Arendt: "La langue est une patrie qui peut se définir par une langue" (2013, 21). It is, in effect, a vital criterion for defining and locating identity (78). For Lévi-Strauss, cooking composes "un langage dans lequel chaque société code des messages qui lui permettent de signifier

au moins une partie de ce qu'elle est", that is to say, "un langage dans lequel elle traduit inconsciemment sa structure" (1967, 276).

Talking around food, as well as talking about food are equally important. Speaking about food through memoirs of foodways and recipes implies that the oral pleasures are subjected twice over to the laws that govern orality, in food's consumption and in its support of a profuse language activity, in the pleasure of talking about food and in its transcription: "Les plaisirs de la bouche sont deux fois soumis aux loi de l'oralité, en tant qu'absorption de nourriture, plaisir d'avaler et en tant que support d'une activité langagière profuse, plaisir de parler qui décrit." (Certeau et al., 1994, 262). These multiple points of access are the rhizomatic propagation, motivated by nostalgia, or—if one can oppose them—the quest for self-understanding of memories.

The map of ancestral memories is traditionally associated with a space, be it a country—Egypt for Rossant and Zonana, Jordan for Abu-Jaber, the Mediterranean basin for Roden—or interiors, such as Miriam's immigrant's kitchen or Mayes' terrace; Svetlana Boym claims that the nostalgia that these memories generate is related to time: "At first glance nostalgia is a longing for place, but actually it is a yearning for a different time - the time of our childhood, the slower rhythms of our dreams." (Boym, xv). There is an ambivalence between the search for identity in the past that Gullestad evokes—"achieved through negotiated and reflexive use of available life-story material" (Gullestad, 6)—and the desire to find comfort in an imagined persona, the soothing irrefutable self-image that we have just evoked that may not stand up to close inspection in terms of veracity.

Memoirs that are not true cookbooks, and cookbooks that are not obviously memoirs, serve as an intimate space for women to express nonconformist stories, displaying, for example, the courage of Martin and Weiss, and the inventiveness of Narayan. However, the dominant message is not invention, but tradition, culinary memoirs offering not just comfort in home cooking, but also practicing a form of self-indulgence. Many of the recipes are for comforting cakes or soup, while a number of the traditional Mediterranean and Middle Eastern dishes will find nostalgic resonance in contemporary homes of diverse origins.

The undertone of indulgence extends to an undomesticated appetite, or more specifically an unfeminine appetite. Fisher's works, a homage to the multiplicity of

appetites, resist labels: they are neither wholly cookbooks nor wholly travel literature and yet manage to distil the essence of both, while raising the language of food to that of an influential and powerful art that nourishes her emotionally in its beauty and its generosity. Food and its preparation are myth, and myth is word, according to Barthes, a system of communication and symbolism (1957, 211). It can be interpreted, appropriated and used, as with Fisher, for the myth is stolen language (Barthes, 1957, 239), the art of the memoirist is that of making a story from a stew and a stew from a story, the very dish, a 'stew', an emblem of nostalgia.

While the cookbook heritage has left an irrefutable trace on the form of food memoirs, the gastronomic influence can be unmistakably discerned in the language and ideology of the works, if not always in the quality of the narrational culinary artifice, at least in the intention and values to be imparted. According to Alice McLean, the writings of the matriarchs of the culinary self-writing tradition, Fisher, Toklas and David incorporate the tenets of gastronomic literature that we find in more recent culinary memoirs: (McLean, 8). These traits, which include a focus on cooking as an art form and as a social event, associated with the aesthetic pleasure of eating, create an unconventional literary form and determine the language used in culinary memoirs. It embraces personal anecdote, historical reference and literary devices, with a cosmopolitan sensibility, and a concern for elegance of expression in which writing, as an artistic medium, is nourished by the pleasures of gastronomy and the bitter-sweetness of nostalgia.

3. Narrative structure

> *A la table de George Sand* prouvait qu'on pourrait recueillir des recettes, pour autre chose que leur utilisation (Vierne, 153).

Simone Vierne cites the book of recipes from George Sands' table as a mirror through which to understand the writer. There is something tautological in the use of language in culinary memoirs that manipulates food as a language that accesses memories and converses with the reader. That same circular movement is reflected in the narrative structure in which, while pursing the specific notions of recipe as both

artefacts and literary artifice, we are drawn to explore the fragmentary or piecemeal nature of recipes that could appear to dislocate rather than cohere the text, and yet point, by their own inherent narrative structure, to the prescriptive nature of the narrative itself.

Recipes as artefacts and artifice

As both the source and the outcome of stories, the starting point and the conclusion, homely recipes determine the narrative structure and the way in which food descriptions are used in the spirit of gastronomic literature, as creative narrative artifice. The notion of recipes as an embedded discourse to be read, embodies, as Susan Leonardi describes it, "a recommendation, a context, a point, a reason to be" (340). They stand, uniquely, as both material and cultural artefacts, vestiges of a community that document not just the preparation of a dish, but remnants of a previous life, testaments to a way of eating, living and sharing. Recipes are a necessary commodity, a way of reclaiming memory fragments, as an explicit connection to the past. They are a form of exchange for the diaspora due to the rupture with tradition and the influence of other cultures, that must be interpretable by a broader group to ensure their perpetuation.

Frequent and even insistent, the presence of recipes is a relentless reminder of where the book is anchored. Traditional recipes are re-appropriated and made pertinent to the story, serving the emotional needs of the narrator and also perhaps the reader. Conserving artefacts from the past is, for the diaspora or displaced person, a gesture of reassurance, a tool for consolidating a fragmented identity, even reconstructing a disseminated community. Documenting recipes, rituals and traditions is, therefore, also a curatorial act to preserve personal and community histories. The hybrid form becomes an integrated and purposed cultural artefact. In Madhur Jaffrey's richly evocative childhood story, a collection of recipes is offered as tantalizing tidbits, in which artefact and artifice are dissimulated, alluded to in the metatext, the subtitle and photographs, as in a museum, as witnesses to the past, and concrete applications in the present:

> I cannot imagine our picnics or train rides in India without this dish. Sometimes we eat it here with *pooris*, the deep-fried puffed breads, as we did so often in India, and sometimes with rice. When cooking for

> the children, I leave out all the chilies [...] My parents did the same for us where we were growing up. (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 240).

As a literary device, recipes are holistic, in the sense that they offer sensorial, practical, cultural and aesthetic perspectives, pulling together the multi-dimensionality of the authors' pursuit for self-understanding. Recipes also have the capacity to connect the narrator to time as well as place. The paradox of food lies in both its inherent instantaneity and essential timelessness when traditional dishes or culturally-specific staples are invoked. Food preparation and eating follows a rhythm which allows the narrator to connect to an endless historical timeline. Just as Miriam's cakes mark the ritual celebrations of the Jewish year (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 162), so the abundance of seasonal produce from the mythical Mediterranean soil in *Under the Tuscan Sun* imbues the food with solemn importance (278). The consumption of vital foods is a sacramental act, a time for blessings and meditation (Verjat, 16). The narrator, in respecting the cadence and partaking of the meals, becomes part of the cycle of nature, acquiring an aura of immortality that infuses her family's identity and inspires such extasies as this example, which represents the gastronomic recipe for a moment in place and time:

> As I unload my cloth sacks, the kitchen fills with the scents of sunny fruits and vegetables warmed in the car. Everyone coming home from market must feel compelled to arrange the tomatoes, eggplants [...], zucchini, and enormous peppers into a still life in the nearest basket. I resist arranging the fruit in a bowl [...] because it's ripe this minute [...] The *signora* who lived here a hundred years ago could walk in now and start to cook. (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 112, 113).

Recipes, as artefacts, can also seem frustratingly incomplete appearing in incoherent disorder as disparate. In *A Homemade Life*, Wizenberg takes us on a route from Swiss chard and bean soup, through Mediterranean meatballs and Scottish shortbread with lemon and ginger to cider-glazed salmon in as many chapters. The story, in contrast, as an assemblage of memories, can also provide coherence, just as recipes can provide the thread that string anecdotes together, each element supporting the other. Personal histories are marked by crossings borders, the movement, an oscillation that we previously observed in language styles, symbolized in the switching between narrative and recipes, where "discursive positions and material locations are imbricated" (Anderson, 2011, 107), traversing literal and metaphysical boundaries.

On a macrocosmic scale, Judith Jones, the legendary editor of the publisher Alfred Knopf who discovered and published most of the culinary giants of the twentieth century,[118] draws to herself authors and their recipes as artefacts that form recipes collections, particularly ethnic, her editorial cause in the name of a national, or one might say international, heritage. Her memoir gives us insights into the evolution of food writing in the second half of the twentieth century. Recipes offered vicarious travel experiences, access to a hedonistic world of pleasure, as well as insights into the lives of food writers. Reviewing the manuscript for Elizabeth David's *Italian Food*[119] she writes: "I was immediately captivated by the book, loving the way David managed to weave history, story and personal experience into a collection of recipes, peppering it all with opinionated comment." (*Tenth Muse*, 58). Such was her enthusiasm that when faced with the question of her abandoning the publication because David refused the translation of the Italian recipe titles, she resisted, "the idea of walking away from Elizabeth David when she had just opened up a whole new world to me in the art of food writing was an appalling thought. So we went ahead and published it – quietly." (59).

The recipe presentation in Judith Jones' memoir is one example of several in which recipes are presented with their provenance, explaining, in effect, the journey that they have taken to arrive at that point. Following each recipe is a section in italics which presents its 'passport'—its origins and identity—and notes on possible adaptations and Jones' own personalisations. The recipe is accorded the multiple facets of a persona. Commenting on the recipe for *Bitki*, she writes: "I'm not sure where the recipe came from or how it got its Russian name, but that added to its appeal [...] Over the years, I've played with the basic recipe and under the influence of Claudia Roden have made what I think of as a Middle Eastern version" (209). Food writers and cooks are often cited in these descriptions using first name terms to heighten the personal nature of the recipe and the journey it has made to reach her: 'Julia', 'Claudia', 'Jim', 'Jacques'.[120]

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[118] Judith Jones, as Senior Editor at Alfred A. Knopf, published many of the major culinary works of the twentieth century, including those of Claudia Roden, Julia Child, Madhur Jaffrey and James Beard.

[119] Elizabeth David's other cookbooks that perpetuate the discreetly autobiographic, passionately demanding form of *The Mediterranean Book of Food* include: *French Country Cooking* (1951), *Summer Cooking* (1955) and *French Provincial Cooking* (1960).

[120] Jones is referring to food writers and cooks Julia Child, Claudia Roden, James Beard, Jacques Pepin.

M.F.K. Fisher also uses personification to indicate the way in which food can reflect its evolving environment. The strange, often unappetizingly presented food on the small Dutch passenger-freighter that took Fisher and her husband back to Europe, was a reflection of the ship itself and its journey: "It was dull, good, heavy food, but there were many vegetables and salads all the way to England" (137), as though the food itself was impregnated with the solid reliability, as well as the contextual reality of the passage in 1936, just prior to the war, personified like the boat itself**:** "like a well-loved animal or woman, sensitive and intelligently grateful, the realest ship I ever knew" (135). Food can also be substituted for a metonymy, in which, for example, the table is personified, representing both the stable institution of food and meals and a potentially exotic place; writing of France and its food, Gopnik entitles his work *The Table Comes First*, anchoring in the instance of food. While eating the *magloubeh*, Abu-Jaber's uncle says: "Here it is, our national identity [...] we're singing to the *magloubeh* [...] the table undergoes its balkanization—women on one side and men on the other" (*Language of Baklava*, 129), and a transformation occurs as though they have returned to the homeland, Jordan.

Narrative fragmentation

Recipes open up a new world not just for the reader, but as we have seen for the writer too. Scattered recipes can be seen as symbolic of modern social dislocation, offering a unique way of perceiving and articulating moral values, and creating both symbolic textual cohesion and fragmentation as much on a cultural as on a poetic level. They represent the combining of diverse ingredients to make a harmonious and appetizing dish. Although fragments in the narrative flow, they play a catalytic role in culinary memoirs to preserve, retrieve, anchor and restore. They operate on two levels, as spiritual crutches, creating linguistic echoes of the past and nostalgic tastes of a lost homeland through a metaphysical connection to kin and country, and because of this, physical and emotional healing. The two functions, operating together, construct a new identity. On a structural level, recipes both disrupt the narrative and offer a refrain and a common thread that tie together the pieces of the narrator's identity, and that, despite the vagaries of the narrative, typically bring the story back to an ethnic core. On a symbolic level, recipes as textual fragmentation, represent the multiple facets of

women's lives and a generalized postmodern dislocation, offered as a way of perceiving or articulating the world. Shoba Narayan's quintessentially Indian yoghurt rice dish recipe takes the reader through the steps of preparing the ethnic ingredients, while transplanting the dish to America in the final sentence, with an essentially American dietary recommendation: "Eat on a hot summer day after an afternoon of Frisbee in the park, for a wholesome, nutritious supper" (*Monsoon Diary*, 120).

Fragmented food preparations are ultimately the allegorical grains of creativity that allow the narrator to build something new while retaining symbolic ties with the past, proposing stories within stories that are both complete and waiting to be enacted. Shoba Narayan offers her readers the recipe for Okra Curry which is one of the dishes she prepares to convince her family to send her to America. It has a family history, a mythical tale of a poor man who eats okra to increase his wits that will enable him to win the chess game and allow him to marry the princess. It is also an invitation to the reader to taste each of these elements (*Monsoon Diary*, 108). Abu-Jaber's father, a culinary wordsmith, who struggles to communicate in America, capturing lost language in flavours and smells, is himself a story within a story, his life, a rich pageant of passions and contradictions around food.

Homes and homelands are constructed in the imagination to compensate for the frustrations of reality. Zonana's memoir is entitled *Dream Homes: From Cairo to Katrina*, as though all the places between Cairo and New Orleans were insubstantial and illusory. The start and end point of her exile's journey is Cairo, her family's place of origin and the stuff of dreams, in which she seeks comfort in tangible evidence, only to discover not a real but a spiritual family birthplace: "What I found, instead, was the ancient home of dreams—a resting place, a cure." (*Dream Homes*, 181). Like the shards of a mirror, they make it possible, through the senses, for diasporic or displaced communities to remember memories distanced by displacement or exile:

> [...] it was precisely the partial nature of these memories, their fragmentation, that made them so evocative for me. The shards of memory acquired greater status, greater resonance, because they were remains; fragmentation made trivial things seem like symbols, and the mundane acquired numinous qualities (Rushdie, 1991, 12).

As Linda Hutcheon explains, "[w]e live immersed in narrative [...] situating ourselves at the intersection of several stories not yet completed." (1989, 51-2). Memoirs

are segments of time, incomplete, selected, structured and constructed, without ends, offering the possibility "of imposing order on that past, of encoding strategies of meaning-making through representation", for she explains that the historian's job is to tell plausible stories, "made out of the mess of fragmentary and incomplete facts" (Hutcheon, 1989, 67). As curators of culinary traditions, memoirists can be considered historians of a familial and community past. Many of Elizabeth Ehrlich's recipes are traditional Jewish fare which she personalizes with comments about how her mother-in-law would prepare or serve them. Past and present are processed simultaneously in food narratives, where memories are evoked at the same time as dishes are prepared and eaten, enabling the narrator, through the perpetuation of emotions associated with dishes to transcend the chronology of time. Abu-Jaber precedes 'Forget-Me-Not Sambusik Cookies' with "What sort of person am I? Where are my loyalties? And who will I remember when I grow up?" (*Language of Baklava*, 51). Shoba Narayan follows an intimate description of her grandparents and their fusional relationship during her early years, with a recipe for lentil-based *rasam*, the vegetarian equivalent of the proverbial chicken soup of the Jewish American tradition, albeit symbolically offered as "a diluted version", and geographically pinpointed (*Monsoon Diary*, 20). On another occasion, recalling the taste of a childhood stew, with closed eyes, "trying to etch the stew into memory" (46), Narayan interrupts the reminiscence with the recipe preceded by an anecdote of another stew in a different situation (47), juxtaposing together mental and sensorial memories of a similar vein.

Often compared to the novel, the episodic, anecdotal and non-chronological nature of women's memoirs, corresponding, in many ways, to the publishing reality of isolated chapters, would indicate an affinity with the short story, or travel tales of displacement. Chapters that read like short stories are strong indicators that they were previously published in a magazine, the case, for example, of several extracts from Frances Mayes' *Under the Tuscan Sun*, or in academic journals for four of the ten chapters from Joyce Zonana's *Dream Homes*. The material has been tried and tested on other audiences, but more importantly, this approach accentuates the parcelled, shredded and reconstructed nature of the memoir. Estelle Jelinek describes the disjointed nature of women's autobiographies as a reflection of their multifaceted lives: "Disjunctive narratives and discontinuous forms are more adequate for mirroring the

fragmentation and multidimensionality of women's lives." (Jelinek, 1986, 188), reflecting the nature of women's roles within the home and in the outside world. A diasporic narrative style emerges that is foremostly fragmented, but also layered and nomadic in its hybridity, never fully part of a single genre but wandering between several, such as food or travel magazines, academic journals, or personal blogs,[121] not without intention, but resisting formal categorization within the recognized autobiographical canon.

In terms of narrational organization, the chapters in culinary memoirs tend to be short, corresponding to a single anecdote and an associated recipe. Narayan's 223-page *Monsoon Diary* contains no less than 18 chapters and 21 recipes, while for Jaffrey's 231 pages in *Climbing the Mango Trees,* there are 29 chapters, a prologue and an epilogue, each with a number of sub-titles indicating the episodes of the chapter, followed by a 63-page recipe section. The table of content of *The Language of Baklava*, indicates 24 chapters, typically containing two or more recipes, with descriptive, ironic or humorous names making them stories in themselves. Nigel Slater's *Toast*, has no table of contents, but the text is divided into 118 fragments or stories, for the most part bearing the name of a food item. Reichl's 136 recipes move string together an irregular progression towards healing. Each of the three parts of Elizabeth Gilbert's 108 segment narrative are preceded by the mention "36 Tales about the Pursuit of Pleasure" or "Devotion" or "Balance". Luisa Weiss' *My Berlin Kitchen* is divided into five parts that follow her transcontinental oscillations, with a total of 41 chapters and a dense 43 recipes. Wizenberg organizes her 300 plus pages into some 46 chapters. Each work offers a non-conformist fragmented structure that heeds the subjective logic of the author's culinary narrative intention.

Frances Mayes' *Under the Tuscan Sun*, Elizabeth Ehrlich's *Miriam's Kitchen* and Ruth Reichl *My Kitchen Year* define a temporal structure, each loosely following the course of a year. Mayes follows the seasons, focused mostly on the summer, during which she leaves her home in California to progressively entrench herself in Tuscan

[121] A marked example of the commercial fragmentation of culinary texts is Kate Christensen's *Blue Plate Special*. Christensen specifies that portions of the memoir were published in works as diverse as a collection of essays on influential music, a collection of essays on the condition of women in today's society, a collection of stories about broken relationships, a worldwide distribution women's magazine, a literature and music blog and her own personal blog. A *New York Times* article by Abigail Meisel (Meisel, n.pag.) even goes so far as to say that the book was "culled from her popular blog, *Don't Let It Bring You Down*", indicating the very starting point of the memoir was piecemeal.

society and the restoration of a new home. Episodes within the chapters are separated by ornamental symbols. Ehrlich's narrative follows the Jewish year month by month, starting with Rosh Hashanah in September. Each section is divided into a metatextual journal entry, followed by between three and five subsections. It is one of the most structurally fragmented of texts and yet her identity quest ultimately binds the parts into a coherent whole. These memoir structures were possibly influenced by Laura Esquivel's novel, published a few years earlier in 1992, *Like Water for Chocolate: A Novel in Monthly Installments with Recipes, Romances, and Home Remedies*,[122] about female desire and domesticity. It associates recipes with a temporal progression and the evolution of the protagonists, while the recipes and home remedies link food with healing through domestic family cooking traditions.

Many memoir authors offer several locational perspectives within a single work, often associated with different places, periods in life or turning points. M.F.K. Fisher's memoir flows from America to France and Switzerland, Luisa Weiss moves her narrative between New York, Berlin and Italy, Diana Abu-Jaber's story describes several moves between America and Jordan. Culinary memoirs offer a multiplication of viewpoints and voices through recipes, but also the notion of prismic distortion is perhaps too self-centred to fully represent a community, or too idealistic to represent reality. Christopher Middleton writing of D. H. Lawrence says that "the narrator may reflect all things and persons so prismically that his vision is not single but multiple" (Middleton, 19). Lawrence Durrell, through itinerant island books, offers a single vision of man and his place within the universe through the fragmented multi-faceted lens of his Mediterranean residences and the voices of the people he meets: "Durrell's intense awareness of place imposes a kind of unity on his otherwise disparate material [...] and the landscape and the atmosphere serve as touchstones, as controlling metaphors" (Friedman, 1987, 61). Durrell creates a holistic vision of the Mediterranean using diverse viewpoints, landscapes and morsels of hybrid text, as we find in *Prospero's Cell*, which couples personal memoir with guide book indications and conversations. He offers a personal map with multiple entry points, an image which can also be applied to culinary

[122] The novel was originally published in 1989 in Spanish *Como agua para chocolate*, and in 1992 in English (American).

memoirs with their contrasting poetic narrative and functional recipe prose. Durrell, like memoirists that followed him, needed to proceed with a reterritorialization[123] of his individual roots that no longer had a place to bury deep and anchor themselves for, according to Durrell, there was no soil favourable to their growth. They extend their reach horizontally, creating shoots, connecting with people, communities and traditions. Reterritorialization is indicative of a constant state of transformation and self-seeking that must multiply itself in order to consolidate its core.

Within a rhizomatic dimension, manifold voices emerge, united by a multi-tasked collective voice which recalls memories, proposes recipes and tells a story. This is particularly true of the recipe book form of memoirs, such as those of David, Toklas and Roden in which the author is accompanied by the scarcely audible voices of the recipes' authors, whose contributions are acknowledged as coming from disparate sources, albeit mostly anonymously. Molly Wizenberg's cooking is symptomatic of the solitary self-searching of youth, constantly seeking culinary perfection; she nevertheless emphasises her family's contribution, writing, "[w]hat follows is a result of *our* pooled memories and my own trial and error" (*Homemade Life,* 39). Cooking is, in essence, a collective effort, a spiritual coming together felt strongly in Joyce Zonana's acknowledgments, in which she admits that writing, initially conceived as a personal academic exercise, turned out to be not a solitary enterprise but "an intensely communal adventure, bringing me into ever-deepening contact with an ever-widening circle of people" (*Dream Homes*, 1).

The indexes—an uncommon referential paratext in memoirs—are symbolic of a rhizomatic structure in their spreading lateral and non-hierarchical references. They are also telling of the authors' perceptions of their works, in terms of the degree of fiction, and whether they are food-focused or essentially autobiographical. Kamman, Chamberlain, Weiss, Wizenberg offer indexes of food and recipes, while Ehrlich, Judith Jones and Anna Del Conte provide both food and general indexes, signifying the conception of the book as a work of culinary reference, but also of general topics, suggesting that it is conceived as a resource for others of similar diasporic fate or origins.

[123] Refer to Deleuze and Guattari, 1980. *Mille Plateaux: Capitalisme et schizophrénie, 2*.

In Madeleine Kamman's uniquely structured text, she tells her early life story through the reminiscences of eight other lives, that we have referred to earlier as a polyphonic voice. The story of each of the women who shaped her life with honest French country cooking, is the embryo of a memoir in its own right. Rhizomatically, they are connected through Kamman and also to their region and 'terroir'. These examples, with other culinary memoirs, embody a timeless, sometimes non genealogical quality. The narratives draw lines and make connections, but do not always have clear start or end points, an atemporal quality that we find in the notion of cooking itself, that combine enduring traditions with instantaneous consumption and marking an inevitable deterritorialization: "Il n'y a pas de points ou de position dans un rhizome, comme on en trouve dans une structure, un arbre, une racine. Il n'y a que des lignes." (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 13). A rhizome has no start or end point and Deleuze and Guattari insist that questions of origins are inappropriate. Are memoirists then pursuing an illusion? We might conclude that the desire to trace one's origins is instinctive, unconditional and inescapable. A rhizomatic approach is a survival technique for dealing with the unthinkable, that origins may be untraceable, or inadequate and disappointing when found. It is conducted in parallel and contributes to the sense of narrative fragmentation, although it might ultimately be the unique strategy for achieving a coherent whole. Sasha Martin's building of a cosmopolitan culinary heritage, as a sort of horizontal connection with the earth, proceeds even as she seeks to discover the meagre but significant truth of her father's intentions and true nature.

Deleuze and Guattari claim that to look for a beginning or foundational starting point, as culinary memoirs are intent on doing, implies a false notion of travel and movement.[124] They seek an initiation and draw a tentative conclusion at what they believe to be a pertinent end point, but in the great diasporic scheme of things, the narrators are only themselves oscillating fragments in a larger community or even territorial picture. They can be seen as part of "un mouvement transversal qui les emporte l'une *et* l'autre, ruisseau sans début ni fin" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 37). Joyce Zonana's milestone at the Rosh Hashanah meal she hosts, is a moment of pause

[124] "[C]hercher un commencement, ou un fondement, impliquant une fausse conception de voyage et du mouvement" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 36). My translation.

on her journey, not a conclusion. Her long-thought out menu is "what I want just now [...]" (*Dream Homes*, 203).

Narrative as recipe and recipe as narrative

Narayan's story, likewise, comes to a satisfying conclusion, that makes the narrative and the recipes a fulfilling experience, in potentially all senses of the term. The narrative elements that Anne Bower has identified in cookbooks[125] are found in culinary memoirs, including setting, typically the kitchen and dining room, characters playing roles of differing importance from those acknowledged in paratexts to protagonists who play out a drama centred around the pursuit of identity, and plot which unfolds in synchronization with the readers' interactions with the text. Peter Brooks refers to plot as "an activity, a structuring operation elicited in the reader trying to make sense of those meanings that develop only through textual and temporal succession" (Bower, 37). The plot, if as such the narrative development can be called, solicits the reader at the junction where the narrative shifts from introspection to recipe. Recipes themselves point towards themes of ambition, integration, differentiation and assimilation, be they ethnic, in the case of Egyptian Zonana endeavouring to feel at home in American society despite the sentiment of being an outsider, religious, in Ehrlich's pursuit of a stricter religious Jewish practice, or geographic, with Abu-Jaber's equivocal father, Bud, who oscillates between homeland and host land.

Autobiographical texts are framed by paratextual elements that accompany publication, reception and circulation. Gérard Genette describes paratext as a combination of peritext (material found inside the book) and epitext (elements found outside the book).[126] As Genette explains, far from being neutral, paratextual material establishes a threshold that can dramatically affect the autobiographical interpretation and reception (1987, 7-8).[127] Recipes have a unique status, as an integral part of the narrative and also as paratexts, whether they mark a pause made by the narrator in the

[125] Refer to Bower, 32-35.
[126] Refer to Genette, 1987.
[127] "Le paratexte est [...] par quoi un texte se fait livre[,] [...] une zone [...] de transaction[,] [...] d'une action sur le public au service [...] d'un meilleur accueil du texte et d'une lecture plus pertinente [...]" (Genette, 1987, 7-8).

narrative to provide guidance and cooking instructions, or as an annex to the primary narrative. The recipes in *Miriam's Kitchen*, taken in their globality, provide subtle cultural context that helps us to understand the main narrative. As individual anecdotes, they provide meta-commentary of the author's story as pinpointed vignettes that are both specific to the author and her family or community. Taken in their entirety, as a record of Ehrlich's awakening to her Jewish heritage, her recipes, modest yet numerous, are a homage to Miriam and her wounded generation, but like the baked apples that her grandmother makes for her son, are never enough: "A tray of baked apples just wasn't enough. Even a bushel, even an orchard. A galaxy of apples, scented with cinnamon, flavored with lemon, would have been inadequate, too." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 140).

Most culinary memoirs use the explicit paratextual subtitle to set the readers' expectations about the book. They define the genre, stipulating not only that it is non-fiction, but also that it is not merely an autobiography either. Where the title mentions food, the addition of 'a memoir' suffices, sometimes introducing ideas of love, growing up and forgiveness; otherwise they announce a culinary dimension: *The Language of Baklava: A Memoir* (Abu-Jaber), *Miriam's Kitchen: A Memoir* (Ehrlich), *Life from Scratch: A Memoir of Food, Family, and Forgiveness* (Martin), *Tender at the Bone: Growing Up at the Table* (Reichl), *My Berlin Kitchen: A Love Story (with recipes)* (Weiss), *A Homemade Life. Stories and Recipes from my Kitchen Table* (Wizenberg). Some set the stage for recipes as a healing formula. Wizenberg's opinionated meta-dialogue about herself, her writing and her food preferences, as well as the metatexts, that include acknowledgements, introduction, and most significantly, "How to use the recipes in this book"—which she admits she would usually skip to avoid being told what to do—strongly influence not only the way we read the narrative and recipes but also how we perceive Wizenberg herself.

With the transmission of values through complementary stories and recipes, the narrative itself becomes a form of recipe, a formula for well-being. Interdependently, the recipes themselves are narratives, stories from family and community members, transmitting culturally based context and creating a parallel narrative in the text, a dualism in the voice of the narrator. Colleen Cotter draws on Donald Polkinghorne's

reference[128] to Roland Barthes' description of the 'recipe' as a narrative, representing a formal unit: "the narrative may incorporate [...] gestures and the ordered arrangement of all the ingredients" (Cotter, 58).[129] There form and their implementation are structuring: Cotter describes a sense of psychological completion that accompanies the conclusion of recipes (63), symbolized by their use in illustrating a story within the narrative, and their position as conclusion to a chapter, infusing them with the power of the final word, more emphatically still, at the end of the book, in the case, for example, of Madhur Jaffrey. They provide a thread that connects disparate narrative elements of turbulent stories like Elizabeth Ehrlich's ribbon image that "tethers us to our past", her grandmother made those connections: "without my grandmother to hold things together, Jewish essence also dispersed." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 99). Women practice a form of intertextuality when they transform cookbooks into a testimony of their own lives, adapting them to their own experience. Ehrlich admits that before she began her journey she knew nothing of the traditions of her mother-in-law, her kitchen barren of cultural roots. Joyce Zonana, likewise, fled the kitchen and her mother's ardent respect of her ancestral foodways before finding her path back home.

Recipes enable an examination of the intersection that Cotter describes between language and social relationships (54), derived from the multiple interpretations, in the author's relationship with her family and in the reader's culinary creativity. The reading of a recipe becomes not a fulfilment of expectations so much as a potential modification of them. Luce Giard refers to cooking as basic repetitive practice that is shaped by family history.[130] For the narrator, particularly of diasporic origin, authentic ingredients of family dishes are often lacking and the recipe must be adapted to new circumstances. Many recipes are annotated with special notes about substituting ingredients or modifying the preparation. Abu-Jaber substitutes lamb for goat in her *Bedouin Mensaf*

[128] Donald Polkinghorne. *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany: State U of New York P, 1988. 15.
[129] "[...] le récit peut être supporté par le langage articulé, oral ou écrit, par l'image, fixe ou mobile, par le geste et par le mélange ordonné de toutes ces substances[...]" (Barthes, 1966, 1).
[130] "Faire la cuisine est le support d'une pratique élémentaire, humble, obstinée, répétée dans le temps et dans l'espace, enracinée dans le tissu des relations aux autres et à soi-même [...]" (Certeau et al., 1994, 222)

Leben recipe and adds a note about where to but *Shrak* a special thin bread. (*Language of Baklava*, 69-70).

Elizabeth McDougall counter argues that the precise measurements and cooking instructions of recipes are a form of control that she associates with Bakhtin's notion of 'monoglossia'[131] that locks the cooks into a preset formula: "a text that denies plurality to the reader" (McDougall, 115), as an exclusive language. Stephen Mennell confirms that the recipe fixes an approach to cooking through the "the fixing of a text in an objective, written form", but the presentation of recipes in memoirs as part of a constructed narrative, confirms that they too are a constructed element and therefore, as we have suggested, viable to change. Despite the usual intention of recipe writers to avoid ambiguity, the recipes are not without a plurality of meaning, for beyond the recipes' anecdotes that conjure flights of imagination, readers potentially bring their own knowledge and experience of the ingredients and the cultural and culinary context of a dish.

Apart from Toklas' unique stream-of-consciousness style of recipe narrative, recipes are typically presented in culinary memoirs in a classically scripted form, using an imperative tone of the written recipe, "indeed the word 'recipe' itself [...] means 'take', typically the first command in the instructions for each dish" (Mennell, 67). Within the structure of the text, recipes, thus, serve as anchors that fix the narrative in both past and present. Their guiding and imperative tone is reassuring in a cultural and social context that is often ill-defined or unsure. They create a rhythm in the narrative serving as a refrain, as markers of origin, of the kind described by Deleuze and Guattari, which indicate a territory "les ritournelles territoriales [...] cherchent, marquent et agencent un territoire" (1980, 402). That territory, be it physical or virtual—a tradition or a recipe—with which one identifies home, is a place through which one must pass, like Narayan in her rite of passage to access an American education, or Ehrlich, who must learn her mother-in-law's recipes in order to connect with her own spiritual identity and raison d'être. Paradoxically, recipes are also malleable, open to adaptation and personal interpretation, yet they are also prone to deterritorialization. Their malleability

[131] This opposes Bakhtin's theory of polyglossia, or the hybrid nature of language, in which a text generates multiple meanings, described in (Bakhtin, 48-254).

reinforces the idea of a crossover with narratives of other genre themes, notably those of alterity and travel, in which, for example, Linda Furiya regularly takes her reader to Japan in her recipes, from her 'whitebread' America.

Just as recipes serve as narrative so the narrative offers us a recipe, not simply of values that we have discussed earlier, but as a creative response to the interplay between the now of the narrative and the then of the historical past. Gullestad writes that "Literary theorists locate autobiographies between history and creative imaginative literature, though closer to creativity than to history." (Gullestad, 13). The memoir narrative identifies the shift from biography to autobiography, from a focus on life to a focus on the construction of self. Recipes can be perceived as biographical stories of foodways and traditions, shifting attention from the personal story to the family or the community. The construction of self is often dissimulated behind a mission to recollect and to curate one's past.

This creativity often takes the form of a complex focus and narratorial position in terms of device or artifice. Toklas, like Elizabeth David, wrote a cookbook about her life with Gertrude Stein that was really about herself. Stein, reciprocally, wrote an 'autobiography' of Toklas, in the voice of Toklas, which was really a memoir about herself.[132] Leslie Li writes a memoir focused on writing the biography of her grandmother, but the book turns into the story of her complex relationship with her father, as well as her grandmother. Kamman speaks through a sisterhood of women, Samuel Chamberlain through a fictitious domestic heroine, David through the writings of a literary entourage of friends and writers she admired. Narrators demonstrate a cautious quality, continually stepping back from the participant and witness roles to observe the patchwork being formed. The works constitute a collage of fragments that makes sense of troubled lives. During the chapter on the Moon Festival celebrated with perfectly round fruits symbolizing "family unity and harmony", Leslie Li assets that she does not want to be happy but to be whole, her father's letter arriving at that time gave

[132] Anna Linzie wrote a critical analysis, *The True Story of Alice B. Toklas: A Study of Three Autobiographies* (2006), of the three interwoven cookbook-memoir-autobiographies that Toklas and Stein wrote of each other and their gastronomic world: *The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook* by Toklas (1954), *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* by Stein (1933), and *What is Remembered* by Toklas (1963). Worthy of note, the original book design for this latter work, was done by German-American book designer Ernst Reichl (1900-1980), Ruth Reichl's father.

her "ground" under her feet, the "foundation" she needed to build a new life, without which connection "life would have lacked a dimension, a dynamic, a wholeness"; the passage concludes with a recipe for Moon Cake, tying these threads together (*Daughter of Heaven*, 141-152). Recipes, which are by nature self-contained and concretising, contribute to a pursuit of wholeness, central to memoirs.

According to Pierre Nora, memory moves from concrete to abstract and originates not in places but in situations. Culinary memoirs respect that structure to a point, prominent values represent the abstract, but recipes shift the focus again from abstract to practical. The oscillating structure of memoirs reflects the vacillating state of many diasporic writers. In *Monsoon Diary*, recipes are offered within vignettes, stories within a story, traditional tales or further anecdotes from the author's life. This multi-faceted structure is symbolic of the many faces of American immigrant life, recipes within narratives, narratives within recipes. Kate Christensen's narrative shifts from personal landscape to natural elements and its foods, from earth-rooted farming to personal journey.

Amongst their many literary virtues, culinary memoirs, foremostly, bring memories into the contemporary foodways arena, which is frenetic with a newly emerging consciousness around food as a channel for self-discovery, and charged with important issues around voice, identity and traditions. Food language expresses the essence of place and that place, through language, is equated with food. They also allow women to speak as a common voice while each recounting their singular tale, bringing a new perspective on the literature of travel and displacement, and writing a new page of the travel literature genre.

The culinary memoir is evolving with the emergence of a literature of food writing and the evolution of women's literary creativity and independence, manifesting a cultural and literary creativity harbouring manifold and distinctive literary calibre. It blends diverse strands of identity, paradoxically expressing autonomy in its structure through a discourse around alterity, as evoked through foodway descriptions and imaginatively conjured otherness, while emphasizing the relational and communal as the ongoing grounds of self-performance. The strength of its form is in the elasticity of the modes that it makes available for fuller repossession of the cultural world in which we perform our lives.

C. Reception

> [R]ecipes are conversations, not lectures; they are a beginning, not an end. (*My Kitchen Year*, xix).

Ruth Reichl's words remind us that cooking is a dialogue between the cook and those passing on the recipe. There is an explicit aim of transmission within the narrative and a tacit transmission between the narrator and the reader. For all of Elizabeth David's intransigent rigour and claim of finding comfort in the transposition from memory to page of her cherished cuisine, she was delighted at the proposition of a paperback version of *Mediterranean Food*: "I jumped at the offer. A Penguin would mean a vastly increased readership, and in all probability a younger one [...] needing to cook for themselves and give the occasional dinner party." (11). She saw in the publication venture, not only an increased readership, but more importantly, one that would implement her culinary manifesto. We are led to examine the respective roles of the author and the reader, and the questions raised around their autobiographical pact. Culinary memoirs are personal journeys of self-discovery, but they are written with a stated intention to share learnings, as well as recipes and culinary cultures. The reader is addressed both through the narrative and in the recipes, while the text itself is an implicit invitation to come to the table.

1. The reader's performance

We have previously identified the active performance that the reader plays in the creation and interpretation of culinary memoirs. In this chapter we will explore this central role, reviewing the reading act, the reader's subjective approach to the memoir, including her appraisal of metatexts from the perspective of previous experience. This role is paramount in the intimate sphere of memoirs, for according to Wolfgang Iser: "the convergence of text and reader bring[s] the literary work into existence" (Iser, 107). In an early example of this fusional relationship, Marie Ritz, wife of Cesar Ritz, writing of Escoffier's says: "Escoffier's *Culinary Guide* is something more to me than a superior sort of cookbook. I turn the pages of it and it is like turning the pages of my own personal

history",[133] narrator and reader join forces. In this example Marie Ritz is no doubt a passive reader, but the invitation to enter the kitchen is explicit.

For the reader, the attraction to autobiography is the fascination with how people make sense of their lives. The cultural obsession with the personality that adheres to an ideology of individualism,[134] accounts for the popularity of culinary memoirs as personal story-telling since the 1990s (when publications multiplied).[135] Autobiographies embody the notion of healing through a resourceful and penetrating narrative, an approach at the heart of the discourse of culinary memoirs, where the narrative is particularly attentive and inviting to the reader. Memoirs allow the narrator to construct, as well as reconstruct memories in order to rebuild, often dislocated, or confused identities. But, what does the reader bring to the reading of a culinary memoir? Sometimes a personal diasporic story, perhaps a form of trauma or a nostalgic experience of another culture. There are also literary expectations based on previous reading experiences as well as the intervention of the metatext that the author or the publisher uses, amplified in culinary memoirs by the presence of recipes as personal and collective invitations to cook. Hans Robert Jauss writes of the plurality and diversity of "horizons of expectation" that the reader brings to the act of reading in a receptive and active relationship with the text: "toute nouvelle production apparaît, soit pour répondre fidèlement à l'attente, soit pour le décevoir ou lui imposer de se transformer." (Jauss quoted in Lejeune, 1975, 320). Previous reading experiences define a landscape, the form of which adjusts itself according to the reader's appraisal and her moral and literary expectations.

Their sometimes-ambiguous link to reality makes memoirs the perfect space for the reader to imaginatively explore her own life, and values, guided by a virtual community of women. Symbolically, the reader also becomes the subject and substantiates James Olney's claim that autobiography is the literature that offers the reader an increased awareness of ourselves through an understanding of another life

[133] In *Cesar Ritz, Host to the World. Philadelphia*: J.B. Lippincott, 1938. (Trubek, 2000, 49).
[134] "The contemporary fascination with confession and other modes of personal storytelling derives in part from the tenacious hold that the ideology of individualism has on Westerners." (Smith and Watson, 124)
[135] Although fiction is not the focus of this study, we note its relevance to the development of a literary imagination around gastronomy, while the late 1990s also saw the rise of gastronomic fiction in both English and other languages.

(1972, vii). When we seek unity within the stories of others, the acts of writing and reading work together to create order from chaos (Anderson, 2011, 118). Moving beyond trauma narratives to contemporary concerns about identity, other people's narratives are, for the reader, ambitious guides to self-understanding, self-improvement and self-healing. Helen Buss states that memoirs express "a wish to regain the harmony and inner tranquility of a congruent relationship with the realities of human existence" (Buss, 3), a connection between self and reality. Roland Barthes described literary texts as either readerly or writerly, (Barthes, 1970). He used the terms "lisible" ("readerly") and "scriptible" ("writerly") to distinguish respectively texts that are straightforward and demand no special effort to understand and those whose meaning is not immediately evident and demand some effort on the part of the reader. Culinary memoirs can be said to fall into the category of readerly texts in which a world of easily identifiable characters and events is presented, and in which the characters and their actions are understandable.

Reader and writer meet on common ground in this particular need to make sense of their respective lives. Both seek to connect to *ad hoc* communities. As Boris Cyrulnik writing of trauma narratives said, when a group hears a shared story, each person (whether reader or writer) feels reassured by the presence of the other. This is why stories, myths and prayers recited side-by-side are excellent cultural tranquilisers.[136] The recipes which create a poetic rhythm in the memoirs, offer the comfort of community prayers through their repetitive linguistic form, a sort of comforting refrain and anchor point, as repeated stories, myths or even supplications, with their recurrent injunctions of 'add', 'chop', 'mix', 'beat', 'toss', 'heat', 'bake', 'remove', to name a few of the commonly used repeated imperatives. Julie Rak notes that in the memoir genre "the non-identical repetition of familiar elements" creates a sensation of pleasure as well as a sense of being involved: "the act of recognition itself creates a measure of participation for the reader." (2013, loc. 638). As Rak explains, this is not necessarily solely narcissistic, for many readers it is "a way of discovering the lives of others, not of rediscovering or obsessing

[136] "Quand dans un groupe, on partage un même récit, chacun est sécurisé par la présence de l'autre. Raconter la même histoire, croire aux mêmes représentations crée un sentiment de grande familiarité. "C'est pourquoi les récits partagés, les mythes racontés, les prières récitées côte à côte sont d'excellents tranquillisants culturels." (Cyrulnik, 188).

about the self" (2013, loc. 218). Analysing Ben Yagoda's position she comments that in the memoir boom there is: "more narcissism overall, less concern for privacy, a strong interest in victimhood, and a therapeutic culture" (2013, loc. 317). Privacy in memoirs, that come from or meld into blogs, is seconded to the cause of sharing and working through existential and diasporic dilemmas. There is also a propensity to publish victim-trauma memoirs that relate how turning to cooking was a life-changing act.[137]

Culinary memoirs unite reading, writing, tasting and savouring in a creative performance that is ultimately shared between author and reader, in which the act of reading is a trope for eating: the memoir is consumed[138] – devoured or savoured.[139] "Life writing invokes food that is both memory and metaphor" state Smith and Watson (2010, 149). By reading and, in effect, consuming the book, the reader endorses the value of the narrator's written word. Linda Furiya explains that her parents' Japanese diet enabled them to maintain their existential integrity. The reader affirms their existence through her role as reader and consumer, a witness to the testimony of their existence. Wizenberg writes of her Julia Child-inspired Tarte Tatin recipes, about which she writes profusely: "I'm very verbose" (*Homemade Life*, 108), she concludes. Metaphorically, by eating the cake, ostensibly simple but elaborately explained, the reader will also consume her words. Her presence allows the writer to step outside her work and view it through another's eyes. The reader substantiates this subjective process. While Joyce Zonana's reflective style, encouraged by her self-seeking, invites meditative savouring, Wizenberg's extravagantly tasty tale, abounding in confidence and enthusiasm, invites to be devoured. One finds proof of Smith and Watson's assertion that the subjectivity of another is in effect "cooked up, reproduced and tasted" (2010, 150).

Barthes describes texts in which the reader plays an active role in constructing a narrative based on "cues" in the text (Barthes, 1970), such as Wizenberg gives us. The reader contributes her own expectations based on her life experiences, faced with the

[137] Some of the titles of works listed in the bibliography of culinary memoirs in the appendix clearly indicate this strategy, for example "*Stir: My Broken Brain and the Meals That Brought Me Home*" (Jessica Fechtor), or "*Cooked: From the Streets to the Stove, from Cocaine to Foie Gras"* (Jeff Henderson).

[138] The tropes within culinary memoirs will be developed in part IV in an examination of the nurturing nature of this literary artifice.

[139] Refer to the chapter "Ecrire, Lire, Déguster, Dévorer" (Vierne, 91-93).

inevitable juxtaposition of fiction and reality, as a poetic and practical function of language.[140] Judith Jones introduces her recipe section with the injunction: "Every recipe continues to evolve, and I trust that all who make these dishes will come up with their own improvements." (*Tenth Muse*, 199), both recipes and text are open to interpretation. Storytelling, and its reception, is a performative act which echoes the self-performance of the memoir itself, implicating the reader and creating a situation where the reader's performance is as important as the playing out of the narrator's identity. The reader investigates her own relationship to the past, to contradictory cultural voices and ways of thinking, and may observe shifting viewpoints and self-assessment. Helen Buss sees another point of synergy: "The conflation of narrator and writer that the memoir-reading contract offers, encourages this self-performance by readers." (Buss, 25-26). Memories enacted as experiential history through recipes can develop a unique narrative that displaces the locus of both subject and object. Kate Christensen's descriptions of childhood hardship in *Blue Plate Special* are accompanied by family-bonding recipes. 'Anadama Bread' is associated with a poignantly amusing story about separation followed by a description of how Christensen would eat slices of bread hot from the oven standing at the oven. At the end of the recipe, Christensen invites the reader to relive her childhood memory, as though in the same circumstances and place: "Invert loaves to cool onto a wire tray. Eat piece after piece, slathered in butter and honey, standing at the counter" (*Blue Plate Special*, 74).

The role of the writer

We use the term 'writer' here deliberately to describe the role of the person who conceives and directs the narrative, to differentiate between the author whose name gives the work its autobiographical identity, and the narrator who is the persona enacting the scenes. The reader stands alongside the narrator as witness, observing and recording actions from a localized viewpoint, adopting one of memoirs' tripartite voices that Buss has identified: "The memoir narrator, through the three functions of witness, participant and reflective/reflexive consciousness is full of reassessments, rejoinders, doubts and reassertions." (35). The writer explores her life through storytelling, pulling

[140] Refer to Jauss, 1978.

the reader along on her enquiry into self-awareness; the participant narrator plays a role and the author's reflections give meaning to the story, offering the possibility of understanding the past for the purpose of changing the present from multiple viewpoints and facilitating the role of the reader.

The author offers the reader an elaborate reading experience, as we have previously seen, in the form of an autobiographical story of diasporic trauma or dislocation that provides a sense of belonging associated with principles of commensality. Autobiography is a special kind of reading experience that is intentionally orchestrated. "Writing an autobiography can be regarded as a *situated practice* involving the writer and his/her imagined readers" explain Smith and Watson (2010, 13), for as Lejeune has stated, autobiography is as much a form of reading as of writing (1975, 45). The emotional intensity of Sasha Martin's life, abandoned by her father, and placed in an unwelcoming foster home by her mother where her brother commits suicide, is in itself, a trauma story that could be exorcised through the cathartic act of writing. She chooses to accord the reader a place within her narrative by offering recipes that are part of her frail family heritage. Food was always more than sustenance:" it's about getting our fill. Not just of food, but of the intangible things we all need: acceptance, love, understanding" (*Life from Scratch*, 343). The story exists within a social context, an environment that includes a reader with the use of 'we'. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson elaborate on the narrative intentions of the interaction between narrator and reader:

> [L]ife-writing requires an audience to both confirm the writer's existence in time and mark his or her lived specificity, distinctiveness and location. Thus, autobiographical truth resides in the intersubjective exchange between narrator and reader aimed at producing a shared understanding of the meaning of a life (Smith and Watson, 2010, 16).

In reexamining the past, a multi-focused voice includes a participant who senses and feels, a witness who observes and records from a localized viewpoint, and a reflective/reflexive consciousness. Within this schema, the narrator and reader may also have reciprocal or interchangeable roles. These differing perspectives are illustrated in *Under the Tuscan Sun*, wherein Frances Mayes is narrator and reflective persona, engaged in quiet conversations with her reader who, by implicitly sharing cultural and, notably, culinary pleasures with her, is both participant and witness. The reader

becomes her mirror and the roles are reversed as Mayes writes, 'reads', and observes what the reader has done and discovers herself in the narrative:

> My reader, I hope, is like a friend who comes to visit, learns to mound flour on the thick marble counter and work in the egg, a friend who wakes to the four calls of the cuckoo in the linden and walks down the terrace paths singing to the grapes; who picks jars of plums, drives with me to hill towns of round towers and spilling geraniums, who wants to see the olives the first day they are olives. (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 3).

Other scenarios are less harmonious, and the writer seeks appeasement in the text from the sense of fluctuation that is generated when an erstwhile and short-lived boyfriend makes an "instant food connection" with Abu-Jaber's father, she seeks to win back his attention, by casting herself in the role of a reader. She associates this difficult moment of questioned loyalty to her culinary heritage, with the presence of food in literature, making comparative references to the absence of food in E. M. Forster's domestic scenes and to Hemingway's multiple food and drink scenes[141] (*Language of Baklava*, 209). Abu-Jaber's crisis of belonging is generated by her father's existential dilemma: "I feel Bud's presence [...] sleeping away his broken dreams, lost in the thin gray air of loss and disappointment" (176). Similarly, Jaffrey writes that during the Second World War "[m]y father's ambivalences were seeping into all of us" (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 60). The reader acts as a symbolic foil to help the writer find her way through the dilemmas and disappointments with which her origins confront the narrator.

Narrators candidly comment on their fears and doubts, exposing their private thoughts, within what Lejeune defined as a contract of identity sealed with a name (1975, 33). Elizabeth Ehrlich reflects on the significance and context of her endeavour to create meaning in her life and those of her children, always with reserves and conditional clauses: "For the moment I will try Sabbath, and stop all our clocks, step out of time" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 24). Private lives are exposed as the reader enters into the narrator's world, her domestic interior, and sits down at table with her. Joyce Zonana shares with her reader her persistent question of identity that has kept her searching for home for much of her adult life. However far she moved from her immigrant family she failed to rid herself of the feeling of marginality in American society: "I had never been able to

[141] Coincidental references with regard to this thesis' corpus of reference.

shake the sense of being indelibly 'other', incurably alien [...] No matter what I did, I remained to myself an anomaly, a strange amalgam of ancient custom and contemporary ambition." (*Dream Homes*, 144-145). Throughout the narrative, the reader accompanies Zonana's awareness of the diasporic nature of rootless nomadic existence: "Was this how my parents felt when they moved to the United States? Separated from family, friends, familiar objects and places; scents, sounds, customs and tastes. Alone, with no support or guidance? Was this a reprise of their dislocation?" (147). Is her question rhetorical or is she soliciting the reader's help?

Acts of individual recollection are exhibited in culinary memoirs as a social-interactional process that emphasizes interpersonal relatedness. In order for the reader to understand Madhur Jaffrey's foodway reminiscences and their cultural context, she supplies historical macro-and microcosmic details that situate the family within space and time. Her family, for example, upheld the notion of *jhoota*, or the contamination of food by another's contact. However, her *Kayashta* family who were also known as *sharabi-kebasis* lovers, sent out for taboo kebabs and Muslim bread for parties, the driver bearing cloths and utensils "so that when the food reached us it upheld the family's standards of cleanliness, at least outwardly." (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 180). The prepared food must follow rules of strict purity and represents potential danger if it does not adhere to strict family culinary codes. The situation is a metaphor for the way that even the transgression of traditions is ritualized and contained by the community, in much the same way as Narayan's trailblazing path to studies in America is circumscribed with a test meal. Rituals define non-traditions, reflecting the attempt by the witness-writer to construct logic and meaning around memories for the sake of the reader.

The act of remembering cannot be divorced from the act of communicating. As David Rubin explains, autobiographical memories emerge from diverse discourses (Rubin, 271), such as the culinary memoir. Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson claim that "life-writing requires an audience to both confirm the writer's existence in time and mark his or her lived specificity, distinctiveness and location. This autobiographical truth resides in the intersubjective exchange between narrator and reader aimed at producing a shared understanding of the meaning of a life" (Smith and Watson, 2010, vii). Several critics emphasize the importance of the role of the reader for the writer, notably that "[s]haring our past experiences with others is an important part of creating

shared histories and interpersonal bonds" (Fivush et al., 356). Indeed, hermeneutical theory asserts that alone we cannot grasp our own "horizon of expectation"[142] or understanding, as there will always be unstated blind spots (Moi, 43). "Blind spots" subsist because, on a literary level, the memoir reassembles a piecemeal construction of the past which, by its nature, sacrifices objective distance to detail, whereas on a psychological level, the narrator's memory and pen are also selective, particularly in recalling memories in which other people's imaginative constructions interfere with one's own. These blind spots can be paradoxical. Molly Wizenberg's cooking is symptomatic of the solitary self-searching of youth, constantly seeking direction, confirmation, perfection, while at the same time emphasizing her family's contribution: "What follows is a result of our pooled memories and my own trial and error." (*Homemade Life*, 39). Although demanding of herself, she confesses to a strong desire to please, which she considers a weakness; it keeps her revising her recipes, her eyes fixed on her reader: "I was very eager to please (still my greatest weakness, I'll freely admit) [...] I made eight different versions before I found the right one." (98, 71, 87).

As a narrative of personal enterprise and self-affirmation, Molly Wizenberg's Bildungs-memoir, *A Homemade Life* takes the form of an enthusiastic conversation with her companion-reader. Assertive in her role as narrator, Wizenberg, in effect, elects a *narratee*, as defined by Gérard Genette; in *Figures 3* Genette describes the reader designated by the narrator as the narratee**,** to whom the narrator directs her narration. This fictive addressee is the construction of the narrator's expectations and presumptions. (Schmidt, paragraph 6).[143] Wizenberg's self-reading and self-writing are of altruistic intention offering a homemade formula adding another facet to the self-help culture of contemporary individualism. Her intense home ethic is perhaps the literary blind spot that the reader can help her to see beyond, by reminding her that

[142] The idea of "horizons of expectation" lies at the core of Hans Robert Jauss' reception theory (1978), rejecting the notion of an objective literary text in favour of a framework within which readers comprehend and appraise texts based on their cultural context and experience; Tzvetan Todorov explored a similar idea in *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1975) (Rak, 2013, loc. 589).

[143] Genette describes the narratee (*narrataire)* as a construct in detail in *Discours du récit* (1976). The narratorial voice explores the relationship between the utterances of the narrative in terms of moments of production (narrator) and reception (narratee). See also *Penser la narrativité contemporaine* blog (Audet and Xanthos, n.pag.).

eating is ultimately a larger social act. We bake cakes, she asserts, because "[t]hat's the best we can ever hope to do, to win hearts and minds, to love and to be loved" (*Homemade Life*, 311). The expectation amongst readers is that authors are not only instructors, but also partners, kindred spirits, even like-minded friends. Readers also expect a level of expertise from authors, not because they are professionals, but because recipes are associated with tradition and *terroir*, and are considered part of the author's culturally assimilated heritage. Narayan makes a promise of culinary instruction in her Prologue as she describes her exemplary father's "unquenchable fascination with food" (*Monsoon Diary*, xi). In extolling Elizabeth David's directive but creative attitude to cooking, compared with the relative inflexibility of Julia Child, Ruth Reichl implies—given that she has previously invited the reader to chat with her about her recipes—that she would like to be viewed by her reader in the same light. She guides the reader's reception of her text:

> Ms David was cut from a different cloth [...] The recipes are as lively as the woman who wrote them [...] To her, cooking is a dance; she may be leading, but you need to keep up. She lures you into the kitchen, twirls you around and them goes waltzing off. To cook with Elizabeth David, I found, is to keep tasting as you reinvent each meal [...] Spending time with Elizabeth David is very liberating. (*My Kitchen Year*, 285, 286).

Reichl would like to emulate David's creativity and genius without her reserve, raising the question of the distance between the writer and the reader. Francis Russell Hart talks of contemporary society as one characterized by the confusion of public and private (1979, 195). For Nancy K. Miller the term memoir captures a dynamic postmodernism in its movement between private and public, subject and object, reader and writer (Smith and Watson, 2010, 4), which is imitated in the flux between the intimate story and the public display of family recipes. The personal stories are painted against a backdrop of community history that is the ground rock of all self-questioning. Narratives open with personal, yet also universal cameos of family life of which there are several examples: "My grandmother used to sit before her stove on a tall four-legged stool" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xi); "[w]hen we were little, my mother thought of a uniquely devious way of getting my sisters and me to eat our dinner" (*Daughter of Heaven*, xi); "The first foods I ate were rice and ghee. I know this because my mother told me so." (*Monsoon Diary*, 3). Wizenberg sums up this spirit using the first-person plural pronoun

to embrace the reader in her affirmation: "When I walk into my kitchen today, I am not alone. Whether we know it or not, none of us is. We bring fathers and mothers and kitchen tables and every meal we have ever eaten." (*Homemade Life*, 2). Helen Buss explains that the narrator's identity is constructed with reference to a community and the degree of dependence and assimilation within the community, whether imported or adopted: "Memoir has required a human subject whose autonomy is compellingly intertwined with relationships and community, a human subject that does not seek to disentangle herself from those compelling ties, but build autonomy based on them." (Buss, 187). The blog from which her memoir was born, Martin says, was "pulling in the whole world" (*Life from Scratch*, 286) for "there can be no peace without community" (301). Healing, according to Martin, must come through a shared experience, explaining why she extends her Global Table Adventure to the whole community, in a huge tasting festival.

Self-reconstruction is, then, a collective literary performance by the writer and the reader, who accepts that the memoir is more than autobiography and also fiction, what Shoshana Felman calls "a conflation between text and life" (quoted in Buss, 138), for the narrative is a construction of life episodes, a collage which creates a picture that is more or less 'readable' depending on the coherence of the elements aligned. Some authors give clear clues such as Martin's comment as she sits down to her first global adventure dish, a special moment to be preserved: "a new feat, a new memory in the making" (*Life from Scratch*, 256). M.F.K. Fisher's portrait is more difficult to discern because the memories of anxiety and melancholy that she recalls are at times non-linear, unusual and often destabilizing in their emotional intensity. Her memoir, a hymn to universal emotional hunger and a shameless recognition of passion, has an undercurrent of sinister moments worthy of gothic literature, when the reader is caught by surprise, baffled by the turn of events. As well as the strange episode in the Burgundy restaurant,[144] Fisher describes her grandmother's cook, Ora, who magically transformed plain food into something "exciting and new and delightful" (*Gastronomical Me*, 11), giving Fisher "an increasing consciousness of the possibilities of the table" (12). She then dramatically disappears from Fisher's life after murdering her mother, before cutting her

[144] In the chapter "Define that Word, 1936".

own throat with the kitchen knife she was forever sharpening. Evil resurges again in the chapter "Sea Change, 1935", when Fisher returned to France aboard the *Hansa*, "a tidy, plump little ship [...] and at the same time subtly coarse and vulgar" (128-129). She is ominously mysterious, leaving the reader wondering about untold truths: "Several things happened to me aboard her that I have often wanted to write about, but I never have and perhaps never will because I feel very strongly about prejudicing people." (129). Fisher implies that she has secrets never to be told, but also that she wants to preserve her readers from misinterpreting her opinions and therefore her text.

Reciprocal support

Respect for the reader also implies respect for oneself that is discreetly presented in the memoirs' extratextual elements. Self-commentary through para- and metatextual elements reinforces narratorial voices. According to Philippe Lejeune, autobiography embodies an implicit contract (1975, 44), tied to its publication and paratext (including title, author and preface), the author, reader and text operating in a triangle of mutual intentions. Paratexts, as Vincent Jouve reminds us, are the collection of indications and signs that reveal the way in which the book should be read, constitute a pact or a reading contract (7).[145] They influence the reader's horizon of expectation increasing the climate of intimacy between reader and writer, and orienting interpretations. Janet Varner Gunn describes two pivotal moments in reading—the first when the autobiographer reads her life, the second when the reader encounters the text and reads her own life by association (Smith and Watson, 2010, 207). In effect, author and reader are each engaged in their own autobiographical pursuit.

Rich with entertaining details, the three pages of acknowledgements at the beginning of *A Homemade Life* are an example of paratext as a quasi-integral part of the narrative in which the author reveals not just intimacies intrinsic to the memoir, but also the 'making of' her performative autobiographical act (v). On a purely textual level, her lengthy acknowledgments attest to the 'homemade' origins of Wizenberg's narrative, and convey a sense to the reader of being part of the same crowd of well-

[145] "L'ensemble des indications ou signaux qui indiquent selon quelles conventions le livre demande d'être lu, constitue le pacte ou le contrat de lecture." (Jouve, 7). My translation.

meaning bystanders, perhaps even a literary mentor. Wizenberg recognizes their constant support, even during moments of creative uncertainty: "Whenever this book gave me trouble, I worked instead on the acknowledgments. It was the easiest part to write" (*Homemade Life*, v). The reader is cast as a necessary accomplice in the unfolding narrative. Similar to the personal styles of Mayes and Weiss, she chooses a distinctive narrative voice in tone, rhythm and syntax, often addressing the reader directly using the second person pronoun: "It's a lot better, I swear, than it sounds. I'll tell you more about it later" (42); "there was cake, of course, which I'll tell you about in a minute" (302); "You want to keep it nice and hot, but not smoking" (40).

In her acknowledgments, Zonana also admits that writing, no doubt initially conceived as an individual academic exercise, turned out to be not a solitary enterprise but "an intensely communal adventure, bringing [her] into ever-deepening contact with an ever-widening circle of people." (*Dream Homes*, 1) Such acknowledgements are signs of the polyphonic voice in culinary memoirs, which emphasize the sense of community as well as the authenticity of recipes. Zonana writes "Through the act of writing I found my home in the world." (1). It is implicitly understood that the reader is part of that community of resources that helped Zonana to find herself. The acts of writing, rereading, and also of being read, lead her home.

Recipes generate a further level of confidentiality: "When an autobiography is enhanced by recipes from author to reader, the trust implied by the recipe-sharing tradition affects the reception of the autobiographical offering" (Inness, 2001, 266). The positions of both reader and writer are negotiated, in culinary memoirs, through the dual role of recipes. They have, at once, an integral and a paratextual role. The narrator pauses the narrative to guide the reader in cooking, symbolic of the performative act of autobiographical writing itself, involving food preparation that helps the reader to understand the narrator, placing the reader in a paradoxical position. Recipes also represent the ritual of the shared meal, the breaking of bread together, as a gift shared between author and reader. One or more are placed at the end of each chapter, or grouped at the end of the book, recipes assume an iconic quality which engages the reader's attention. This is most marked in the example of Colette Rossant's graphic boxed recipes illustratively positioned within the narrative, or those of Furiya and Narayan separated from the text with decorative elements.

Beyond the exotic and unexpected there is also the ritual of reiteration in culinary practices for which the reader is implicitly designated a curator alongside the narrator. It is at their reception that the reader invests recipes with an augmented imaginary dimension. She is active in helping the author to appropriate and preserve memories. Recipes collections that are detached from specific anecdotes, give readers greater freedom in this respect. Smith and Watson remind us that the reader-cook is drawn to recipes by the desire to imagine and prepare a dish: "The food memoir incorporates food-laced memories that feed readers' desires to redefine themselves by both imagining pleasures and cooking them up, as a way of enacting the life chronicled." (Smith and Watson, 2010, 149). Of course, not every reader will hear the lyrical resonance or find satisfaction in reading culinary tales and recipes; the very repetition which accords recipes a specific literary role in self-writing, is found irritating by some. Using Brillat-Savarin's aphorism Margaret Atwood indicates that it depends on the degree of poetry that the reader will discern in a culinary text: "'You are what you eat' means one thing to a nutritionist another to a novelist." (Atwood, 2).

The invitation to participate in food preparation is a subtle way of helping the reader to understand the writer's story, the recipe becoming a trope for measuring, mixing and transforming an identity, the end result bearing the marks of personal choice, effort and creativity, reflecting the author's writing drive towards self-understanding and regeneration, and presenting an exemplary statement to the reader. Despite the lengthy preparation, the tightly wrapped stuffed vine leaves that Zonana makes for a party, a poetic symbol of the imbricated memories of the memoir itself, are a pact of self-discovery and self-realization. Working too rapidly, the leaves break. It requires commitment to the task, and symbolically to the tradition itself: "Abruptly, angry with myself, I bring myself back. Slowing my pace and concentrating, I separate the next leaf from the stack, laying it gently on the plate, using both hands. I fill a tablespoon with the rice mixture" (*Dream Homes*, 23). The delicacies, that she sets down beside the chips and dips, are a silent statement about herself and her origins, requiring patience, effort and a certain pride in what they represent, symbolic of the approach she must adopt towards finding who she really is. The act of food preparation and eating is an act of repossessing traditions individually and within an extended community.

The readers of culinary memoirs appropriate the story through recipes potentially testing culinary claims, adapting instructions and adding comments. Accepting the invitation to cook involves a dynamic relationship between cook, text and food. Culinary memoirs thus stage their own reception through the weaving of autobiographical fragments around recipes, inviting the reader to share the author's perception of food preparation and traditions and to participate in creating and consuming—a two-way metaphor for reading. After describing her teenage club of friends with whom she shares "the joy of communal dining and creation", Martin offers a simple recipe for pasta dough, whose delicate and detailed instructions are a mix of hers and her mother's and her grandmother's experience (*Life from Scratch*, 127-128). Kate Christensen describes how her editor came to choose her to write *How to Cook a Moose*. It was in listening to Christensen talk about her first memoir *Blue Plate Special*, about how had lived and what she had taught herself, that persuaded Genevieve Morgan that this was the author she needed: "revealing a book so full of delight and wisdom (and recipes!)" (*How to Cook a Moose*, xi). With the recipes as a window onto the author's world, the reader discovers other—in this case Maine—traditions, or, by following Christensen's wisdom and learnings, perhaps her own.

Narratorial intimacy

The reciprocal support that narrator and reader share, creates what Pam Morris calls 'literary intimacy' (Morris, 60), wherein women establish a literary kinship. The subjectivity of the reader is crucial to the evolution of the narrator. Patrocinio P. Schweickart mediates between her perspective and that of the writer (Warhol and Herndl, 540-545). The concurrence of postmodernism with a feminist reevaluation of non-canonical forms of discourse to which Hutcheon refers (1989, 23), including family biographies and memoirs, engenders autobiographical compositions that expand the scope of the self-focused narrative to imaginatively embrace other individuals and communities. Julie Rak elaborates on the receptivity of the modern memoir: "Memoir-reading, in its openness to others, can potentially be an act of citizenship." (2013, loc. 875). Food reading as well as writing defines an implicit pact in which memoirs become a shared venture, an act of "citizenship" for the individual and the community. The

reader is warmly invited into the kitchen to engage in what Toril Moi would define as a non-subordinate intersubjective exchange with the narrator (Moi, 31). The traditionally subservient female activity of cooking is used for empathetic, creative self-searching. While struggling with the dilemma of where her true home should be, Berlin or New York, Luisa Weiss writes, "So I looked for home in kitchen [...] The one place where I felt I could open up a little about how I was feeling was on my blog[146] [...] I was oblique at times and a little shy [...] But my readers listened, read between the lines, and held me up, silently and not so silently". This is followed by a comforting German cake, *Pflaumenkuchen*, and instructions for eating as well as cooking it, to ensure that her readers procure the same pleasure and comfort as she did (*Berlin Kitchen*, 94). While the blog is not the memoir, the latter is an extension of the former, like that of Martin. The reader's view is shaped through the degree of trust and comfort generated by the writer. Certain writers, such as Wizenberg and Weiss, whose styles emanate an exaggerated intimacy, make an overt connection, addressing the reader directly in the second person. Other more discreet writers, such as Mayes, and Zonana, name the reader in the third person. Writer and traveller, Patience Gray, shows a discreet awareness of the reader's needs through the narrative structure of her memoir-recipe book, offering a chapter interlude, like a stimulating mid-narrative digestive shot, drawing together reflections on art, landscape, history and myth: "A book about food can be as fatiguing as sitting through a six-course dinner, so I propose to intrude a digression—offered like a glass of marc or eau de vie to brace the protagonists." (*Honey from a Weed*, 219). She esteems the importance of hospitality "to be able to discern precisely what your guests are in need of." (Gray, 49), who we can interpret as the reader.

Contemporary culinary memoirs embrace similar ambitions as those of community cookbooks in which sharing recipes is an act of trust between women. Memoirs that describe the dispersed or culturally fragmented family of Sasha Martin, who knew several father figures and lived in several different cultures, or the multicultural American-Italian parentage of German-raised Luisa Weiss, speak to a community of readers. Weiss promises a unique experience to those who drink her elderflower syrup in the middle of winter: "You'll take gulps of it, as if it held all the

[146] Weiss' describes her blog *The Wednesday Chef* as her "imaginary fireside circle".

promise of rebirth and regeneration" (*Berlin Kitchen*, 190). Reader and writer are partners on a food project, implicitly exchanging and sharing intimacies that enable them to protect and celebrate their identity; they also reinforce their role as good women in each other's eyes. Within the home, a microcosm of society, Toril Moi claims that women control the social mores and the symbolic language of food, determining what food will say about themselves, their families and the world. (Moi, 49). Using Carole Counihan's premise that providing food defines the nature and extent of female power (1999, 32), sharing recipes and food traditions empowers women, allowing dysfunctional families, such as those of Weiss or Martin, to perpetuate traditions for reconstruction. In defining her Buttermilk Panna Cotta, Luisa Weiss explains the delicate balance of flavours, the tart red berries contrasting with the "smooth vanilla-speckled cream" that creates an environment of peace:

> As we ate, the buttermilk cutting the richness of the cream and the sugared berries a sharp contrast to the soothing blandness of the panna cotta, we listened to the neighbor's children playing in the garden next door. The table soon fell quiet and as our spoons scraped against the china and I saw the light draining from the sky, my world suddenly felt so stunningly complete, so full and rich and just as it should be, that I almost lost my breath. (*Berlin Kitchen*, 242).

Contrasting multi-sensorial images work together to create a balanced dish in synergy with a harmonious moment: sharp and bland, noise and quiet, light and dark, rich and simple.

Despite initially running away from traditional food preparation, Joyce Zonana's first written assignment was for a cookbook from inexpensive ethnic restaurants. Believing that her chosen academic career would, she writes, "lead her away from home and food preparation and its ambiguities of identity, [she was] unaware that in the end it would guide [her] even more inexorably back." (*Dream Homes*, 31). Food was the common language between her and the immigrants she interviews for the book. This experience led Zonana eventually to learn how to feed herself, both literally and metaphorically. The humbling relationship she established with the anonymous women, detainers of the recipes she needed for her cookbook, is symbolic of that which she shares with the readers with whom she confides her conflictual relationship with food and family traditions and her reluctant return to the kitchen, and painful first steps in

cooking. Like her readers, Zonana reveals to them that she also learns culinary wisdom and life lessons beyond the kitchen, in memoirs for her readers, on the streets for Zonana.

2. The concern for authenticity

Intimacy implies sincerity and, within that, lies a fundamental concern for authenticity, in the autobiographical narrative itself and in food traditions. The debate turns around the question of whether traditions are genuine or staged, which stems from whether the author is sincere. It may also be suggested that there is a contradiction between the inherent inertia of traditions and the ephemerality of food consumption. Memoirists manipulate narratives and even genres to find sincere forms of self-expression. They exploit the hybridity of food literature, wherein food can be expressed as both life story and lifestyle, less concerned with "the meticulous authenticity of David's generation" (Humble, 2005, 249), and yet paying respects to community and tradition, creating contexts where authors can use food for personal reconstruction, as well as pleasure, cultural diversity and travel. Ruth Reichl explains that Julia Child guided her readers "through a carefully choreographed map of each recipe—with no deviations allowed" (*My Kitchen Year*, xix), while Reichl admits, with a humility in contrast with her knowledge and experience: "cooking is an adventure of combining ingredients, hoping they'll play well together" (169). Reichl's culinary year is illustrated with poetically-captured, nature-imbued, unsophisticated photographs of homely recipes in rustic earthenware dishes, the author's hands in mid-preparation, the natural landscape, the author's neutral-toned interior. Memoirs, such as these, are landmarks, the culmination of the gradual emergence of a sincere and human voice in food narratives.

Literary sincerity

Reichl's memoir is an example of Philippe Lejeune's claim that the author is not just a writer but also a producer who makes the object and then shapes the book's meaning and reception paratextually. Memoirs contain, what Lejeune refers to as the

autobiographical or 'referential' pact, containing implicit or explicit guidelines to the degree of veracity and frame of reference.[147] The reader, while absorbing stories to learn about herself, accepts the pact in which authenticity takes precedence over veracity. It establishes a contract of sincerity in which the author determines the way the text will be read. Helen Buss claims that the dominant place of the witness transforms authenticity so that it is no longer an "essentialist value but rather an effect of selection and shaping of detail" (Buss, 17), which culinary memoirists attain through the choice of memories, anecdotes, recipes and rituals. Paradoxically the pact replaces the need for complete exactitude; it invites the reader to suspend doubts and questions. The memoir must be a congruent narrative on foodways that is consistent with its implicit intention, both literal and symbolic, and its inherent values, as well as a credible autobiographical story of an emerging identity. Elizabeth Ehrlich's soul-searching reflections reveal her emotional self-searching and honest discourse which infuse the recipes she learns at Miriam's kitchen table with the power of moral and spiritual transformation. Miriam bakes to assuage the ultimate pain of loss and abomination. The baking is the only practical comfort she can obtain. The sense of duty is immense, and in proportion to the tragedy: "The year ebbs and flows. Miriam's cakes work, form, swell and subside and the universe is good to us: another cake already on horizon's rim" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 155). Her careful investment in daily rituals is her way of honouring the lives that were annihilated. Miriam reassures herself and her reader with her cake baking, by the constancy of her commitment, knowing that it imparts deep rooted values as well as comfort.

The memoir, as a signed piece of self-writing, offers a reality specific to the narrative to which the recipes and culinary traditions bring verifiable truths. Yet there is also an anxiety, according to Humble, about the degree of literary license acceptable and the ease with which culinary traditions can be reworked and hybridized. (Humble, 249). Just as the discursive authority of the autobiographical text is created with, and through, the reader, so the "intellectual credibility, ideological validity and aesthetic value" (Bower, 49), claimed by or conferred on the work, are produced interactively with

[147] "[U]ne définition du champ du réel visé et un énoncé des modalités et du degré de ressemblance auxquels le texte prétend." (Lejeune, 1975, 36). My translation.

its readers. Elizabeth David's literary credibility is created through her elegant uncompromising language which shows respect to the discerning reader, as well as the narrative's aesthetics and structure, and even the books' commercialization. Extracts from authors of literary importance enhance the book's tenability, including Henry James, Lawrence Durrell, Gertrude Stein, D. H. Lawrence, Compton Mackenzie, Arnold Bennett, Henry James and Théophile Gautier. She delighted in John Minton's artistically authentic cover illustration with "his beautiful Mediterranean bay, his tables spread with white cloths and bright fruit, bowls of pasta and rice, a lobster, pitchers and jugs and bottles of wine", and she also enthusiastically embraced Penguin's feared 'infra dig' suggestion to re-publish the work as a cheap paperback, delighting in the idea of "a vastly increased readership" (*Mediterranean Food*, 9).

The fictional undercurrent of narrative frameworks is not necessarily an indication of the degree of authenticity or the significance of the foodways to the author. Their hybrid nature makes memoirs inherently ambivalent, offering sincerity over verity, a complex but honest genre, as Simone Vierne has described it. (*Mémoires et autobiographie: Actes du colloque de Fribourg, juin 1990*, 113). A text has varying degrees of authenticity like any poetic creation. "Les mémoires ne sont jamais qu'à demi sincères, si grand soit le souci de vérité : tout est toujours plus compliqué qu'on ne le dit [...] Le pacte autobiographique est plus un pacte d'authenticité que de vérité." says Lejeune, (1988, 79, 33), but the promise of sincerity is the most important. Ehrlich confesses: "I consider the law, the restrictions, the presumptions of holiness, the doubt [...] That collage is my religion, and it is what I am passing on." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xiii). Martin is similarly frank: "Happiness is the spice—that fragile speck, beholden to the heat, always and forever tempered by our environment. This is the story I share with you." (*Life from Scratch*, 14).

The authenticity of traditions is central to memoirists as it serves to validate the pursuit of origins on an individual and community level. It is closely associated not just with a food's geographical and ethnic provenance, but also with its quality and mark of social responsibility, favouring collective wellbeing rather than personal betterment, and embracing a way of life and worldview (Le Dantec-Lowry, 116). Amy Trubek explains that "[t]he use of authenticity when related to food and drink rests on the assumption about the superiority of traditional practices" (2008, 16). While her comments are more

recent than the gastronomical works referred to here, the values of authenticity and purity of ingredients—the latter symbolic of the purity of the pursuit for origins—and, we may add, of intentions, are equated with the positive values of family, home and origins presented in the memoirs, superseding other culinary values of artistic expression and technical complexity. Food origins and sources are but one aspect of the question of authenticity; taste is another crucial part, at the forefront of memoirs with recipes. Lifestyle memoirs, such as the work of Frances Mayes, make the assumption that the reader countenances similar tastes and that those tastes are part of the aesthetics of the work.

Mayes is one of several authors who assume a complicity of lifestyle with the reader. She nurtures the authenticity of her narratives by offering readers carefully painted tableaux of idyllic scenes, each element encoded according to a certain bourgeois Mediterranean lifestyle of deceptive simplicity: "our dining table with a candle, jam jar with wildflowers, and a feast of eggplant, tomatoes and basil" (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 61), or a dinner on a warm evening "everyone in pale linens and cottons" feasting on "cool fennel soup", a rustic casserole and a salad of exquisite local ingredients (103). Her readers relate to images that correspond to a lifestyle they desire to emulate and which correspond to the aesthetics and visuals of similar cookbooks. In creating a library of culinary and lifestyle reference material, Judith Jones reveals her sensitivity to the story she narrates. Her intimate history of the rise of American gastronomic literature is an inspirational tale for the initiated, describing a world of incontestable veracity. Jones brought from the shadows what, in her own words she called "recipes that represented recovered memories—Claudia's Middle Eastern, Madhur's Indian, Irene Kuo's Chinese—and the memories always added a context and a richness to the home fare being shared with us" (*Tenth Muse*, 105), including the reader in the 'us' as a world of like-minded food enthusiasts.

An ambivalence however exists in the invitation that the author extends to the reader to share in their food. Like in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, which elaborates the concept of acts of incorporation in which history is symbolically and literally consumed, we approach culinary memoirs as symbols of the food and the traditions they embody: "To understand me, you'll have to swallow a world" (Rushdie, 1981, 458), is coherent with the narrator's request that the reader tastes her food, hence

the reader's concern that what she is ingesting is honest and beneficial from the subjective stance of the narrator. Herein lies an essential paradox, for while the narrator restores her traditional well-worn recipes in inviting the readers to try them, she is also typically asking the reader herself to try something new and exotic. Madhur Jaffrey, as a voice of exile, epitomizes the porosity of culinary traditions and the tenuous nature of culinary authenticity when exposed to situations of exile and displacement that Humble expresses: "The first thing you learn, as you travel is that nothing is authentic. People are absorbing recipes from each other" (Humble, 192). Sincerity is all the more important in the light of this reality that narrators implicitly invite the reader to often take a step, a journey even, into unknown territory, to learn a new language of food, taste a new form of alterity and relative exoticism. Jaffrey's recipe for lamb with spinach comes close to the "common-man dish" that she ate from the tiffin-carriers of her Muslim friends in her high school yard. Her years of research finally comes upon that of an Indian chef in Delhi which join three or four others she already has in her cookbooks: "Here was the dish that I had been dreaming about for so many decades", to which she has no qualms about suggesting variations for her readers. (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 244-245).

Questionable intentions

A lack of coherence between the memoir and the autobiography, is ultimately what makes culinary tourism memoirs—such as those by Salma Abdelnour (2012), Kathleen Flinn (2007), and Tracey Lawson (2011)—more complex for the reader to identify with, for a certain narrational incoherence can translate into superficiality which undermines the authenticity of the genre. Questions raised, for example, are not of an existential nature. While we have noted that naming food is an important act of reuttering language and relocating place, it is not necessarily enough, Barthes explains, to convey the symbolic significance in gastronomic pleasure. A name alone may not convey the inherent values that give food the numinous qualities in culinary memoirs.[148] There must also be a sense of recurrence, attachment and loyalty. In her chapter entitled

[148] "[…] du lait, des tartines, du fromage à la crème de chantilly […] Est-ce encore un plaisir de pure représentation (ressenti alors seulement par le lecteur gourmand) […] En nommant (notifiant) la nourriture, impose-t-il au lecteur le dernier état de la matière, ce qui, en elle, ne peut être dépassé, reculé […]" (Barthes, 1973, 73).

"March", Tracey Lawson writes in *A Year in the Village of Eternity*: "Easter smells of cinnamon here. Of aniseed too. [...] You can mark your calendar by the herbs and spices whose smells waft from kitchen winds—a kind of olfactory code by which to measure the months" (*Village of Eternity*, 65), a recommendation that is not her personal practice. While Lawson joins the women of Campodimele in the kitchen, she observes and records in the manner of an ethnographer, documenting vicarious experiences. She records over one hundred recipes, the particularities of which are local, seasonal and familial. However, as a journalist she lacks an intimist perspective and a visceral appreciation of the traditions she writes about, this latter attribute, has shown itself to be particularly important in culinary memoirs.

Authenticity supposes a long memory and self-effacing line of female forbears (Roy, 2010, 173), with a source that is either the place of origin, or bears sufficient of its characteristics, associated with respect and commitment from the author/narrator. These aspects are typically missing in stories of culinary tourism. Kathleen Flinn's motivation for attending the Cordon Bleu Cooking School in Paris was not a fundamental dilemma, but an attraction for the chic of the French school, boredom with her journalist job and her blithe parents' adage that "[l]ife is not a dress rehearsal". (*The Sharper Your Knife, the Less You Cry*, 15). She nonetheless weaves a narrative with a recipe per chapter, a bibliography of books on writing and eating, presupposing a certain sincerity, as well as a promise in the title of "laughter and tears in Paris, at the world's most famous cooking school". Such a vast program overbears her personal story.

These memoirs are examples of what has come to be recognized as the fetishization of authenticity, a leitmotif, as we have seen, in culinary memoirs, and part of a new order of ethical or at least reflexive consumption, proposing, as Parama Roy explains, a non-dissimulated, attractively exotic cuisine (174). Authenticity becomes a commodity that is pursued indiscriminately and is subject to various degrees of commercialism. Madhur Jaffrey relates her iconic status to the romance of spices, idiomatic of culinary authenticity. Her culinary memoir was published after a series of highly-respected and acclaimed cookery books, which means that her personal story is both anticipated and its authenticity unquestioned.

These works are part of a larger, complex, and more controversial question around authenticity in modern Western society, a value that has been reinvented into a

commodity, of which culinary memoirs are a part. The relationship to authenticity is found in the anticipation of the reader and the intent of the narrator. While authenticity measures the degree to which something adheres more or less to cultural norms, its reception, and therefore to some extent, its representations, are influenced by the reader's perspective, experience and expectations. Jennie Germann Molz goes so far as to describe a "recreational" tourist who will accept a cultural product as authentic for the sake of the experience, even if sceptical of its origins (377).[149] This reflects something of the suspended questioning that the reader of autobiographies accepts in the pact between author and reader. The pursuit of identity reflects an existential quest if we accept that authenticity has become a commodity in modern society. Germann Molz describes tourists as caught in a paradoxical situation, where they think an experience is authentic, but it is in reality staged authenticity (2008, 55), which leads us to ask the question whether culinary memoirs are also a form of staged authenticity. Is food at the service of literature or literature serving a culinary end?

Culinary memoirs, as a literary form for celebrities as well as anonymous authors, are a medium for expressing identity needs within a society in mutation, where questions of personal and social authenticity are exposed and foodways and travel converge in a wider social discourse. Processes of self-construction occur along a perceived divide between familiarity and alterity, between the edible and the exotic, the self and the other. Like autobiography, "[t]ourism is a metaphor for our struggle to make sense of our self and world within a highly differentiated culture" claims Germann Molz (66).

The works of celebrity chefs, like those of Jaffrey, are also often received with a similar indulgence and indiscrimination. Marcus Samuelsson makes little concession to sentiment in his climb to fame, revealing his claim that his career left him no time to raise his daughter, yet he includes his mother's meatball recipe on the menu of his renowned Harlem restaurant, seeking conciliation with the reader who might be disappointed by his moral values, using loyalty to culinary traditions as a sign of

[149] A parallel may be drawn between the reader and the postmodern tourist. Germann Molz suggests that not all tourists are motivated by a quest for authenticity; the "post tourist" delights in the inauthenticity of the normal tourist experience, revelling in culinary and cultural pastiche that marks contemporary America. (Germann Molz, 70)

autobiographical legitimacy. Unknown authors, whose culinary memoirs are an isolated literary achievement, do not inspire the same credibility, rendering their authenticity less convincing. A form of loyalty to family or community traditions, or at least some specific foodways, even if not one's own, has come to be considered a required credential for memoirists of authentic memoir narratives.

Childhood reminiscences, as we have seen, can be true without being historically accurate, for there are nuances between historical accuracy, nostalgia and poetic truth, the latter created through literary device, in which the distance between the past and the present is more or less conflated. The more openly sentimental a recollection, the more pronounced is the split between past and present. The more naïve a recollection, the less dynamic it is in terms of time and the more intensity and power it has, explains Marianne Gullestad (24). The question is not whether one tells the truth, she claims, but whether the author tells *her* 'fable', *her* truth. (50). The reader accepts the story as a narrative construct of the subject as opposed to the identity of the author who signs the work (Lejeune, 1975, 40).

Sentimental reminiscence, especially of memories distant in time, can be synonymous with superficiality. In the work of Madeleine Kamman, the eight vignettes of bastions of tradition somewhat avoid this fate by the author's representation of women as a collective voice—if polyphonic, carrying a number of independent melodies—resisting that which is negative in modernism and preserving the worthiest elements of traditions, in which the reader 'my friend' is included. Each cameo concludes, however, with words of cloying nostalgia, of "honest home cooking", "of fun, of love, of kindness" amongst "forever" friends enjoying perfect desert together:

> Those were the days [at Henriette's table laden with honest home cooking] my friends, the days of fun, of love, of kindness [...] We still stuff our faces with bread, Reblochon and Persillé des Aravis and we shall forever be friends and talk and laugh around a plate of pear pancakes and glass of the sweet Génepi that she [Mimi] distills clandestinely in the recesses of her barn! (*When French Women Cook*, 103, 142).

Her temporal and geographical distance encourages Kamman to over-idealise the past. Clementine, the perfect cook with the perfect disposition in *Clementine in the Kitchen* can be seen as a parodic cameo of a Kamman's mentors and a further example of the sentimentalizing of cooking as a refined art and channel for immutable values.

Jean-Pierre Carron evokes the idea that autobiographical narrative constructs may transform and distort reality (35) in a way that loses sight of the original autobiographical intention. In certain memoirs such as *Daughter of Heaven*, it is hard to discern the narrator's own story. Li's story is perturbed by those of her father and grandmother; her ancestors play dominant and intrusive roles which make it hard to understand whose origins are sought in the tale. Salma Abdelnour, in *Jasmine and Fire: A Bittersweet Year in Beirut*, fails to tell her own fable as a spectator, nor discovers her family's traditions as she plays the role of a tourist in her home town. She writes about her community's food from the perspective of a 'gap' year in her city of origin. Food is a vital part of her experience and self-understanding, but her personal investment is limited to eating out, and her relationship to her culture is tenuous, for she is merely tasting. Although Tracey Lawson does not claim to write a personal memoir, the reader is encouraged to interpret it as such as it contains several characteristic traits. It recounts intimate personal experience over an extended period of time, each chapter part of a monthly section that spans a year, the travel element transformed into a residence period. It also communicates emotions around the pleasures of food, and, perhaps most importantly, values related to culinary traditions and their perpetuation in home cooking and family feasts, which are observed and reported, though discernibly divorced from the author's personal experience.

Even amongst the more prosaic of cookbook writers, where there appears to be an emotional disconnection, or a vicarious experience, the search for origins can still be present. Nicola Humble writes that "[t]he food Elizabeth David wrote about in her early books was essentially peasant food, simple and unrefined, but imbued with centuries of tradition and the hearty pungent flavours of garlic and anchovies, of olive oil and goose fat and wine." At its reception it was nonetheless perceived as exotic and gastronomically elitist (Humble, 168). While associated with taste and prosperity, it was unavoidably also about roots and history, which David experienced intimately and adopted for her own. Her intention in writing *Mediterranean Food* was both egotistical and elitist. It is in reviewing her legacy of gastronomic literature and culinary culture that her contribution is universally acclaimed.

The works discussed in this section remind us that both readers and narrators step across frontiers, in many cases taking a diasporic stride into unfamiliar territory, of

both culinary and literary origin. They foreground the notion of displacement, as an inevitable stage in understanding origins, in the narrator's relationship towards the reader, and the author's relationship towards the disparate community with whom the narrator interacts. They also raise the question whether the genre fulfils a self-defeating purpose, in that the translation of food traditions within a hybrid form automatically diminishes their authenticity. Is Claudia Roden's scholarly autoethnographic cookbook more worthy a memoir of her community and her own identity than the often hesitant, highly personal forays into community culture and traditions proposed by writers such as Abu-Jaber, Ehrlich or Narayan? The hybrid genre undoubtedly undertakes Ehrlich's "voyage of discontinuity and connection" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii) with the sincere desire to understand origins and find harmony in personal and perhaps collective identity, appearing to be both anchored in generic literary origins while creating a degree of generic rupture.

II. Exploring Self and Origins

> Eclectically piecing together patchworks of images and signs to produce our identities. (Malpas, 1).

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The proliferation of food writing, that we have described in the first part of this thesis, appears to have generated a hybrid literary genre that is highly effective in portraying multi-faceted lives that reflect the eclecticism of contemporary society. We have sought to understand the coherence of this emerging genre and how it reflects fragmented identities. We have observed the emergence of dominant narrative threads around food and cooking that are a channel for self-exploration and identity construction. Culturally vital foodways become a means of communication and cohesion in certain communities, and diasporic groups, translated into literary devices by memoirists. We have exposed a number of paradoxes that appear to conclude that culinary memoirs enact effective literary devices around food and autobiographical life-writing that also embrace notions of movement and travel.

Part II considers the preoccupation of culinary memoirists with their own fragmented identity focusing on the narrator as subject, her self-perception and the need to find her place within her family and the larger community. It explores how the subject perceives herself and her position as a fragmented individual within a mutating community. We will look at the role food-related autobiographies play in the search for self, within individual stories and in the context of communities which have suffered displacement or traumas of exile for socio-political or familial reasons evoking problems of dislocation, uprootedness and existential questioning.

✣ ✣ ✣

A. Trauma, Loss, Unbelonging

> Les mémoires racontent la cuisine comme ancre humanisant pour la diaspora qui en perdant tout erre vers un état nature, sauvage, sans société, humanité, civilisation. (Lévi-Strauss, 1964, 177).

Many food memoirs evoke some kind of trauma whether it be on a macrocosmic community level, on a microcosmic family level, or else as the consequence of a painful or unresolved personal dilemma centred around identity that places the individual in a position of personal doubt and questioning. These trauma stories do not always follow the form of memoirs that detail extensive childhood emotional, physical and psychological abuse, but they contain elements of trauma whether collective or individual, that shape their narrative and their foodway descriptions and choice of recipes.

Writing before the age of the culinary memoir, Lévi-Strauss gives us a key to understanding why food writing is a pertinent forum for expressing trauma stories by explaining how such stories draw the outsider back into society, as a fundamental form of interaction between human beings. He explains that trauma brings us closer to food and eating, when all else is gone, and diasporic communities have lost their geographical or cultural attachment in society; cooking can be the humanizing force that enables them to resist and survive.

Associating culinary memoirs with trauma literature seems incongruous, however, a sample from our corpus indicates that indeed, culinary memoirs are life-writing forums for exploring trauma stories against a backdrop of culinary traditions. In chapter 1 we will look at how diasporic trauma dramatically affects communities and families. The trauma is highly visible in the form of migrations and exile, the shattering of families and social groups. In the second chapter we will pursue less visible, more discreet trauma that results from personal losses and dysfunction within families, often exposed with reserve and caution. In the final chapter, we observe an inward-looking narrator who, facing herself, confronts her often invisible scars resulting from a sense of uprootedness and unbelonging. At the heart of diasporic consciousness lies the trauma of loss and alienation that drives the need to find one's ethnic and cultural integrity. In

this section, we will not analyse the degree of suffering, but rather seek to understand how it is interpreted in texts where recipes and food talk can become a literary artifice to narrate a story that offers hope and perhaps even a means of survival.[150] We will look at those specific memoirs where traumas of various origins, including diasporic conditions, ultimately engenders a sense of unbelonging. We will address the question of personal identity in section B. In part I we broached the subject of cookbooks as a sort of homeland; here we will delve further into the debate of how memoir narratives evoke the needs surrounding the loss of home and homeland, the way in which culinary memoirs evoke this loss and explore the consequences.

1. Diasporic trauma, migration and exile

> [W]hen political circumstances or the economic situation forces one into exile, what remains the longest as a reference to the culture of origin concerns food, if not for daily meals, at least for festive times – it is a way of inscribing in the withdrawal of the self a sense of belonging to a former land [terroir]. […] ['']Food thus becomes a veritable discourse of the past and a nostalgic narrative about the country, the region, the city, or the village where one was born.' (Certeau et al., 1998, 184).[151]

Michel de Certeau and Luce Giard highlight the importance of food as a messenger from one's past—if not birth-country—an anchor when other cultural and social frameworks have disintegrated, the humanizing force that Lévi-Strauss describes. The authors refer specifically to food as a discourse from the past, evoking, once more, its linguistic force in circumstances of exile. In this chapter we will look at trauma as a theme in culinary memoirs as it affects communities, typically diasporic, those that have been uprooted, or whose values, traditions and social fabric have been damaged or destroyed, resulting in the loss of family and homeland. The works we will discuss include the holocaust story *Miriam's Kitchen* by Elizabeth Ehrlich, and Hemingway's *A*

[150] Refer also to the section in part I A on self-writing as a form of survival.
[151] Quand la conjoncture politique ou la situation économique force à l'exil, ce qui subsiste le plus longtemps comme référence à la culture d'origine concerne la nourriture, sinon pour les repas quotidiens, du moins pour les temps de fête, manière d'inscrire dans le retrait de soi l'appartenance à l'ancien terroir […] La nourriture devient un véritable discours du passé et le récit nostalgique du pays, de la région, de la ville ou du village où l'on est né. (Certeau et al., 1994, 259).

Moveable Feast, a book describing the importance of food and the melding of writing with the café culture of the Lost Generation in the interwar years. The works give voice to a collective trauma that permeates the narrative, seeking to come to terms with a social structure that is irrevocably lost and can, at best, only be partially recreated, be it the holocaust of an ethnic group or the war trauma of an entire generation. Myths are created around the pervasive presence of trauma in social consciousness. The holocaust is one of the traumas that most occupies the collective conscience of the late-twentieth century, such that on a macrocosmic community level, the diasporic experience is persistently exposed and explored; a number of memoirists are of diasporic origin or have a strong diasporic consciousness within their family.

Why organize life stories and experiences around food rather than other specific themes related to trauma such as memory, grief, love, loss, or displacement? What is the exigency of these texts, and in what ways are these authors representative of the genre of food memoirs? Lévi-Strauss has given us an important part of the answer to these questions in the role of food in identity loss, while the subtle, even discreet palette of trauma scenarios[152] that they represent, reveal the social, psychological and literary influences of food traditions as a means of accessing and understanding ways of making sense of and moving on from these experiences, when other forms of self-understanding and connecting with one's past are inaccessible.

Defining stories of diaspora and trauma

The classical use of the term *diaspora* was traditionally confined to the archetypal notion of the geographical dispersion of the Jewish people,[153] and their ensuing experience. In the 1960s and 1970s, the use was extended to a description of the exile of Africans, Armenians, Greek and Irish. Their scattering often arose from a cataclysmic event that traumatized the whole group, thereby creating the historical position of victimhood at the hands of a cruel oppressor or in tragic circumstances. From the 1980s onwards the term was deployed as a metaphoric designation for different categories of people with varying but often traumatic relationships to homeland and host land. The

[152] This contrasts sharply with the public nature of the traumas exposed.
[153] The Jewish Diaspora, the dispersal of the exiled Jews from a historical homeland and dispersed throughout many lands., notably outside of Palestine, is written with a capital 'd'.

term *diaspora* has now become part of a set of terms that have partial equivalences, as Parama Roy explains: "sharing meaning with a larger semantic domain that includes words like immigrant, expatriate [...] exile community [...] ethnic community" (Roy, 166). This broader definition of diaspora embraces ethnic communities dispersed throughout the world from their place of origin, either traumatically or voluntarily.[154] William Safran defined traits of the diaspora to include the "physical dispersal from an original centre to two or more peripheral foreign regions as well as the retention of a 'collective memory,' or myth about the original homeland, which in most cases should result in a physical return"[155] (Safran quoted in Pulitano, 38).[156] Physical return is, however, often impossible, but there is a re-turn, a repeated turning to the concept of the homeland and diasporic kin through memory and food, to which the narratives of culinary memoirs can be considered a part. It is considered a valued ancestral home generating a strong ethnic consciousness, with all its associated traditions. Consequently, Robin Cohen explains, the group often expressed a troubled relationship with its host society, problems of assimilation, fear of lack of acceptance, and of another traumatic forced exodus. (Cohen, 2008, 17)

William Safran identifies several criteria to define the modern conception of diaspora which are pertinent to apply to the corpus of this research, focusing on the relationship of expatriated minority communities with a homeland, to which they hope to return, and with which they maintain a restorative relationship, upholding a "memory, vision or myth about their original homeland" which stops them from fully assimilating in their host country; the fragmented communities' consciousness and solidarity are 'importantly defined' by this continuing relationship with the homeland." (Safran, 83-84). In *Bento Box in the Heartland*,[157] Linda Furiya implicitly evokes her parents' homeland whenever she needs to evaluate the normalcy of a belief of cultural reference: "something that seemed perfectly normal was in fact not normal at all" (*Bento*

[154] Even voluntary dispersion, however, engenders a certain unanticipated trauma related to separation, loss and problems of assimilation.
[155] The question of return to the homeland will be discussed in part III which focuses on displacement.
[156] See Safran's extended argument (Safran, 83-84).
[157] The use of 'heartland' (a term specifically designating American states that do not touch the ocean, and generally, the most central or important part of a country) is ironic in this memoir, for Furiya's parents' hearts will always be attached to their homeland, Japan.

Box, 21). Ehrlich uses the term "homeland" only once in her memoir, as an ingredient that goes into her mother's sabbath stew, an essential element, but no longer any more permanent than an ephemeral seasoning: "Into the pot went sentiment, homeland and yearning" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 150).

In summary there is a history of dispersal, myth-fogged memories of the homeland, alienation in the host land, a desire to return,[158] ongoing support of the homeland, including cultural and literary manifestations, and a collective identity importantly defined by this relationship, characterised by the group's cohesion, despite their dispersal. In culinary memoirs, we are concerned with individual responses to trauma, even though as Avtar Brah points out "Diasporas are not a metaphor for individual exile but rather, diasporas emerge out of migrations of collectivities, whether or not members of the collectivity travel as individuals, as households or in various other combinations" (Brah, 193).

The diasporic experience is usually characterized by varying degrees of trauma. Standard definitions converge to define trauma in its broadest scope as a psychological, emotional response to an event or an experience that is deeply distressing. On a lesser scale, this definition can refer to something disturbing, such as an accident, an illness or injury, loss or bereavement. It can also encompass extreme experiences that are severely damaging, such as war and its brutality. In culinary memoirs, trauma encompasses community as well as individual experiences related to war, and associated exile, personal loss and exclusion, victimization of all sorts, abuse and neglect.

Miriam's Kitchen is perhaps the most quintessential trauma memoir in the corpus, although Elizabeth Ehrlich is herself a second-generation non-practicing Jew with no holocaust family history. The memoir tells the story of her mother-in-law Miriam, a holocaust survivor whose devotional foodways inspired Ehrlich in her move towards stricter observance, and motivated her to learn the culinary traditions that can provide her children with a cultural and spiritual foundation. However, the core of Miriam's trauma story occupies a mere eleven pages. What infuses the book with the weight of tragedy is the omnipresence of the unspoken memories of the protagonists, notably the author herself. The tragedy occupies Ehrlich both consciously and

[158] Fantasizing the possibility of return engenders a myth that we will discuss in part III.

unconsciously, invading her with a fear of the potential loss of traditions and a cultural and religious inheritance to pass on to her children. The delicate oscillation in the book between staying the pain of trauma and building for the future is eminently illustrated in the pages on the holocaust story, in which the indirect voice of Miriam recounts her tale while Ehrlich describes the cake-baking session, the story pulling the reader back to the terrible and unchangeable past, while at the same time in the creative act of baking, pushing her into the present.

Miriam's trauma response is initially that of a need for survival in its most primitive form, physical and then emotional, as well, subsequently, of a need to keep the memory of the community alive. Ehrlich's is a different necessity, that of finding meaning from the roots she has inherited. Miriam did survive, but her quiet, unspoken duty is to recall her lost world every day in every gesture in her kitchen. With cruel irony, she lost her sense of taste and smell after a brain haemorrhage: "Life was given, but at this price. Still she bested it, healed to cook again, to create the world again by memory. This is what survival is." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 44). She does it for her children and grandchildren. Ehrlich writes of holocaust survivors: "They cooked the foods they remembered. Motherless, they learned to be mothers." (48).[159] "The kitchen fills with the smell of autumn and rectitude." (71). Cooking gestures and eating are acts of redemption, saving traditions and ties to lost generations, for beyond the tragic loss of life is another trauma, that of losing or abandoning rituals, wisdom and knowledge.

The chapter in which Miriam tells her holocaust story carries the unassuming title "Cake". Her story is interwoven with a cake-baking session with her daughter-in-law.[160] The macrocosmic universe of the holocaust is brought into the present microcosm of the home. She describes the world and her family that was destroyed, her relatives killed, while the cakes are baking. In an early memory 'extract', Miriam recounts the radio that her father smashed into small pieces and discarded to prevent the Nazis from taking it: "*We knew the Nazis would come back for that radio. So my father took it*

[159] The question of transmission of traditions across generations will be discussed in section B of part II.

[160] The knowledge that Miriam's own daughter died twenty years previously heightens the pain and importance of this exchange: "The memory of that [recollection of her daughter's name for her cookies] always makes Miriam smile [...] until her heart snags on the rusty hook of her daughter's death" (156).

down in the cellar. He hammered it into tiny little pieces, put them in a sock and the whole thing into the garbage." (155-156). Destruction is counterbalanced by creation; her healing force lies in her confident rhythm and her repeated cooking gestures. Ehrlich describes the neatly packed cookies that Miriam produces with careful efficiency, and the soothing rhythm of her repetitious mechanical hand movements: "She makes them in batches of dozens and dozens, and packs them neatly like brown dominos into a large square tin [...] At four fingers' width, she cuts off her segment and gentles it flat on a baking sheet, lifting her hand in time to catch the next bit. Catch, cut, gentle, fall, lift, catch, cut, gentle, fall, lift, dozens and dozens. (156). The carefully cut segments contrast with the smashed radio fragments. Life is affirmed in the kitchen against the killing machine of war. All that is left to Miriam is her resilience and her ability to cook and bake. Food, her baking, makes her trauma tale just palatable.

We listen to Miriam's story without being sure who she is addressing—her daughter-in-law, the reader, her community, a larger audience? The two threads are parallel but disconnected and above all antithetical in terms of emotional intensity. The fabric is neatly woven but the whole is anxiety-provoking because of the chasm that separates the two worlds, the benevolent present highlighting the atrocities of the past. Miriam's story of brutal torture and killings is oppressive, only made bearable by the constant return to the present—although the brutal switch between the two worlds, *shtetl* and kitchen, is disturbing—with Miriam's sensual cooking gestures as a confirmation that life continues:

> *My auntie's boy, seven years old, he was shot. My Cousin Elke, nineteen years old, shot. My Cousin Malke was fifteen, too, she got a job laying track. It was very hard work. She was beaten every day, then they took her away to Treblinka.*
>
> *To live, we bargained for food. We sold our jewelry to buy potatoes and bread, bread and potatoes.*
>
> *At fifteen, I was no more a child.*
>
> Cake is not all Miriam can do, figuring to delight those she loves. There are other desserts. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 160).

She has a panoply of sweet recipes that are, for Miriam, a barrier against the trauma, of having no past to go back to, only a future to hope for, the abundance of delicate sweets of diverse cultural origins contrasting with the privations of the Holocaust:

> In a cupboard under the telephone, Miriam may keep chocolates for the children, Israeli candied orange peels or lightly frosted wafers, hard candy, maybe M&Ms, just in case things are not sweet enough. [...]
>
> I blush now to think of Miriam, waking from nightmares, sleepless at dawn, with nothing to turn her hands to, and then no sweets to offer her only grandchildren. [...]
>
> "Someday," she warned me, "you will know what it is to be a grandmother."
>
> We were deported to Chestochowa in June or July 1944. [...] We were lucky to be going, because whoever escaped got shot. (163).

Following Miriam's speculation that perhaps a cousin survived, but may be unaware that she is even Jewish, Ehrlich, seemingly out of respect, draws the narrative into the Jewish calendar, although a silent invitation: "each holiday brings its own special offering: apple cake for Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year; dark, moist honey cake to break the Yom Kippur fast." (162). The trauma cannot be dwelt upon and must be assuaged by a return to the kitchen, to cooking and eating. The multiple dichotomies, the juxtaposition of life and death, want and plenitude, hunger and abundance, destruction and creation, abomination and banality, are relentless, but blended into a skilful aesthetic of diasporic memoirs, like ingredients into a bitter-sweet cake: emotions are controlled, discreet, and as such more intense and poignant. The revelation of her father's death is followed by an affectionate invitation to eat cake:

> Later they took my father away, to Buchenwald. He was very sick and hungry. He died a day before the American army came.
>
> "Eat a piece of cake, *mamele*."
>
> "*Nem* a cookie, *oytser sheyner*."
>
> "What shall I bake for you next week?" (164).[161]

A final paradox expressed in this and the following quote perhaps brings the most despair as well as hope to the text: that of negative hopeless absolutes, uttered within a world of choice and possibility, of nothingness embedded within abundance: "Nothing is wasted here, not an object, not a motion, not a bit of paper, certainly not a bit of food. Miriam's father, ill with typhoid, died of starvation in Buchenwald." (43).

The text is segmented and disjointed, as a reflexion of their lives, with intense experiences related to the homeland and ambivalence towards the host land, to pre-and post-war experiences. Memories are in italics to accentuate their separation from the

[161] In Yiddish, *Mamele* and *oyster sheyner* are terms of endearment, *nem* means 'take'.

main narrative, alternating with a detailed description of the present. It recalls Georges Perec's *W ou le souvenir d'enfance* which weaves a story of a deceptive paradise, in the spirit of Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*, with an autobiographical account of the traumatic early loss of the narrator's parents in the war, also alternating italicised memories with a story. Perec describes his past as "ni nostalgie, ni terreur, ni paradis perdu, ni Toison d'or, mais peut être horizon, point de départ" (Perec, 25). The simultaneously formed autobiographical and fictional narratives, are like Ehrlich's text, a starting point, the first for a long and perilous journey, and the second a voyage into the past to make sense of the present and future. As though questioning their veracity, Perec ponders the timing, location and plausibility of his memories, associating, for example, a cupping session with the culinary gesture of his aunt's efficiently rhythmic biscuit cutting (184). Like Perec, the two threads in Ehrlich's could not exist the one without the other, Miriam's memories are a point of departure for Ehrlich's own personal journey of spiritual self-discovery.

Reciprocally, Ehrlich provides the framework in which the trauma story can be told. Her literary artifice, the recipes and cooking descriptions, are a sort of mediation instrument that create a propitious situation. Pierre Nora explains that "[l]a mémoire est attachée non pas à un évènement mais a une situation" (Nora, 523). Recipes are a vehicle that holds content and meaning: "form promises meaning and meaning promises fulfilment" (Moran, 224). They create a space where life is symbolically regenerated, the gestures practiced and familiar, the whole harmonious and peaceful, symbolized by a cloth placed under Miriam's food mixer's metal stand "to muffle vibrations and noises", of her father, also perhaps, smashing the radio. Miriam's account is symbolically fragmented and incomplete: "tissée d'oublis, elle se présente comme une trame de lieux de mémoire" (Nora, 963-4), as one by one previous 'homes' are taken away and reduced to nothing, from house, to hovel, to room, to dormitory, to nothingness. The kitchen and her cakes are her universe now: "another cake already on horizon's rim" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 155). They are not only something to hope for, but they fill the horizon, such that there is no longer nothingness.

Respecting the traditions for Ehrlich meant maintaining the links with her roots, "[b]ecause I am not sure I can bear to finally cut the string connecting those lives to those of my children." (53). The presence of the loss, pain and sacrifice of their ancestors

is an ever-present litany in the book. The word 'finally' emphasises the tenuous nature of the ties that will disappear with her parents' generation if she does not act and honour their difference. Their memories woven into the preparation of traditional foods are sacred. "Keeping kosher has this value: I daily reaffirm identity, purpose and rhythm. Separateness is intrinsic to that, separation from the world outside as well as within the meal" (54), "rhythm" signifies the necessary repetition to maintain tradition alive, like a heartbeat. Ehrlich's memoir, in effect, describes a double diasporic condition, the second being the exile from her Jewish roots and practices that marked her childhood and youth, no doubt a further source of pain for her observant mother-in-law. She represents a generation which carries the pain of their diasporic forefathers and foremothers, split between two worlds and two, or potentially more, identities, which is manifest in lifestyle and in the food they eat, confusing, even painful differences told in short, abrupt, sentences of unexpected contrasts:

> In the diaspora of my childhood, I felt myself to be an outsider. We were renters in a town of owners. We didn't have a swing in the backyard or a cottage on the lake. We weren't synagogue members with a jovial golf-playing dad and a mom in the sisterhood. We weren't off to suburbs with most other Jews. We didn't celebrate Christmas. I didn't eat milk with meat […] My favourite sandwiches—sardines and onions on pumpernickel; cream cheese, olives and walnuts; chopped liver on *kiml* bread, the crusty caraway corn rye—were the subject of hilarious derision in the school lunch room. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 29).

Similarly, Linda Furiya parents' traumatic childhoods infuse her narrative and become one with her food tales. Her father tells the story of his parents while making rice: "It appeared that his mind was focused on the making of the rice porridge, but I knew he was lost in his memories." (*Bento Box*, 55). Her father, born in America to Japanese parents, but sent back to Japan by his widowed father when he was a small boy, often tells Furiya about the miseries of his childhood as a servant, and his later life back in the United States, seeking work and sanctuary, after his traumatic experience as a POW during World War II. His children listened shocked as they eat their porridge. "My eyes turned down, I stirred and blew on the half-eaten porridge, even though it was already cooled, for something to do. Then, holding the bowl to my mouth, I scraped heaps of rice with my chopsticks. These simple, normal motions felt exaggerated and awkward." (60). Furiya's father turns his painful memories into stories that he recounts

over dinner, when "the rhythm of the stirring" and the taste of the food seems to put him "in the mood for storytelling" (51). The trauma of her father's experience overwhelmed her. "I couldn't articulate the despair I felt for his experience. […] My father's reality was a child's worse nightmare. […] I stockpiled the fears and anxieties that his experiences stirred in my imagination." (293). She continues "[m]y entire youth was filled with Mom and Dad's stories. I saved them in my mind taking bits and pieces here and there until I accumulated a big tangled ball of delicate silk thread, enough to weave a tapestry of their history." (294). Those "bits and pieces" are like the morsels of a meal. There was little space for her to untangle and make sense of their painful tales, as symbolized by the tiny kitchen "the size of a small closet, the small room became alive during lunchtime, like a living, breathing creature" (4), and, as though symbolic of resilience and survival, from this space emerges delicious, authentic Japanese food that embodies their homeland and gives sense, at least to her parent's exiled existence.

Post-war generations - Mis/displacing the homeland

The space in which Furiya tries to negotiate her identity may be narrow, but in her parents' closet kitchen, food gives them the imaginative space to travel back to their homeland with each meal. Although hard for her to grasp as a child, foodways enable her to make sense of her origins and move forward. Ehrlich and Furiya, like many other memoirists, can be considered part of a post-war generation affected by the trauma of the war, either directly or by affiliation, distanced by time or generation. The trauma expressed may be either personal or received from previous generations. It embodies the notion of movement, either metaphorically over time in Ehrlich's spiritual journey, or literally in the case of Ernest Hemingway's self-imposed itinerant exile, in France and elsewhere.

As well as lived traumas, these authors process 'inherited' traumas of pain and loss. Ehrlich expresses fear of losing the fragile origins and the traditions which are their vehicle, and having nothing to pass on to her children, coupled with an unconscious element of ethnic shame or guilt, that is stimulated by an inherited sense of

destitution.[162] Diasporic trauma is therefore associated with a complex sense of loss of home and of traditions that on a community level focuses on a collective identity and the homeland, and on an individual level, on conflictual assimilation and instability. Kiran Desai's novel *The Inheritance of Loss* offers a pertinent insight into this condition. A book about displacement born of her own family's exile and that of her characters, the title imparts the idea of loss as a trauma that is passed down from generation to generation, in the manner of an irrepressible tradition. On a macrocosmic scale, responses to trauma can be seen as collective and generational, while attitudes to food traditions evolve with age and the social situation. First generation immigrants distance themselves from the traditions of their parents in order to integrate for survival in their adopted culture. Second generation immigrants recognize that links to the past are in fact tenuous and attempt to reconnect with their origins. Desai writes of the unstable source of her narrative: "Perhaps the centre was not firm at all? […] Even the past—home of sorts to all of us—wasn't fixed." (Desai, 2009, n.pag.).

Homelands are recreated in a diversity of tangible and discursive ways. In *Miriam's Kitchen* we are reminded of the ethnic identity of the homeland, the detailed food descriptions and the reconstituted Polish village in the community's Catskill Mountains through which Ehrlich's parents-in-law and friends maintain the memory flame of their former homeland life by creating a past 'home' in the present, finding temporary solace for their painful memories every summer, as exiled Poles recreating pre-war village life. However, the loss of cultural roots is more poignant in works such as *A Moveable Feast*, in which, for Hemingway, an ethnic foothold is missing. To use his own term in describing his writing of autumnal Michigan in cold, windy Paris, he and his compatriots 'transplanted' themselves: "it could be as necessary with people as with other sorts of growing things" (*Moveable Feast*, 5). He claims "Paris belongs to me" (6) as though appropriating it, providing him (and others of his generation) with a sort of

[162] Erin Suzuki discusses the "inherited loss of origins" in Lois-Ann Yamanaka's novel *Blu's Hanging*. In a complex dynamic between loss and consumption, the relationship between the bereaved children is defined by food, as physical gratification or as "fantasies of reincorporation" (Suzuki, 42).

mainstay,[163] ostensibly in his case, to write better. A generation or more later, Paris also offered security to Sasha Martin following the death of her brother: "The city was both alive and ancient in a way I'd never seen, never touched, never felt before. I was small in her embrace—safe." (*Life from Scratch*, 104). Like Hemingway, Sasha Martin consumed the city: "The baguettes were the amuse-bouche to Paris's living banquet. I consumed every morsel of that city" (103). Hemingway believes he can find himself in the old world, and its traditions, notably in food and drink. He is representative of a generation of expatriates who, like him, resided in many countries, fought for political causes that were not their own, and posed the ultimate question about the location and meaning of their homeland. The Lost Generation experienced what Caren Kaplan described as a tension between progress and tradition, searching for change and harbouring a deep desire for stability (Kaplan, 35), a modernistic post-war anxiety about the relationship between the past and the present (44).

Did Paris have more to offer than good cheap food and wine with which to forget? It was Gertrude Stein who had coined the expression 'generation perdue' from the patron of an inept car mechanic who had been psychologically affected by the war, and she extended it to Hemingway and his generation—many of whom attended her literary and artistic salon where they congregated while she presided like a high priestess, giving advice to neophyte writers: "All of you young people who served in the war. You are a lost generation [...] You have no respect for anything. You drink yourselves to death..." (*Moveable Feast*, 29). That Hemingway, after reflection, generalized and then dismissed her statement is perhaps confirmation that there was truth in her label that touched a sensitive memory, and awakened 'wounds of war': "I thought that all generations were lost by something and always had been and always would be [...] But the hell with her lost-generation talk and all the dirty, easy labels" (30-31).

Hemingway's malaise is the expression of a collective, vicariously lived ordeal. Life in Paris during the interwar years pivoted around an artistic community, an intimate circle of expatriates, sharing their daily lives, their creative works, their meals and

[163] Hemingway was perhaps familiar with the 1958 French film bearing a similar title, "Paris belongs to us" (in French, "Paris nous appartient"), curiously about a group of mostly young immigrants, suffering a possibly cold-war-related malaise who embark on a theatrical endeavour. Also, a book by a collection of writers called *Paris Was Ours* was published in 2011 by Penelope Rowlands, describing the lure of the city that each writer temporarily called home.

drinking session: "He [the poet, Ernest Walsh] wanted a good steak, rare, and I ordered two tournedos with sauce Bearnaise. I figured the butter would be good for him." (*Moveable Feast*, 127). He returns to the old world to find comfort from post-war trauma that the new world could not offer him. Yet the old world is also a world reeling from the war, a society that was seeking to heal itself too. Earl Rovit and Gerry Brenner write that the mood that marked the 1920s was one of expatriation and alienation, of massive disillusionment with traditional values (7), however expatriates came to Europe to find comfort in the Old World that included its foodways, its wine and bistro meals that were comfort food to them:

> Auteurs, artistes Américains entreprennent un retour à Paris au vieux monde pour trouver un remède à leur anxiété après la guerre. Hemingway les précède. Comment vivre avec la certitude de sa propre mort, avec l'incessante répétition des choses, de leur imperfection, du mal partout visible [...] Ils cherchaient à s'enraciner à nouveau dans le temps et le lieu, à l'éternel et à l'historique [...] Il tente de se définir et d'ordonner son univers intérieur. (Astre, 54).

The 1920s French bistro food was a marker of tradition for them, with its oysters and steaks and large portions to satiate them, at least until the next meal: "I found that many of the people I wrote about had very strong appetites and a great taste and a desire for food, and most of them were looking forward to having a drink." (*Moveable Feast*, 101). Hemingway fluctuates between an appetite for life and writing and a sentiment of *mal de siècle*, the disillusionment of a generation which had known world war. "In Hemingway's most interesting work the private subject struggles to negotiate a changing or changed socio-historical order. [...] He charts the uncertainty and instability of the subject's position in the modern world." (Messent, 4, 45). The question of his worth as a writer is central to his work and is embodied in his search for a lost paradise in the Old World and its foodways, as an embryonic writer, in a state of grace, his writerly ambitions mentored by Gertrude Stein.

The loss of his manuscripts is a personal trauma that is symbolic of a greater loss, of personal, social and cultural landmarks and, above all, of his fear of not succeeding as a writer. In his agitation, forever seeking authenticity—which he expressed in his writing through his lean direct style—he is always on the move, travelling, eating and drinking to forget perhaps, but also to find an indeterminate source of security and truth, like Lawrence Durrell, an itinerant resident. Hemingway expresses the collective insecurity

and doubts of a whole directionless generation, as well as the experience of someone who seeks the pleasure of the moment in eating, drinking, skiing, travel. When Hadley tells him what she has done, he immediately takes the train for Paris: "It was true all right and I remember what I did when I let myself into the flat and found it was true" (*A Moveable Feast*, 74), but, significantly, he does not say what that is. In the next paragraph he describes the story "Out of Season", from which he had omitted its intended ending in which the protagonist hangs himself. He explains: "you could omit anything if you knew that you omitted and the omitted part would strengthen the story and make people feel something more than they understood." (75). Hemingway entertained Stein with selective tales of his travels, but again, he repeats the notion of deliberate omission, as some things are left unsaid: "The other things I did not talk of and wrote by myself" (25). This enigmatic stance is also reflected in Hemingway's Preface to *A Moveable Feast*, in which he indicates that many elements had been left out of the book, "[f]or reasons sufficient to the writer", but then goes on to list a certain number of reasons as though full of tormented regret: "It would be fine if all of these were in this book but we will have to do without them for now" implying that they might appear at another time, in another text or edition. He concludes by suggesting that the reader might want to read the whole as if it were fiction, but that as such it "may throw some light on what has been written as fact" as though it contains hidden secrets. Conscious omissions, like literary discretion, are a form of survival faced with the narrative of one's life and a possible way of creating a story that is bearable for the author. Culinary memoirists may select recipes and choose to leave out details of their private lives, but cannot afford to omit ingredients or instructions, as though recipes can contain an absolute truth.

Literary discretion augments the underlying tension generated by the loss of homeland and family. This anxiety is transmitted through generations and from communities to individuals and that manifests itself in the form of self-interrogation for Ehrlich, a malaise in the case of Hemingway, and a sombre melancholy within Linda Furiya's memoir. Like Ehrlich, food preparation or eating is the backdrop for trauma tales, the banality of the one throwing the horror of the other into relief. In each case they are a small and contained part of the narrative that does not detract from the feel-good element of the memoirs, but nonetheless makes its presence felt, reflecting James Clifford's claim that: "[d]iasporic consciousness lives loss and hope as a defining

tension." (1997, 257). Furiya's family resides in America but, through their Japanese eating, finds a precarious connection with their homeland at each meal, and which is put into jeopardy each time their supplies of Japanese ingredients run low:

> During those early years, my parents monitored their Japanese food supplies carefully [...] the worry of running out nagged at them. Mom checked and rechecked her stock of dried Japanese foods [...]
>
> Japanese home cooking had become the only daily thread my parents had to their culture. Even I knew that Japanese food symbolized something greater than sustenance. It was like a comforting familiarity that assured them they could make it through the daily challenge of living in a country not their own. (*Bento Box*, 91, 95).

Writing by omission is also symptomatic of a malaise, manifesting an uncertainty, and even despair about the future. This can be said to be true of certain culinary memoirs which build their impact by understatement and omission, discretion being the force of many trauma narratives. Recollections are often measured in short stories adhering to a form that comprises an anecdote followed by a related recipe. The contained tone tends to imitate or reciprocate the balanced form of the memoir itself, a marked example being that of Ehrlich's respectful discretion in telling Miriam's story. Diana Abu-Jaber, in *The Language of Baklava*, tells the immigrant tale of Mr. Basilovich, the father of a school-friend, a holocaust survivor. His discreet, unassuming presence and benign uncomplicated smile belie a man tormented by unutterable ghosts from his concentration camp experience and traumatic escape. Profoundly touched by the taste of her own father's stuffed cabbage, his raptures provoke shame from his misunderstanding daughter who ignores the twofold mundane as well as extraordinary nature of food: "embarrassed by her father who had gone in one moment from intellectual and aloof to too sensual and nakedly emotional. 'Dad, come on, don't' talk about food like that,' she says [...] 'it's just food. [...] 'Yes', he says, 'just food.'" (164). Staring vacantly, it is clear that to a man who has known starvation, it is anything but 'just' food. A few days after the preparation of his own treasured stuffed cabbage recipe he has a breakdown that leads to his final successful suicide attempt. In him, Abu-Jaber had recognized something of her father, obsessive about food and never fully present, inhabited by a sense of loss and incompleteness, and an inability to create a new life.

One can read the same ominous undercurrent of despair and disorientation of Mr. Basilovich's story in *A Moveable Feast* that is both personal and also the conscience

of an entire diasporic generation. While 'luck' is a frequent leitmotif in *A Moveable Feast*, exemplified by his betting at the races, danger and foreboding are ever-present. Of their lodgings, Hemingway says "'We're always lucky,' I said and like a fool I did not knock on wood. There was wood everywhere in that apartment to knock on too" (38). Of his attempts to financially support the writing efforts of T.S. Eliot, he writes: "The whole thing turned out badly for me morally, as so many things have" (112), writing, no doubt, with hindsight and the tainted perspective of his morose mental state in the months preceding his own suicide when he completed *A Moveable Feast*. In his description of an outing to the races, which is full of reminiscing, this undercurrent is strongly felt: "We should live in this time now and have every minute of it" (55), for they are aware of a hunger that surpasses the physical sensation.

Hemingway expresses a generalized sense of despondency. The city that seemed to hold the secret to his happiness, suddenly became sinister and offbeat: "Paris was a very old city and we were young and nothing was simple there, not even poverty, nor sudden money, nor the moonlight, nor right and wrong nor the breathing of someone who lay beside you in the moonlight" (58) foreshadowing the failure of his first marriage.[164] There was also the notion that since the war, they could trust no one: "In those days we did not trust anyone who had not been in the war, but we did not completely trust anyone" (82), or again "I would later learn to distrust certain people in certain situations." (134). There is a tension belied by the pattern of meals that should be reassuring but assume a desperate, even sinister tone in the cruel relationship which emerges between the protagonists in Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*, which he was no doubt working on at the same time as *A Moveable Feast,*[165] a book punctuated by food descriptions and meals as though the meals themselves were a stage for the drama and a witness to their macabre relationship. As a portent of their downfall, they fail to see the "picturesque", the nourishing landscape, the site of sustenance and connection, that we will explore in part III:

> 'It's a good lee and I like the place. We'll turn our back on all the picturesque.' The ate stuffed eggs, roast chicken, pickles, fresh long bread

[164] To Hadley Richardson.
[165] Begun in 1946, Hemingway wrote over 800 pages of *The Garden of Eden* over the next fifteen years, which was finally heavily edited and published posthumously in 1986.

that they broke in pieces and spread Savora mustard on and they drank rosé [...]

'Can we stop it? [...] Why spoil everything:'

'Let's clean up here and go.'

'Where?'

'Anywhere. The god damn café.' (*Garden of Eden*, 87-88).

Can culinary memoirs then be considered a new form of trauma literature, an attempt to turn loss into plenitude in the form of food, and an abundance of recipes? Is the culinary memoir one of the "new forms of transmission to reshape Holocaust memories for the future" as Louise Vasvári says (Vasvári, n.pag.)? She wrote an Introduction to "Life Writing and the Trauma of War" (Vasvári and Wang, n.pag.), in which she defined a form of literature called Alimentary Life Writing located within a broader context of alimentary writing and trauma literature, written during periods of collective trauma, such as the few meagre artefacts in the form of cookbooks that emerged from certain concentration camps.[166] She uses the word 'alimentary' which can be seen to signify the importance of nourishment or sustenance, rather than culinary which carries the connotation of cooking and creativity. These poignant vestiges were used to counteract the dehumanizing starvation that prisoners faced. In the case of the concentration camp books, there was no possibility to cook and they remained purely imaginary; Susan E. Cernyak-Spatz, professor at the University of North Carolina and survivor of Terezin and Auschwitz, described the acts of writing down recipes on scavenged scraps of paper as "cooking with the mouth" (De Silva, xix). In different circumstances but a similar spirit, George Orwell wrote menus on the back of envelopes with a fellow tramp because they were "too hungry even to think of anything except food" (*Down and Out in Paris and London*, 53). They also often reflected on war-time shortages and rationing as though willingly remaining anchored in reality.

[166] A sample of research into this form of literary artefact include:
Suzanne Evans. "Culinary Imagination as a Survival Tool Ethel Mulvany and the Changi Jail Prisoners of War Cookbook, Singapore, 1942-1945." *Canadian Military History* 22.1 (2013): 5.
Marianne Hirsch, and Leo Spitzer. "Testimonial objects: memory, gender, and transmission." *Poetics Today* 27.2 (2006): 353-383.
Louise O. Vasvári. "En-gendering Memory through Holocaust Alimentary Life Writing" *CLCWeb* 17.3 (Sep. 2015): n.pag. Article 10. Web.

Although the publication of holocaust memory cookbooks—such as the Ravensbrück Cookbook,[167] "a powerful statement about the way memory, food and survival are woven together in Jewish culture", or *In Memory's Kitchen: A Legacy from the Women of Terezín*, edited by Carla De Silva—was met with criticism for being grotesque and inappropriate, others see the works as forms of necessary 'fantasy' literature where imagination attempted to triumph over brutal atrocities. Sandra M. Gilbert called *In Memory's Kitchen* "one of the most moving of all virtual cookbooks" (22).[168] Signed by one woman, but written as a collective effort, this, and contemporary culinary memoirs, share a common psychological reality: that imagining and writing about cooking and dishes puts one in contact with memories that help in one form or other to negotiate the present. There is the notion in these, as in *Miriam's Kitchen* that the scribbled recipes honour the past and claim their right to a present and perhaps even a scarcely imaginable future. They were imaginary exercises that perhaps help sustain their authors in some small way, to confront barbary with the ultimate gesture of commonplace and mundane normalcy, cooking, as an act of resistance and defiance, born of hunger.[169] As we have discussed in part I, other authors such as Elizabeth David and Alice B. Toklas also produced a form of culinary fantasy literature, recalling inaccessible foodways with scarcely more accessible ingredients. For the holocaust prisoners, however, there was no possibility of telling stories to accompany the recipes, for there was no normalcy beyond the recipes.

[167] *Ravensbrück Cookbook*, 1945, by Edith Peer, was never published, but is on display at the Sydney Jewish Museum, Australia.
[168] Born of a different and more terrible necessity, one cannot consider them as forerunners of the modern-day culinary memoir.
[169] Examples of articles on holocaust food writing include:
http://leblogdocumentaire.fr/festins-imaginaires-anne-georget-de-simples-recettes-pour-resister-contre-la-barbarie/
https://www.sbs.com.au/food/article/2018/09/10/resilience-and-recipes-jewish-cookbook-written-concentration-camp-prisoners
https://www.myjewishlearning.com/mixed-multitudes/in-memorys-kitchen-a-cookbook-from-a-concentration-camp/
https://www.sbs.com.au/food/article/2018/09/10/resilience-and-recipes-jewish-cookbook-written-concentration-camp-prisoners

Moving beyond trauma

Culinary memoirs represent not just an expression of trauma but also the possibility of enacting a recovery, albeit sometimes imaginatively. Avtar Brah explains that: "[t]he word diaspora often invokes the imagery of trauma of separation and dislocation [...] but diasporas are also potentially the sites of hope and new beginnings." (Brah, 193). Cooking, as a creative outlet in the host country, which may exhibit "tolerance for pluralism" (Cohen, 2008, 17) can be a site for "hope and new beginnings". Diasporas find space to exist as a consequence of the tolerance that emanates from social mixing. Robin Cohen explains: "Diasporic cultural identity teaches us that cultures are not preserved by being protected from 'mixing' but probably can only continue to exist as a product of such mixing. Cultures as well as identities are constantly being remade." (2008, 270) Trauma experiences encourage communities to become active in transmitting "the marks and messages of tradition" in other words of finding creative ways of sharing as well as adapting their culture (Brah, 271). By adhering to a common formula, culinary memoirists, as a group of cohorts, collectively invoking gastronomic foremothers, such as Fisher, David and Child, or cultural forefathers such as Durrell or Hemingway, generate a collective culinary voice of ethnic reconstruction, perhaps even tolerance.

Although Rogers Brubaker describes the importance of boundary maintenance in the three core elements in his definition of diaspora—the others being dispersion (either traumatically or voluntarily), and homeland orientation (real or imagined) (Brubaker, 1-19)—some culinary memoirs suggest that while respecting traditions and roots, it is sometimes necessary and indeed beneficial, to break the boundaries that in a previous time seemed so sacrosanct. The desire for the homeland becomes transformed in subsequent generations into a homing instinct or desire, such that, as Avtar Brah explains, home can be the place of settlement (Brah, 9), or, by nature of a cultural 'rebirth', a new place of origin, which is explored in culinary memoirs: home is where the heart is, a virtual homeland. Sharing culinary traditions could be a response to Robin Cohen's belief that shared experiences of popular culture replace the need for a homeland. If global spaces are opening up to replace the need for homelands, perhaps one such place can be the literary space offered by culinary memoirs. Shoba Narayan's

generation is different from that of her parents in their response to globalization, compelling her to go to America to study to follow the ineluctable social movement. America becomes a universal space for her in which she thrives as an immigrant, but once a mother, realizes that such a melting pot existence also dilutes, not her identity, but her sense of belonging. The acronym that Indians in America use to designate their psychological status, 'ABCDs', American Born Confused Desi (*Return to India*, 74), describes their straddling of a hyphenated identity (86). They are a generation which has replaced immigrant trauma by a new form of existential anxiety around identity. She discovered that much as she enjoyed American cuisine: "I couldn't last four days without my curd rice. I was Indian after all." (143).

Although Narayan's second memoir is about a physical return to her homeland, this path is not accessible to all immigrants. Culinary memoirs suggest that a re-turn, a repeated turning to the concept of the homeland and other diasporic elements through memory, written and visual texts can be therapeutically orchestrated in the texts, through a reenactment of culinary traditions. While the dynamic nature of diaspora and the potential optimism that it engenders concerning diasporic plights and related trauma is pertinent to our question of the positive role of trauma and related texts, the question of return, physical or psychological, has a mythical status in diaspora; it will be discussed in part III with regard to the question of displacement.

Steven Vertovec also focuses on three key ideas of 'diaspora', firstly as social form that characterises a group that has suffered traumatic exile at some point in their history. His second idea considers diaspora as a type of consciousness that emphasises a common state of mind and a variety of experience that consciously maintains a shared sense of identity across transnational communities (Vertovec, 3). Vertovec also recognizes that diaspora has become a sort of cultural production that Stuart Hall defines as "the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity" (Hall, 235). Diasporic consciousness thus assumes a hybrid form in the host country, a mixture of ethnic, national and transnational elements, embracing assimilation as a necessary and positive drive for survival, inviting transformation in the rewriting of stories. While writing recipes down opens them up for debate, as discussed in part I, so telling trauma stories also reveals multiple or even alternate perspectives. Rewriting stories through

the symbolic appropriation of authentic recipes that themselves can be adapted allow alternative versions to exist. Destined to tell the story of her grandparents, her eminent grandfather and imposing grandmother, Li's narrative is infused with the story of her relationship with her authoritative father who is the source of much trauma in her life. Pursuing the complex web of their relationships from multiple angles, she is able to reconnect with her father in order to find a sense of wholeness in her life. She orchestrates a meeting around a meal table with her mother and father of questionable outcome: "If it weren't for me, she would never have had to see my father again, and her life would have been uncomplicated, happy free of painful memories? Or, if it weren't for me, we would never have seen my father again, and life would have lacked a dimension, a dynamic, a wholeness" (*Daughter of Heaven*, 151). After the "punitive fish-stick-and-buttered-noodles dinner" for which Li deemed her father "responsible for my present hunger", a hunger as much emotional as physical, she generously offers, without further comment, recipes for Breakfast Noodles, Spicy Beef Noodles and Mama's Bean Curd, an abundance of food to compensate for the hunger trauma. Painful as the stories are to tell, Li chooses the path of reconciliation in order to be able to allow new, less traumatic, outcomes to emerge.

Anna Del Conte also shapes her trauma tale, by subsequent outcomes that focus on the lifeforce represented by food. Although directly impacted by the war, the memoir *Risotto with Nettles* has none of the gravity of Ehrlich's work, perhaps because the traumatic experiences seem to have lost their force and at this point in her life are no longer (if ever), a strong reminder of her origins. The three short chapters that describe del Conte's traumatic war experiences in Italy, are embedded in her life story as a celebrated British food and cookbook writer, distanced by age and time, for she wrote her "Memoir with Food" at the age of eighty-four, seeming to measure her harrowing experiences with much hindsight. Her war narrative is written in an understated tone. The title itself is telling, for the eponymous dish, 'Risotto with Nettles', embodies the notion of a sting, symbolic of the war narrative itself. It is a dish from the war years, concluding the chapter 'Machine Guns' which describes the direct near-miss plane attack that so terrified Del Conte that the next day when hearing the same machine-gun fire, she threw herself down, this time face-first into a bed of nettles. Del Conte recalls, as she writes, the burning sensation as she collects nettles for her risotto. Yet, in the

same chapter she describes the abundance of food that they enjoyed during the war years in the region of Emilia Romagna where her family was evacuated. While undoubtedly a traumatic period, she leaves the region to return to Milan at the liberation with regrets for the 'land blessed by the gods" where they had eaten "some of the best food ever" (*Risotto with Nettles*, 130). Her mother, for whom "good food was one of the most important priorities in life" was reassured to be going there initially, sure that they would not "go hungry in such a fertile area" (89), a blithe reaction in the face of extreme danger. Anna del Conte's memoir incites the reader to expect to read the horror of those war years: "It was the most chilling noise I have ever heard [...] [their life in limbo] kicked into harsh reality every now and then by horrible events", or the description of the pig slaughter in the middle of the 'Prison' chapter, the "truly terrifying episodes" that she is witness to, are mitigated by arguably unconvincing writing, or the fact that the war story was a embellishment to her narrative rather than a motivational driver in her memoir.

Thus, diaspora does not always entail the fatality of loss, while the bringing together of people and traditions as demonstrated in the reconciliatory *Daughter of Heaven*, and the resilience of Anna Del Conte's relativism, can be regenerative, transformational and transnational, which, for Homi Bhabha, is the definition of culture "as a strategy of survival" (quoted in Delmas and Dodeman, 7). Culture can also be a site of transmission, a turning towards the future as Jacques Hassoun advocates (1994) or a place of gathering. Catherine Delmas and André Dodeman write: "For Jacques Hassoun, transmission is not a mere transmission of the past, but it enables the subject to undertake a journey, 'not a circular journey around a petrified enclave, but a journey which leads to an open space [...]" (Delmas and Dodeman, 7). Paradoxically, the home and hearth seem to propose a restricted space, but the transmission of recipes to the reader enables both reader and narrator to undertake a journey that allows for non-static transitions to occur in a spirit of open-mindedness.

While questions of generational transmission will be discussed in section B of part II, we encounter here the idea of transition rather than transmission as a dominant possible outcome for diasporic trauma. In some cases, it evolves from an empty space, transforming nothing into something, such as Ehrlich's absence of religious practice evolving into a new home environment that is enrichened by kosher and spiritual rituals, or Sasha Martin's emotional void in which she creates a 'universal' home with global

ethnic recipes. Getting beyond trauma is a journey that embraces resilience and continuity, illustrated in Ehrlich's year of patient steps towards understanding. Other memoirists make physical journeys to reconcile themselves with the ghosts of their parent's past, such as Abu-Jaber to Jordan, Li to China, and Zonana to Egypt. Migration becomes a two-fold journey of displacement and a transition towards overcoming the trauma of that displacement. Hemingway travelled frequently from Paris, as though it was the home from which he could leave with the reassurance of an anchor, a pivotal point to which he always returned, emphasised by the act of leaving bags at the Ritz Hotel, only collecting them many years after he had moved on. He was always pursuing, contradictorily it would seem, new distractions and stimulating experiences to calm existential anxiety, and, at the same time, the absence of stimulation and distraction in order to write.

In journeying, either physically or metaphorically, one retains a diasporic identity, to which there are important advantages, the tension between ethnic, national and transnational identity potentially emerging as creative and enriching. From diasporic trauma a practical and functional cultural identity can emerge: diasporas mobilize a collective identity, not only concerning a place of settlement (imagined, putative or real) but also embracing solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries. Robin Cohen explains: "An identification with a diaspora serves to bridge the gap between the local and the global" (1996, 516). Diasporic populations are 'deterritorialized', yet, as they are continually evolving and reforming, they assume a certain transculturalism that starts often with food, that is both a source of trauma when it seems that traditions are being dispersed and lost, but also a source of salvation by allowing communities and individuals to advance creatively, as memoirs themselves propose, putting trauma behind them.

2. Family trauma and dysfunction

The loss of homeland is felt on a community level, while on an individual level the trauma is felt within the context of the family. In this chapter we will look at the trauma and anxiety triggered by the loss of home and that which home represents. That loss is represented on both a symbolic and a literal level, mostly obviously in that of a

secure family environment, causing isolation and disconnection from one's roots. We will look at how separation and loss require resilience, strength of character and paradoxically even a break with the past, often enacted through food and cooking, or a transition as we have observed in diasporic situations. Sasha Martin, Gabrielle Hamilton, and Nigel Slater each turn to a professional food-related activity after traumatic childhood experiences to make sense of their lives and find a sort of second family. The oftentimes rough, demanding and abusive environments in the food industry are perhaps a perverse self-fulfilling reminder of painful childhood experiences.

As microcosms of a dispersed people, family tales also become collective memoirs, through tacit bonds of loyalty and identification, representing the voice of a community, where cultural and historical veracity is nonetheless subservient to the authenticity of family memories. As a form of diasporic trauma literature, the loss of home symbolically represents the loss of a homeland, cultural landmarks and points of reference. Indeed, can the homeland ever be fully distinguished from the home?

The memoir embraces the notion of home and its foodways to such an extent that the recipe at the end of every chapter becomes a repetitive metaphor and reminder to return to the hearth. Home is both real and symbolic, represented in the sensual language of food and ingredients. Writing is a form of homecoming, of finding oneself, one's place in the world and one's home. It is an intimate environment, the essence of which is captured in the autobiographical narrative, witness to both contingency and conflict in the case of the diaspora, as well as a strong determinacy in the creative element that generates new understandings of self and forms links that transform notions of space and origins and create new possibilities and new pleasures, a process of removing misunderstandings.

Personal trauma and loss

In narratives such as those of Martin, Hamilton and Slater, the death of a loved one, separation or abusive behaviour causes the home, as a figurative nurturing space, to disintegrate. Sasha Martin writes a credible, moving narrative, remarkable in its coherence in the light of her chaotic and precarious emotional inheritance, in which she treats the protagonists in her personal drama with measured fairness. She loses her

brother in adolescence; the heart-breaking suicide of a boy desperate for his mother's love. The inability of Martin's foster family to meet the emotional needs of her or her brother before or after the death is chilling to read. For a while, she turned to cooking that was always the activity around which she and her brother were able to achieve a semblance of home and family with their mother. Later, as a young mother looking for a sense of identity and direction, Martin undertakes a world tour in her kitchen by once a week preparing a meal from each country. Receiving fragments of her mother's colourful immigrant upbringing was a "a spectacle of heritage" (*Life from Scratch*, 29) but, she repeats several times that "peace" is what she needs for her trauma, not "spectacle": "I hungered for peace for as long as I could remember [...]" (178); "Food, I realize, is family, not just survival. It's peace." (258).

Security is linked to food, confirms Nigel Slater, in an emphatic accumulation of adjectives:

> There was something about the way my mother put a cake on the table that made me feel that all was well. Safe. Secure, Unshakeable. Even when she got to the point where she carried her Ventolin inhaler in her left hand all the time. Unshakeable. Even when she and Dad used to go for long walks, walking ahead of me and talking in hushed tones and he would come back with tears in his eyes. (*Toast*, 4).

The tragedy unfolds around food, with Slater's poignant and desperate outbursts over his dying mother's cooking. When she announces to her son that he must eat at the canteen as she was too sick to have him home for lunch, it was as though she had killed him (82). He describes her flapjacks as one of his mother's "rare attempts at homemaking" (22), which once failed, provoking Slater to tell his father in anger to get a new wife who didn't burn everything. The mince pies that Slater's mother plans to make in advance so that they have them at Christmas when she is gone, are almost beyond her physical capacities; when he realizes that she has forgotten the mincemeat he shouts angrily: "'But Mummy, you PROMISED!' [...] 'You're HOPELESS, I hope you DIE!'" (99); his mother dies a few days later on Christmas Eve (101), and the reader feels the force of his loss in his measured, poignant and dispassionate prose. A further drama is then played out by an 'evil' stepmother, who kills his father with her orgy of rich food.

Monocultural memoirs such as those of Slater and Wizenberg and cross-cultural memoirs such as those of Martin and Reichl follow a similar psychological pattern in

which emotional deprivation and a dysfunctional family cause the narrators to seek an affective home in food, offering what Barbara Waxman calls "life lessons in how to overcome a dysfunctional family life and create a serene life in an alternative family" (Waxman, 376), where that alternative family can be found in a food context. "Presenting food as a generational unifier and bond among human beings is a recurring theme in culinary memoirs." (Waxman, 378). Memoirs present depictions of food-assisted self-transformation and the possibility of takings one's life in hand, while homes and kitchens offer places for attaching oneself at the stove. Ehrlich "remembered and unwrapped a bundle of family tales, many located in or near the kitchen. In these [she] found wisdom and innovation and the fading rituals and habits of an assimilating clan." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, x)

Luisa Weiss is an isolated wanderer, not part of an assimilating clan; as a young child between three and ten years she had to acquire the flexibility to segment her life:

> [W]hen you have one parent in one country and one in another, when you are the one who travels back and forth, you learn to split your life very carefully. You have your German life and your American life, your Berlin friends and your New York friends. With a few exceptions there was little overlap. I was the one who bounced between all these factions the easiest, slipping in and out of languages and their lives. It was a little lonely, to feel that the people dearest and closest to me didn't have a complete picture of me. (*Berlin Kitchen*, 285).

Food is presented as the ultimate comfort against a sense of loneliness that comes from self-ignorance and misunderstanding by her family who only see a fragment of the whole picture, especially "that strange feeling of loneliness I'd felt on the airplanes I took over the Atlantic as a child. My parents put me on those planes, trusting their obedient, well-behaved child not only to be responsible enough to travel back and forth, but also to survive the emotional seesawing. They had no idea how much it tested me." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 102). Her latent anger is suppressed until a moment of intimate cooking with her father when her emotions reveal themselves. Tension is tangible between them as they prepare apple pie for Thanksgiving. The ambiance is chilled and the ingredients resist mixing: "The kitchen felt so small and too quiet [...] As I processed chunks of cold butter and flour together into a waxy lump of pie dough, I realized how angry I was." (254). The gestures focused the resentment she felt at the distance her parents created between them that required her to be the ocean-leaping yo-yo that retained a semblance

of family: "I was angry at my father for his jumble of emotions and I was angry at both of my parents for having created this situation in the first place—the two of them so far apart that I'd always be forced to leave one behind. How could we still be some kind of a family when we were separated by an ocean?" (254). Her family is scattered and Weiss must not only seek comfort from the loss of her family 'home' in food, but also untangle the "jumble of emotions" and the crossed strings of her dispersed identity.

Family dysfunction, separation and misunderstanding

In all cultures, food plays a central role in mediating and expressing people's place in the world. To achieve this sense of belonging, infants establish relations with adults through feeding and receive organized attitudes in response (Counihan, 1999, 133). When the reaction is inappropriate or misjudged, confusion occurs, such as the slap Colette Rossant receives as a child for touching the enticing butter (*Apricots on the Nile*, 5), or the condemnation from her nurse for wanting the *semit* street food. A food related incident in a non-food memoir offers a conspicuous example; we read the shocking encouragement of Jeannette Walls' mother in *The Glass Castle*[170] to her three-year-old to repeat her attempt at cooking, after she was severely burned the first time. The destabilising effect of dysfunctional families incite authors to turn to food-making to generate a protective structure with family-like traits of comfort and nurture. Ruth Reichl portrays an emotionally erratic mother who, by her obtuse perception of reality narrowly avoids poisoning her family and friends. Rossant's mother is emotionally negligent, moving Rossant from one family home to another throughout her childhood without consideration for her daughter's emotional needs. Leslie Li's father is emotionally cruel, silence and anger accompanying his resentful dinners, while Luisa Weiss' parents are seemingly unaware of the doubts and insecurity to which they subject their young daughter on her endless ocean-crossings between homes.

[170] *The Glass Castle* (2005) by Jeannette Walls tells the story of Walls' and her siblings' turbulent and ostensibly abusive upbringing at the hands of their unstable and dysfunctional parents. Although not a culinary memoir, it talks of trauma and neglect that generates primitive hungers, for emotional as well as physical sustenance, and one that Julie Rak cites in her work on the new memoir alongside that of Elizabeth Gilbert's (2013, loc. 252).

Reichl's early experiences of food generate mistrust. Food in her home was dangerous and untrustworthy, made doubly toxic by the fact that it was served by her supposedly nurturing mother, from whom she has to distance herself, emotionally, physically and culinarily, in order to take control and acquire power. Given this situation, she comments with irony: "I began to see the status conferred by caring about food" (*Tender at the Bone*, 27). Like Gabrielle Hamilton, she needed to fend for herself to survive. Her manic-depressive mother says of Reichl "'When you were a baby we'd come into the bedroom and find you in your crib, sucking lemons. If I had known then that you were going to turn into such a sourpuss I would have left.'" (253) It is revealing –and disturbing—that her mother thought to leave her daughter because of a character trait revealed by the food she ate. Her mother employs a series of cooks who bring Reichl culinary comfort throughout her childhood of neglect. When Mrs. Peavey leaves, she watches her write her letter of resignation with sadness. "'Don't' leave me,' I wanted to say, But I couldn't.'" (48). She learns at an early age that food is a two-edged sword, both nourishing and dangerous, uniting and divisive.

The first scene of Colette Rossant's memoir with her dying mother is shocking in its brutal remorselessness. It contrasts sharply with the relative evenness of tone and fluidity of the rest of the narrative structure, which avoids judgment and seems distanced from much of her childhood suffering. Her mother neglects and abandons her many times, above all, forcing her to make life-changing journeys from one home and one country to another. Symbolically, in trying to feed her mother, she is offering her the nurturing that her mother was never able to offer her. She speaks in ruthless self-defence: "I had built myself a world of memories and my mother was nowhere to be found. I want it to stay that way" (*Apricots on the Nile*, 3). Her mother rejects the food her daughter offers her (4), only accepting that which her grandson offers. The scene goes without comment from Rossant. Carol Bardenstein offers this analysis: "Her memoir is also the 'writing through' of the loss of her mother, or of the mother she never had, and, I argue, a diffusely gendered act of substitution or re-placement, in which both food and Egypt (as a place that provided some warmth and nurturing) fill the void left by her mother and correspondingly fill the pages of her memoir as well." (2002, 375). Like Reichl, Rossant seeks to fill a void. The original title of *Apricots on the Nile,* was

Memories of a Lost Egypt.[171] Like Claudia Roden, she did indeed describe a lost world, not merely physically and culturally, but emotionally too. Bardenstein questions however: "How does someone like Rossant, whose ties to both her 'native world' and her 'maternal world' were already so unstable, problematized, or disturbed even before becoming 'distanced' or 'collapsed,' come to write a food-focused nostalgic memoir of loss that makes the implicit assertion of 'having had' these worlds to lose?" (Bardenstein, 2002, 382). I would suggest that, like Del Conte, time had diminished the trauma of those losses or voids, or the act of reconciling memories in a memoir serves as an act of sublimation. Colette Rossant wrote two further, equally short, succinct and evenly-humoured memoirs,[172] each one sub-titled "A Memoir with Recipes", confirming her successful, undeviating formula that she employs to narrate the important phases of her life, divided essentially into geographical chunks, Egypt and France, France, and America, without debating the existential dilemmas that cause Abu-Jaber, Furiya and Narayan[173] to return to the memoir genre.

Cooking can then be a way not just of finding oneself but, as in the examples of Reichl and Rossant, of eliminating misunderstanding created by food situations, through the symbolic precision of ingredients and recipe instructions. In cooking, memoirists are seeking "to superimpose a more recognizable form on [their environment]" (Collingwood-Whittick, xx), kinder, gentler and more human. Miriam's baked apples, or Sasha Martin's mother's German Tree Cake (its intricacy symbolizing the complexity of her relationship with her children) leave no doubt as to the love that is involved in their preparation. However, memoirs are not just about recreating family favourites to rehabilitate the dysfunctional family; it is also about the unsuccessful—and one might add stereotypical—failures to reconnect and create host land food. Li's father cooks American food on nights when her mother is working, with silent resentment at her absence and his incapacity to reproduce his traditional cuisine; the meals are flavoured with his negative emotions: "They were meals which, had we been able to decipher the acrid and bitter emotions that seasoned them, might have softened our

[171] American edition: Clarkson Potter 1999.
[172] *Return to Paris: A Memoir with Recipes* (2003), *and Madeleines in New York* (2008).
[173] *Life Without a Recipe* (2016), *How to Cook a Dragon. Living, Loving and Eating in China* (2008), and *Return to India: an immigrant memoir* (2012).

hearts to him" (*Daughter of Heaven*, 50). They ate in "silent suffering", often unable to swallow the food, or to keep it down. Li's father's cruelty to her mother, causes Li to physically reject his food, a scene made all the more intense for the absence of comment. The mention of shells in the recipe for "sautéed prawns in their shells' that immediately follows, almost incongruously, suggests impenetrability and indigestion.

Trauma, women and home

The discrimination women may experience for not fulfilling their role as adequate providers is inseparable from traditional foodways. If we accept Patricia Moran's thesis that femininity can be equated with public isolation and exclusion (Moran, 234), we can hypothesise that turning from trauma to cooking perpetuates a negative female stereotype and does little to further women's cause of freedom and self-control. We see Li's and Furiya's mothers playing intimidated victim roles; Zonana, and even Ehrlich, to some extent, flee diasporic domesticity, yet, according to William Safran, struggle to reconcile roles and images:

> Life for women in diasporic situations can be doubly painful—struggling with the material and spiritual insecurities of exile, with the demands of family and world and with the claims of old and new patriarchies [...] They remain 'attached to', and empowered by a 'home' culture and a tradition—selectively [...] diasporic women are caught between patriarchies, ambiguous pasts and futures. They connect and disconnect, forget and remember in complex, strategic ways. (Safran quoted in Clifford, 1997, 259).

This opinion echoes Ehrlich's own understanding of her process of spiritual awakening that was one of "a voyage of discontinuity and connection" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii). However, culinary memoirs, above all, show that the new generation has a voice, a desire and a capacity to change. Young women who suffer trauma can recreate themselves in many ways. The choice of cooking or food-writing is nowadays dissociated from the prejudice of domestic slavery, and represents rather a form of emancipation. However, social stigma leaves a trace; Ehrlich, Zonana and Li initially reject the self-imposed domestic slavery of their mother's or grandmother's, perceiving diasporic culinary obligations as an obstacle to assimilation, careers and social advancement.

There perceptions are undoubtedly coloured by war traumas epitomised in the culinary texts that emerged from the holocaust as a form of last testament for women

who were using their pre-war domestic identity as a way of confirming their existence in a place where they were being psychologically and physically annihilated. Recounting recipes and meal settings was an "estate of memory," as the novelist Ilona Karmel has called them (Vasvári, n.pag.).[174] Writing of the cookbook she compiled with fellow women inmates in Changi Prison in Singapore during World War II, Ethel Mulvany explained that she took the collection with her thinking only that "there was so little to bring away that I seemed to want something under my arm" (Evans, 39),[175] a tangible vestige of their experience and their suffering. This, like others that we have mentioned previously, were important surrogate diaries in prisons and internment camps where an intimate form of self-writing was forbidden; food becomes the vehicle for private thoughts and needs. Carla De Silva, in her introduction to *In Memory's Kitchen*, explains that these recipes, were "a collective memoir" which is "in some ways as revealing as prose." (Evans, 40). The "Cookbooks and Concentration Camps: Unlikely Partners" web article, published as part of the Jewish Virtual Library, offers further insight:

> As women recollected recipes, they taught one another the art of cooking and baking, and, in the process of teaching, they reclaimed their importance and dignity [...] 'food talk' also enabled women to pass on a culture, the memory of murdered family and friends, religious identification and tradition, and a value system. (Goldenberg, n.pag.).

Vasvári and Wang put the accent on intergenerational transmission, which seems to illustrate: "how food creates a powerful social language that speaks of cultural traditions and inherited identity handed down" (Vasvári and Wang, n.pag.), how women in concentration camps attempted to maintain their identity and connection to their ethnic and family history, and, after the war, their memoirs and recipes act for the transmission of survivors' Holocaust memory. The collection of recipes *In Memory's Kitchen*[176] the author Mina Pachter (with other prisoners) entrusted the manuscript, before she died in 1944, to a friend to give to her daughter who had escaped to Palestine before the war. This is in keeping with the tradition of daughters inheriting a book of

[174] Ilona Karmel. *An Estate of Memory*. New York: Feminist Press at The City U of New York, 1986. The work is a fictional account of women's lives in a Nazi concentration camp.
[175] Evans, Suzanne, Ethel Mulvany, Interview with Sidney Katz conducted in preparation for an article by Katz, "Miracle at Changi Prison: A study in survival," Maclean's, 12 August 1961; Interview #6. The original ledgers containing the recipes are held by the Mindemoya Pioneer Museum, Manitoulin Island, Ontario.
[176] The work was published by Cara De Silva as *In Memory's Kitchen* in 1996.

handwritten recipes from their mothers. Evans writes: "culinary imagination can be a survival tool [...] not only does the sharing of recipes strengthen social relationships, it fosters a sense of hope that one day some of the women will be free to make at least one of the recipes they have learned." (40).

Above and beyond the desperate necessity to invent another form of diary as personal trace that women invented with incarceration recipe books, Geyla Frank has noted, commenting on the American penchant for telling life stories: "'For some of us, the life story is our only home' (orally at a workshop) It becomes an icon; the life story becomes our only location and our destination." (Gullestad, 237). In most cases at least, the home becomes a point of focus for the loss of homeland and central to the narrative. Homes are described in detail, while their absence is the focus of a nomadic narrative that describes each move and its consequences. When Bud moves his family to a remote part of New York State, after an aborted emigration to Jordan, Abu-Jaber reacted as if they had been banished, agonizing that: "we may as well have moved to Jordan" (*Language of Baklava*, 141), so intense was the deracination that it felt to her like a diasporic journey of no-return. Kate Christensen describes many dramatic childhood moves and, in young adulthood, periods of extensive travel, that take her, at the end of her first memoir, to Italy, where she writes a new novel: "[s]afe in Italy, in the throes of new love, far from my old house and neighborhood". The novel,[177] symbolic of the memoir-writing itself, it written in a safe context, far from toxic homes, bringing to life the story of a man, betrayed, banished from his home, his Eden: "cast out of his home like an old Adam banished by his Eve from a comfortable, domestic Eden [... a] secular paradise lost" (*Blue Plate Special*, 341). Her religious language is a reminder of the sacred nature of home in exilic contexts. She describes Italy as her temporary paradise: "The place had its own vineyard and olive grove, as well as persimmon trees, rosemary and sage bushes, [...]" and the olive oil, in the language of Durrell's Edenic universe, was "bitter and rich and tasted like nothing else on earth." (339). As Bhabha explains, unhomeliness can be inherent in the rite of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiation. There is a narrowing of focus, a form of survival, marked in Christensen's memoir by a contraction of space with that loss of original home: "We set up small worktables in the

[177] Christensen's sixth novel: *The Astral* (2011).

two deep dormer windows of our bedroom [...] We spent our days and nights in this room, writing, listening to music, sleeping [...] We cooked meals in a huge kitchen down the stone staircase through a long tiled hallway at the other end of the house." (340). The place where food is prepared is detached from the intimacy of her confined and intimate living space; the memoir is testimony to the recomposing of home.

The personal and intimate dimension of the homeland itself is encapsulated in a home space that is for many writers, the kitchen, as well as the food prepared there and the body that receives it. The kitchen is, for example, expressed as a vital space of comfort for Martin: "Over the years, the kitchens I grew up in and around, continued to draw me in like a moth to a flame, as though I might capture whatever innocence I'd lost in that warm, fragrant space." (*Life from Scratch*, 18). It is a place where the innocence of childhood is recaptured for Weiss, yet during a crisis about her future: "The kitchen—my refuge—became a place I no longer wanted to go to. I was losing my appetite and fast." (106). Confused and uncertain she shares a symbolic episode when she is attacked by pigeons on three occasions in Paris: "pigeons—and doves—are the symbol of homecoming" (115), the attacks forcing her to see the path she should take back 'home' and to the kitchen. The home, the kitchen, the body become one with the food that is recreated, as a form of survival. Furiya associates food imagery with resilience, and her parents' exemplary fortitude: "[...] spinning my own threads of experience would help my character become as resilient and stellar as my parents. I was beginning to realize the importance of protecting the sweet, untouched meat of my spirit, buried deep down like the heart of a coarse black walnut." (*Bento Box*, 296). The nucleus of her home is symbolized in a dense, unattractive, but no doubt tasty, nut.

Beyond the public nature of her self-questioning about a possible return to her homeland of India, Shoba Narayan, in her second memoir *Return to India*, connects her personal dilemma to a very clear social debate that a class of American Indians voiced over their attraction to American wealth and ease of life, and the pride and sense of belonging to their home country. She makes it clear that her quandary is that of a woman and mother, with a sense of responsibility to her children: "I wanted them to have a sense of self, an assurance that came from knowing who they were, but also who they weren't" (*Return to India*, 180). For Narayan, her homeland offered them "the confidence of entitlement without behaving as if they were entitled" (194). It had become her land

of promise: "India had become my America, it had taken the place of my green card" (213). Bhabha writes of this public-private dilemma of home and homeland: "The recesses of the domestic space become the sites for history's most intricate invasions," (Bhabha, 9), a condition that women traditionally did not occupy and which, while reinforcing their resilience and resourcefulness, can initially accentuate states of unbelonging.

3. Rupture, uprootedness, unbelonging

Many of the memoirs we are discussing, are testimonies to the healing and reconciliation of ruptures caused by the trauma and loss of migration, immigration, and the journeys of no return. However culinary memoirs also record conditions of irreconcilable uprootedness and a sense of profound 'unbelonging', the term Sheila Collingwood-Whittick used to describe the deracination, the physical displacement, the psychological disorientation and the disconnection that subjects feel when they lose contact with their native culture (Collingwood-Whittick, xiii-xiv). Monika Fludernik explains that literature is "both the creator and the critical analyst of diasporic consciousness" (Fludernik, 42) which leads me to suggest that culinary life writing indeed generates a diasporic consciousness by the association and exploration of ethnic traits and traditions;, it also investigates a variety of conditions which bring that diasporic state into being. Roden's story is an example of a multitude of ethnic communities who recognize their culinary traditions in *The Book of Middle Eastern Food*. Elizabeth Ehrlich describes the minutiae of diasporic lives that are true for many holocaust survivors and exiled East European Ashkenazi Jews, with their holidays and culinary rituals, their summer homes and memories.

Uprootedness and continuity

Diaspora, meaning the scattering of people, from the Greek *speirein*, means a sowing of seeds. Sometimes the seeds survive, thrive and grow, sometimes they fail. Michel de Certeau and Luce Giard talk about the uprootedness of cooking itself as a representation of local identities that is due to "[l]a rupture avec la transmission d'autres

générations." (Certeau et al., 1994, 251). Culinary memoirs endorse the argument for remaining loyal to traditions and roots while facing the challenges of one's difference within a diasporic context, such as, being the only Asian in small town Indiana for Furiya, or being the girl with the funny name 'Abu-Jaber', and the generalized denigrating lunch box comments. The pauses for reflection and self-interrogation in the memoirs are a constant reminder of the rupture between the 'before' and 'after', particularly when there are not one, but several, ruptures as in the case of Rossant or Martin. The past and the present are shown as distinct but significant entities of the same, forever separated by time and relocation. (Naguib, 48). The repetitive nature of separations make the trauma all the more painful, such that as Bardenstein explains: "Combining narrative text, photographs, and food knowledge in the form of recipes, the bridge these books construct between disconnected worlds is a far more fragile and tenuous one, in which one is more constantly aware of the gap covered by the bridge and of the 'before' and 'after' as distinct entities separated by a rupture." (Bardenstein, 2002, 364). One loses sight of a possible bridge amidst the constant separations in Rossant's story. From her child's viewpoint she writes of her constant emotional wrenches: "I was the only child who wanted to be with him [her Egyptian grandmother's cook] in the kitchen [...] and he and I became especially close [...] I was always afraid that Ahmet would get so angry that he'd leave me like all the people I loved" (*Apricots on the Nile*, 47). Despite all the signs of rejection, Sasha Martin persists in trying to connect with Patricia, her adoptive mother through food: "It would take me two decades to admit to myself that there was another reason I wanted to cook in Atlanta: I was desperate to connect with Patricia. Whether or not I could call her 'Mama', for all intents and purposes, she was my mother now. I needed her." (*Life from Scratch*, 78).

Narrators, while seeking to make connections to diminish the pain of loss, often increase their sense of uprootedness. In the end, Martin writes that "[t]heir home came to remind me of who I wasn't and who I could never be" (133). As we have seen in part I A, Durrell, Hemingway and even Lawrence seek a primitive metaphysical continuity in their places of exile, that has been lost in their societies of origin, as memoirists who seek connections in foodway traditions. These efforts are echoed by E. M. Forster's temporarily uprooteded characters who lose their moral and social bearings when they leave the sanctuary of their homeland. In *A Passage to India* as in *A Room with a View*,

characters make clumsy gestures towards spiritual connection, which Forster expresses in its most sublime form in *Howard's End*, and can be considered the lesson of his entire corpus: "Only connect! That was the whole of her sermon. Only connect the prose and the passion, and both will be exalted, and human love will be seen at its height. Live in fragments no longer. Only connect, and the beast and the monk, robbed of the isolation that is life to either, will die." (*Howard's End*, 188). For memoirist, connection to traditions may also become a form of religion. Linda Furiya's parents are uprooted and lost in their 'whitebread' America: "Both my parents devoted their time, heart and energy to maintaining their Japanese diet, not simply because they preferred the taste of it to Western food, but because it connected them to their culture and all that they had left back in Japan." (*Bento Box*, 85). They inhabit a space that is on the edge of foreign culture, in the inbetweenness of cultural encounters in the heterogeneity of language, in the confrontation of past and present. Beyond the kitchen is a barren, infertile ground where they are unable to put down roots. This space is symbolized by the material emptiness in which Abu-Jaber's family find themselves when they give up everything (home, work, possessions) to follow her father to Jordan. The announcement of Bud's premature return leaves her destabilized, symbolically standing in her empty bedroom doorway "gripping the doorway as I feel my knees tremble" (*Language of Baklava*, 139). They are subjected to a new exile in a move to the "empty roads and rolling hills of New York State". This rupture is concluded by "Subsistence Tabbouleh: For when everything is falling apart and there's no time to cook" (143), when even the comfort of cooking deserts them. Culinary memoirs also record minor less dramatic and consequential ruptures, destabilizing transitions from one state to another. These transitions, such as Abu-Jaber's aborted Jordan move, may cause insidious damage as they do not always allow for a new beginning as her recipe indicates.

Dislocation is the term used by Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin to describe forms of displacement which result from cultural hegemonic practices, and which call for the reinvention of place "in language, in narrative and in myth" (quoted in Delmas and Dodeman, 2).[178] Culinary memoirs create a space in which food is prepared, shared and

[178] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies*. 1998. London: Routledge, 2003. 73.

experienced, such that the rupture can sometimes be mitigated by the creation of culinary myths. Several authors are indirect victims of colonization which Ashcroft in *Post-Colonial Transformation* says:

> […] disrupts a people's sense of place […] In the case of diasporic peoples, 'place' might not refer to any location at all, since the formative link between identity and an actual location might have been irredeemably severed. But all constructions and disruptions of place hinge on the question of 'Where do I belong?' (Ashcroft quoted in Delmas and Dodeman, 2).[179]

A sense of uprootedness is sometimes inherited from the author's parent's own dilemma, as in the case of Abu-Jaber, or generated by a situation of intense emotional instability such as Sasha Martin experiences which lead her to question who her father is, who she should call mother and where to find a place she can call home. She ends up settling in a city far from other family members, cooking food from every country and tradition in the world except her own. Yet she is aware of this dislocation: "There's only so much I can cook the world and study other people's family traditions without feeling pulled toward my own past […] The omission feels a little like avoidance (303), but later she talks of the hurt she feels so intensely that she cannot be "angry at anyone, let alone my own mother […] It's not even a choice any more. It just *is*" (*Life from Scratch*, 329).

"'Culture', says Edward Said, 'refers to what is a stake in the phrases belonging to or in a place, being at home in a place" (Said quoted in Donald, 166). According to Benedict Anderson the nation is an "imagined community", the place or culture where we feel at home. Nationalism for him if more comparable to 'kinship' and 'religion' than 'liberalism or 'fascism'. (Donald, 166). Culture that produces the nation, emerges from literature and narratives. From belonging nowhere, Martin's eating from every country in the world is an attempt to feel at home everywhere, to belong in some small way to every place, like Hemingway in his peregrinations. Narrators are afflicted by a psychological malaise that Homi Bhabha describes as "the estranged sense of the relocation of home and the world in an unhallowed place" (xiii-xiv). Home—any home—becomes as intense pull as Luisa Weiss explains in a text in which her cultures overlap and superimpose in cooking like soothing waves:

[179] (Ashcroft, 125).

> No one I knew struggled with the same sense of division that I did. It seemed unbecoming to be a young woman in her late twenties who wanted nothing more than to move back home [...] But sometimes there were moments when my two worlds overlapped, like when I cooked stuffed cabbage for my blog and remembered my lunch trays in Berlin or when I spent an evening baking star-shaped hazelnut Christmas cookies [...] those little moments soothed me, made me feel as if the huge expanse of ocean separating my two lives wasn't all that big after all. All I had to do, I decided, was get in the kitchen and bring Berlin to New York via the stove a little more often.
>
> So I looked for home in kitchen. (*Berlin Kitchen*, 92, 94).

A sense of unbelonging

Loss of home and uprootedness generate a sense of unbelonging that implies not being accepted where one is and as one is. Sheila Collingwood-Whittick has described it as a psychic pain, "the pain of unbelonging" (xiv). Coined by Germaine Greer, the term signifies the ambivalent responses of both autochthonous and settler subjects notably in the postcolonial context. However, immigrants and hosts are troubled alike by the sense of confusion that diasporic communities feel. When Abu-Jaber's family set up a barbecue in their front garden in order to be able to share the food with their neighbours, the gesture is met with hostility and incomprehension on both sides: "we are lost in the food" (*Language of Baklava*, 80), she remarks, which her school friend translates for her as "an 'unholy disgrace'' [...] in this country nobody eats in the front yard. Really. Nobody. [...] If your family doesn't know how to behave, my parents will have to find out about getting you out of this neighbourhood" (82) while her father naively wonders if the neighbours were themselves gypsies. Linda Furiya, unlike her mother, whose "family stayed in the back of her mind like an anchor that kept her sane and moving forward." (*Bento Box*, 173), struggled with idea of home: "My unhappiness was rooted in not knowing where I belonged." She began at that moment of departure for Japan "a lifelong journey in search of home [...] (173):

> Except for a few treasured childhood experiences, such as my trip to Japan and learning how to write hiragana and katakana, growing up Japanese American in a rural farm town was saturated with emotions that made me feel as if I didn't truly belong and that I was on the outside looking in. I felt suspended between two worlds I didn't belong in [...] (*Bento Box*, 300).

Her parents' oppressive trauma stories give her a profound sense of anxiety and sorrow, fed, like Abu-Jaber, by a sense of misunderstanding: Listening to the legend of her exiled ancestors "I considered that it was perhaps our family legacy to be outcasts and rejects." (14). In her second memoir, with the maturity that comes from lived experience and hindsight, Furiya comes to an understanding of that sense of exclusion, making the humble acknowledgment: "When I lived in China with my baby boy, I came to understand the isolation my mother faced in raising a family in a small town in Indiana." (41).

Gabrielle Hamilton also evolves with a strong sense of unbelonging, fuelled by her traumatic family disintegration. Later on, she experiences a sense of isolation amidst the idyllic scene of her husband's large Italian family, eating, drinking and talking together, presented in a prose whose tone rises with the fervour of a sacred and solemn scene, with words such as "grail", "recover", "welcome" and "fantasy", and falls in anti-climax with the realisation of her evident isolation, using words such as "hunger", exhaustion", "sadness" and "impossibility", while expressing emotional and existential needs as hunger:

> Oddly, this is where my full isolation sets in: at the dinner table, surrounded by family and good food. Here is the very place and the very moment of the grail I've been seeking to recover since my own family evaporated, thirty years ago. [...] You are welcome for a plate of spaghetti and a glass of wine—but it is not yours, and it will never belong to you and you will never belong to it. [...] It is my fantasy of recovering that fireside night [...] surrounded by my brilliant siblings and speaking our own made-up language. But I am reliably alone [...] My hunger feeds my exhaustion. My exhaustion fuels my sadness [...] I feel a gulf between me and the impossibility of what I want, what I crave from this family of which I am, still, not a part [...] it's promising and seductive, that huge Italian family, sitting around the dinner table, surrounded by olive trees. But it's not my family and I am not their family [...] (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 272, 273, 276, 286).

Furiya, Abu-Jaber and others are representative of what Homi Bhabha describes as scattered people who gather on the edge of foreign cultures, in ghettos or ethnic eating places, for whom partial belonging is always reduced to unbelonging. Discovering a sense of belonging involves reconciling the past and the present as Bhabha explains: "gathering the signs of approval and integration, gathering the past in a ritual of revival, gathering the present." (Bhabha, 139-40). Importantly, as Benedict Anderson indicates,

deracination and cultural disorientation lead to ontological destabilization. (Anderson, 2006, 116). The immigrant community cannot expect to put down a classic root system because that system was left behind or destroyed in the homeland. It is rather a rhizomatic system that organically emerges over time and generations, which involves adapting to the new terrain and making compromises, if at all possible. For Linda Furiya's parents, survival means living in a 'segregated' way in order to preserve the vestiges of a connection with home. For Furiya herself, her assimilation takes the form of horizontal footholds, such as connecting with classmates or deciding on an education that makes sense in her host land. Abu-Jaber writes, with a use of repetition that emphasises the motion: "My father and his brothers fly back and forth, back and forth, whisking over the oceans and continents. They live their lives in the air, in the ether of in-between, the borderlands" (*Language of Baklava*, 326). Letting go of the single root system is necessary for integration to be successful; Deleuze and Guattari explain that "[l]a racine unique est celle qui tue autour d'elle alors que le rhizome est la racine qui s'étend à la rencontre d'autres racines." (22).[180] Their theory is based on a notion of nomadology, the cultural and emotional resilience of the protagonists, conveyed through the rhizomatic nature of the narrative, stories interwoven within a lateral network of recipes. Shoba Narayan concludes her memoir with an example of an eclectic Thanksgiving meal that includes pop tarts and pasta for the children, Greek salad and her traditional dal and rice for the adults with an Australian wine, symptomatic of a rhizomatic adaptation.

Anderson asserts that belonging is a desire whose object, at the level of reality is unstable and uncertain (Collingwood-Whittick, 115). In memoirs, cooking can create a sense of connection to roots through traditions, which substitutes for a sense of belonging. In her gestures preparing stuffed vine leaves, Joyce Zonana experiences a sense of belonging that her parents felt when they bought the ingredients for her father's *ful medammes* 'chez les Arabes' on Atlantic Avenue (*Dream Homes*, 35), while Rossant writes of a similar experience on Atlantic Avenue: "I finally felt that New York was my home." (*Apricots on the Nile*, 165). For Luisa Weiss, a recipe can provide that similar

[180] "The single root is the one that kills everything around itself, whereas the rhizome is the root that stretches towards other roots." (Glissant, 59).

sense of belonging: "whenever I was feeling blue and out of sorts, like I didn't know where I belonged or if I even belonged anywhere at all, this *ragù* anchored me, reminded me who I was and where I came from." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 98). "It had been almost a year since I left New York, and Berlin felt like it belonged to me again." (247). The closing words of her book focus on belonging: "Home to the city I was born in and where my husband awaited me [...] where I knew I belonged. I went home again." (293).

A sense of otherness

While the diasporic consciousness that we discussed in chapter 1, can be felt and exploited by a community, these examples demonstrate that isolated individuals are profoundly troubled by otherness as a position of social marginality, in which the subject is essentially a passive victim. The dilemma for the diasporic immigrant is being caught between the need to assimilate and the necessity to retain a degree of outsidedness in order to preserve their identity, while at the same time avoiding rejection or expulsion.[181] Retaining this posture of cultural isolation, casts individuals in the role of the eternal foreigner. An alternative to ethnic pride is what culinary memoirs put forward as a counterpoint to the negative aspects of alterity, for foodways are both a unifier and the visible manifestation of otherness.

Perplexed by the talk of an arranged marriage and not understanding its meaning or the reaction of friends, Linda Furiya felt "even more insecure and uncertain, another reminder that we weren't like other families, and that something that had seemed normal was in fact not normal at all." (*Bento Box*, 21). She questions her parents in a state of awkward naïvety, while her mother prepares tea in the kitchen and her father smokes. "The grassy aroma of green tea mellowed out the smoky sweetness of tobacco" (24) as though a symbol of the impervious harmony between her parents, springing from their shared culinary culture. In response, her father admits that he wanted a Japanese wife "who could cook Japanese food" (25). They interrupt their story to rush to the grocery store to buy pork for the evening dinner *gyozas*, "as if there were a family emergency to rush off to" (29), enforced culinary necessity providing them with a way to evade a

[181] Refer to the discussion by Elizabeth Grosz on "Judaism and Exile, The Ethics of Otherness" in Carter et al., 1993.

delicate subject, and confirming that food protected their otherness in America. Paula Torreiro Pazo discusses the trauma in relation to identity as most evident in food habits (219). Food is both exposing and character-defining. In the allegory of the fish bone, Furiya describes how she was mocked by her classmates, but also how the eating experience gave her a keener sense of self, in the spirit of M.F.K. Fisher's "Measure of my Powers" leitmotif that we have touched on and will return to: "My throat tightened as if a fish bone were on the verge of lodging itself in my windpipe [...] I was filled with helpless, choking anxiety." (*Bento Box*, 6). She evaluates: "It was pride. I lost a sense of innocence that first year of school, but from it grew a defined measure of self that would stay with me and emerge during difficult times in my life." (9).

A notable recurrent scenario is what we might call the lunch box trauma and triumph. At school also, identities are put to the test, though as a satellite or dependent dimension of their parents' identity and cultural otherness. The school lunch highlights cultural difference, the narrator's reaction to the food supplied by the diasporic parents, and the reaction of her school mates. It is heightened by the reality that as children, they carry in their lunch box, their imposed parents' identity, quintessentially prepared in their midday food, by the adults who, according to Geeta Kothari, negotiate their place and inclusion (Mannur, 156), yet who are not there to explain or give cultural context. The lunch box content is both a source of shame and pride, as well as a secret delight for the food is often appreciated by its owner. Gabrielle Hamilton felt shame over the lunch boxes that her resourceful French mother put together: "our school lunches were just plain embarrassing: leftover ratatouille, a wedge of Morbier cheese, a bruised pear." (*Blood, Bones & Butte*r, 37). For Hindu Shoba Narayan, the lunch hour at her Christian school was a shared multicultural feast. The ritual of the tiffin boxes was a complicated ritual involving religion, social status, the cook's skills and the girls' generosity and curiosity (*Monsoon Diary*, 44-45): "There was a clear pecking order that has little to do with each girl's talents, personality or brains, and everything to do with her mother's culinary prowess." Lunchtime involved skilful bartering and negotiations to glean some choice morsels from another's (often culturally diverse) lunch box. Her awareness of what was forbidden or frowned upon by her Brahmin Hindu parents, meant that she also needed to negotiate with her conscience. She was dependent on the indulgence of Amina, a Muslim girl whose mother's cooking was coveted by everyone.

Madhur Jaffrey experienced the same intercultural culinary curiosity and tolerance at school during the times of partition: "What made these dishes special was the hand that put the ingredients together [...] They had a different rhythm, a different energy to my mother's" (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 167). She expresses a sense of the culinary traditions and foodways that had confected the delicacies, so exotic to her eyes: "I always found my own food the least interesting and barely touched it. It was all too familiar. [...] I wanted the contents of their tiffin-carriers." (168). However, the multitude of dishes and ways of preparing, made the exactitude of otherness difficult to distinguish: "There were dozens of traits, habits and traditions that could be used to define regional food. But such definitions were never entirely satisfactory as there always hovered above each dish an air of indefinable religious sensibility that could be seen and tasted but eluded pinpointing" (167), as elusive as the spirits that the girls conjure on their makeshift Ouija board after they have finished eating. School lunch diversity became even greater and more tantalizing after Partition with food coming from more distant destinations (193), yet many of her friendships "withered and died as talk of Partition began" (169). She mentions the dishes that were also Narayan's staples, notably *idlis* from the coconut state of Kerala. Her friend "left us with our mouths agape as she described her tropical home state which no one of us had visited" (194), an unknown place, introduced through delicious food. The potato dish of another from Rajasthan assumed "mythical proportions" because it was impossible to reproduce.

For Diana Abu-Jaber, the school cafeteria was her first exposure to "truly awful food" that she compares with the bag that her mother prepared for her, symbolically marked with her name, which was itself a form of mockery amongst her classmates. It contained: "garlicky chicken kabobs, crunchy falafel, or fresh spinach pies. My stomach tilts in sympathy for the children who must eat the cafeteria food. These so-called hot-lunch children seem like another breed—a lost forlorn tribe" (*Language of Baklava*, 22). At high school, the fragrant lunches of the immigrant students contrast with the meagre portions of their fellow American students who are often on diets. Abu-Jaber stood out, even among her immigrant crowd for her lunch bags "full of garlic-roasted lamb and stuffed grape leaves" (160), a cultural statement as strong as the spices.

Colette Rossant's lunch box experience is one of pride marred by trauma when an eagle sweeps down and grabs the grilled sparrow she was about to put in her mouth.

(*Apricots on the Nile*, 28). She learned to evolve and adapt for survival. "Although I missed my Egyptian grandparents and our way of life in Cairo, I made a point to become as French [as I could] as quickly as I could. Not half French, half Egyptian. I needed to be whole. So I shed my accent, as well as excess pounds [...] and ate a sandwich au jambon for lunch" (142). Her school peers interpellated her as Egyptian, but through specific willed acts of modifying her self-presentation, behaviour, eating, and performance of identity, she can "de-Egyptianize" herself in a particular context.

Although ashamed to be Chinese, the distinctive lunch box Leslie Li's grandmother prepares for her, notably with dried beef strips that her class-mates call tree bark, becomes a source of courage for her, making her brave in the face of shame and taunting: "'Tree bark' made me bold where my physical features and my mental make-up made me shrink" (*Daughter of Heaven*, 12). When her grandmother includes a richly prepared homemade version: "Nai-nai, who among other unforgiveable embarrassments she caused us, filled our lunch bags with 'icky-looking tree bark', 'disgusting animal turds', and turpentine-laced 'poisonous' fruits. All of which we secretly loved (classmates' squeamishness be damned) and to which she added a fourth delicious offense, Wise woman. The best she saved for last." (21). The pleasure of the food outstrips the sense of difference and her grandmother is deemed a 'wise woman' (21).

Linda Furiya was seduced by the idea of a conformist lunch box after the novelty of the school cafeteria waned in the light of the "sumptuous" lunches that her mother produced in her closet sized kitchen. However, when she discovered that her mother had prepared an *obento*, a traditional boxed meal, she was covered in the shame of an outsider: She wanted to be part of the lunch box crowd "this exclusive group" (*Bento Box*, 5). [Her] stomach lurched [...] when she saw "three round rice balls wrapped in waxed paper. Mom had made me an obento, a Japanese-style boxed meal [...] My desire to emulate my peers was palpable. My *obento* lunches were a glaring reminder of the ethnic differences between my peers and me." (5). Her appetite for the delicious delicacies her mother prepared had not diminished her appetite, and she eats her coveted rice balls in the toilets out of sight of her friends, a vital act of self-affirmation, expressed in the idea of primal empowerment: "It was a secret act that I found empowering and primal, rather than diminishing [...] I had the sensation that if I left one

grain uneaten, something inside me would shrivel up and die." (*Bento Box*, 10). She continued the subterfuge, even though it meant that her mother was deemed culinarily wanting. Her analogy of the bento box she eats on the train in Tokyo to an "open book" is apt, for her school lunch box tells the story of a diasporic family, her unassimilated parents and her ambivalent position, loyal to her foodways, but desirous to integrate, as represented by the apple and cookies that her mother adds as a concession to her daughter's new identity needs.

These situations of prejudice and difference are not so much related to who the narrators are, but where they have come from, what they have experienced, what they, as well as their forbears have lived through. It was important for Sasha Martin to know who and how her father was, to discover that he was a caring man. It was important in the same way, for Rossant and Zonana to return to Egypt to retrace their origins. Rossant's was a more nostalgic visit than Zonana's, which indeed took the momentous form of a spiritual rebirth. Recipes are the ultimate symbol of 'where they have come from'. The multiple terms signifying estrangement, including loss, dysfunction and unbelonging, suggest chaos and confusion in a personal perception of identity. However, as we have seen in the fragmented and sometimes often obtusely ordered or randomly selected recipes, they reflect both a condition and provide a way to overcome it.

James Clifford dismisses assimilation as a remedy for diasporic trauma. "Peoples whose sense of identity is centrally defined by collective histories of displacement and violent loss cannot be 'cured; by merging into a new national community" (Clifford, 1997, 250), yet he expresses concern that individual identities are being lost within a diasporic consciousness: "What articulations of identity are currently being replaced by diaspora claims?" (250). Within our collected corpus, diasporic conditions and related traumas are intermingled with other traumas: of, rupture and uprootedness, personal loss and unbelonging. The vision is broader and inclusive of the vulnerability of displaced people, those who have lost sight of their origins and affective ties. Indeed, there is a blurring of boundaries in memoirs between trauma states, and an increased focus on the consequences of and reactions to exclusion and otherness. In the following section, we will look at how conditions of displacement, diasporic or otherwise, effect perceptions of identity and understanding of origins.

B. Identity, origins, transmission

> Reclaiming one's past involves traveling back to an endlessly receding origin identity. The very act of tracing, of remembering undermines the very notions of identity and ethnicity, originary and initial subjectivities. (Bromley, 6).

Individual or collective ruptures with homelands, family or ethnic roots result in the fragmentation or loss of one's sense of identity, which itself generates a state of ambivalence or confusion about the identity fostered by one's parents and about that which one assumes in a new environment. The memoirist, as a potential channel for culinary traditions, is a role that has evolved into a credible and recognized literary narrator both publicly and personally; it is a status which defines her relationship to the reader and also to her family, and that implies a degree of transparency. Julie Rak describes memoirs as a way of thinking and even of being public, a way to construct, package and market identity (Rak, 2013, loc. 189). Memoirs, in her terms, turn identities into commodities: "they also participate in the manufacture of public identities as a reader encounters the life of another within the context of his or her own experience, values and beliefs about what it means to be a person." (2013, loc. 196-203). Indeed, James Olney proposes that autobiography[182] is the manifestation of an individual's desire to find his true integrity. Identity is inextricably linked to cultural integrity which launches moral debates that are the subject of mythical narrative threads. In part I, we named personal origins and their relevance to one's current identity as a central pursuit in culinary memoirs. In this section, we will consider the effects of trauma on perceptions of identity as they are revealed in culinary narratives, representing a person's or a community's similarities and differences, including their moral perspective, the perception and transmission of origins, and the places of memory where those roots reside.

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson enumerate three concepts that redefine identity within the context of life narrative: performativity, that denotes that identities are not fixed but enacted and reiterated through cultural norms and discourses and thus remain

[182] 'Autobiography' should be understood here to refer to self-writing in general.

provisional and unstable; secondly positionality, that defines geographies of identity in autobiographical narratives of colonization, immigration, displacement and exile, embracing terms such as hybrid, border, diasporic, nomadic, and migratory, glossing the notions we explored in the previous chapter of 'in-betweenness', 'uprootedness' and 'unbelonging'; and thirdly relationality which promotes 'fluid boundaries' (Smith and Watson, 2010, 215, 217). The fluctuating and fluid nature of identities interact with notions of space and territory. Relationality is at the core of transmission that we can trace back to early cookbooks, and is central to autobiographical narratives which tell not solitary, but interactive stories, often of the narrator and that of another person or entity, for example, Wizenberg's father, Li's grandmother, Miriam's kitchen, David's Mediterranean or Mayes' village; Jean-Pierre Carron emphasises the constructed, or acted, nature: "C'est donc au travers de l'histoire racontée que surgit l'identité du personnage mis en scène." (Carron, 138). Childhood memory, Helen Buss adds, is thus made up of more than one person's imaginative construction, but of a dialogue between the self and others (Buss, xvii). In terms of performativity, unified stories and coherent selves are the stuff of identity myths: "We are always fragmented in time, taking a particular or provisional perspective on the moving target of our pasts, addressing multiple and disparate audiences." (Smith and Watson, 2010, 61). We will explore the idea that "[a]utobiographical acts are investigations into and processes of self-knowledge" (Smith and Watson, 2010, 90), even though the conclusions are sometimes enduringly ambiguous. Despite this ambiguity, narratives may serve as a link in a diasporic transmission chain.

The question of transmission is a recurrent preoccupation in culinary memoirs; when perceived as cookbooks, transmission lies in the oral or written passing on of recipes and culinary traditions, and as memoirs in the passing on of foodways that encapsulate origins and the core of an identity. The position and status of women, as well as places of memory, are closely tied to the questions of active or passive transmission, and from what points of reference one can trace one's identity, particularly in the case of trauma victims.

1. Ambivalent or lost identities

Question of identity are at the centre of narratives and are equated with finding one's emotional integrity or wholeness. Authors pursue the complex problem of incomplete or fragmented identity. Questions of otherness that we discussed in section A arise in crises of identity that are often a consequence of trauma experiences. Homi Bhabha proposed the notion of 'interstitial' encounters:

> These 'in-between' spaces provide the terrain for elaborating strategies of selfhood—singular or communal—that imitate new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration, in the act of defining the idea of society itself [...] home is no longer where you were born, but the immaterial scape where the different scapes you are part of intersect. (Bhabha, 177).

Through stories and recipes, narrators present broad views of their situations in the forms of 'scapes':[183] new or inherited trauma-scapes are superimposed on foodscapes at whose intersection an identity may be defined or understood; examples of these trauma-foodscapes are Miriam's cake preparation (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 153-164), Molly Wizenberg's Italian Grotto Eggs (*Homemade Life*, 138-140) that she feeds her father in his final morphine-induced hallucinatory state, or Diana Abu-Jaber's tutorial in womanhood and the aggravations of cooking, during her Aunt Aya's baking session (*Language of Baklava*, 185-192).

We will consider here how narrators, responding to trauma, seek out origins to shape an altered reality, often in a new environment. Autobiographical culinary memoirs offer narrators the chance to discover the story of themselves through a unique form of story-telling and help them to redefine cultural markers. However, these perfect ingredients are not always enough. The hybrid style of culinary memoirs, suspended—sometimes unequally—between cookbook and autobiography, reflects the diasporic dilemma and expresses a profound malaise that Shoba Narayan identifies in *Monsoon Diary*, "it's about juggling cultures, straddling lifestyles, never fitting in anywhere, questioning the values that you have grown up with, and having your kids grow up as

[183] While acknowledging that many memoirists are relatively young and so do not have long life stories to recount, memoirs often offer extended details of childhoods as well as modern-day situations in succinct temporal spaces: the average page count of contemporary memoirs in the corpus is 289 pages.

Americans." (*Monsoon Diary*, 104).[184] This results not simply in a personal dilemma but also a predicament of transmission, for personal questioning does not always leave space for altruism, despite Marianne Gullestad's claim that: "[t]he value of autobiography is that it creates forms of embodied knowledge in which the (adult) self and the (childhood) other can rediscover and reaffirm their connectedness." (Gullestad, 237). Connection or healing must take place between childhood and adulthood, sometimes to the detriment of the relationship with the previous generation, as we see in the works of Reichl and Rossant works where the child is called on to feed-heal-reconcile the adult and vice-versa, thus re-establishing their personal integrity, although not necessarily that of the parent.

Memoirs offer depictions of food-assisted self-transformation and the possibility of takings one's life in hand, while concepts of home and kitchens offer places to take root, allowing identities to emerge, although being uprooted, as we have seen, causes personal and cultural deterritorialization and the constant pursuit of an identity that respects the past and tolerates assimilation. On her spiritual and personal quest, Elizabeth Ehrlich "found wisdom and innovation and the fading rituals and habits of an assimilating clan" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii). In describing the house on moving day as a young adult, Ehrlich observes: "Here was the kitchen. Here was our home" (330). Yet as an isolated Jewish family in an increasingly black neighbourhood, it became "a lonely island of echoed traditions" (330). Molly Wizenberg writes in her blog[185] "the kitchen, and the food that comes from it, is where everything begins". The kitchen is a place where one finds one's integrity, but is also a place where lies are concealed. An example is the kitchen of Fisher's grandmother, in which Ora, the talented cook but also, it is revealed, murderer, operates.[186] It is a place of danger where tensions abound, in Colette Rossant's kitchen spaces for example, or sinister events, dramatized in Laura Esquivel's novel *Like Water for Chocolate*, where food preparation is foregrounded and characters

[184] Narayan reviewed her conceptions on immigration and transmission in her second memoir *Return to India*.
[185] Orangette: orangette.net
[186] Fisher learns that Ora has killed her own mother, before killing herself. No explanation for this sinister crime is given, but it contributes to the perception that Fisher expressed at other moments, such as on her transatlantic crossings, or in restaurants, of the dark side of human nature.

die of a grief-infused poison, or in a disturbing contest of culinary supremacy in Leslie Li's memoir, in which her mother challenges Dashao the cook to a chicken dish 'war' to prove whether Chinese or American food was superior in its ingenuity and taste (*Daughter of Heaven*, 133-136).

Cooking is a channel for shaping identity, as much a process as a symbol, or "in the making" explains David Sutton (quoted in Counihan, 2013, 316). Linda Furiya writes: "Most of what I learned about my parent's culture was taught to me through Mom's cooking talents and Dad's enthusiastic appetite. It was only at the dining table as a child, and later in the kitchen, that I experienced an absolute peace and connection with my Japanese heritage." (*Bento Box*, 278). At the end of this chapter, however, it is not a favourite dish of hers, but the emotionally charged dish that her mother associated with her own mother's death, at twelve years' old, 'Short-Necked Clams Steamed with Sake' (*Bento Box*, 297) with which she chooses to conclude, as though she must consume her mother's grief as part of her process of self-discovery. It is also a sign of duty and respect tribute to her mother, acknowledging that "Mom was still grieving for her mother, that her unhappiness was much more than being homesick" (281).

Cultural integrity

It is in consuming her family's history in the form of the clam dish, and not merely through her cultural legacy that Furiya finds her ethnic serenity. The trauma of alienation and loss drives the need to recover cultural integrity explains Steven Vertovec (1997), which is equated with self-healing. The point of departure is often a dichotomous and contradictory approach to food. Many authors are troubled by a loss of personal integrity with regard to their origins. Through the immigrant eyes of Abu-Jaber and Bud, (and the influence of her maternal grandmother) the Betty Crocker American cookbook is filled with "reasonable, neutral" recipes, offering "optimism, clarity and direction", but the antithetically flamboyant Bud describes himself as a "dashing, improvisational, wayward, intuitive" cook (*Language of Baklava*, 89, 90). He will never have the heart of an American cook.

For Ehrlich, her well-intentioned journey towards integrity takes the arduous road of kosher observance, the foundation on which her family's hybrid identity might

potentially stand, tied to her ancestors and receptive to the identity she is creating: "[a] basic floor that would hold them as they grew and went their way" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 127). As a child she and her siblings sought that foundation for which her atheist father and her uncommitted mother were unable to make adequate provision. The children wanted the kosher kitchen as an "arsenal to objectify our leanings, to tether us to a solid post" (183). For her children, Passover is no longer a "mausoleum" (215). She appropriates memories and reinvests them with her personal experiences.

Both Abu-Jaber and Ehrlich succeed in constructing identities that contain strengths from their ancestors coupled with elements from their own forged experience. Integrity is equated with keeping traditions alive through the daily gestures of cooking to feed body and soul. Abu-Jaber describes a public reading for her first book[187] at which her father raises his hand to ask a question, and turns to the audience to say: "'I just want you all to know that's *my daughter*.' [...] Then he invites the audience over to his house for dinner. Each event is one piece in the path of claiming myself. As I begin to teach and publish, I begin to own a little more of my story." (*Language of Baklava*, 232). She is aware of her father's sadness at seeing her find her autonomy and her own identity—"I am at the microphone. I am holding the pen" (232), speaking for herself and writing her own story; like her father though, she generously provides the recipe that follows for "'Invite the Audience' Tomato Chicken *Mensaf*: A crowd-pleasing variation on classic lamb (or goat) Mensaf" (232) which Bud had no doubt made. For Shoba Narayan, her identity determines her place in society and her reaction to events around her. She describes *Shraadham*, a day dedicated to paying homage to ancestors with a meal served to Brahman priests as "a circle that defined my identity, my lineage and my place in the world" (*Monsoon Diary*, 90). This belief enables her to wait serenely for the end of the meal to gather the few crumbs that were left for the women and children.

Crumbs are a garrulous symbol which speaks of the difficulty of constructing an identity from dispersed morsels. Is integrity possible when the diasporic identity is severely fragmented within the family and within society? Luisa Weiss's identity is inevitably fractured by her parents' origins and life choices, and in seeking to find coherence she ultimately returns to her childhood 'home' in Berlin, leaving behind a

[187] Diana Abu-Jaber. *Arabian Jazz*. New York: Norton, 2003.

comfortable and successful life in New York, evoking the decision in a further food analogy, suggesting that Berlin was a harder dish to swallow: "Many people would have liked that life and would have been happy to gobble it up." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 268). Her ambition, leaning on the notion of truth, is "[t]o find a menu, to find a life, that would be mine. That would be genuine and true." (269). The food imagery is sustained, for Weiss seeks not just a recipe but a menu, a nourishing 'meal' containing several courses, implying concepts of balance, coherence, completeness and sustainability. Arriving definitively in Berlin, Weiss finds wholeness in two essential activities: "I baked to stay warm. I baked to find control. I baked because it was Christmastime in Berlin and in this new life I was, at last, a full-time food writer." (156). She equates writing with baking and baking with writing. Coinciding with her return to Germany, Weiss is asked to write a book on *Classic German Baking,*[188] the irony of an Italian-American woman who is considered an authority on c*lassic* German baking is blatant; this status carries worthy credentials for her immigrant/diasporic American audience.

While most culinary memoirs are individual quests, they can also represent a collective voice in the face of a common struggle. The story of their dual immigrant dilemma captures the drama of many Americans caught between two worlds, contemplating abstract notions of staying or leaving, fed by the immigrant imagination of the journey and settling. They lead "[d]ouble lives with journeys of migrations and dwellings of the diaspora" says Homi Bhabha (212). Salman Rushdie believes that it is impossible for emigrants to recover the homelands they left behind. The best they can do is to "create fictions". Rushdie's imaginary homeland "can thus reinvent and question place and identity, generate and celebrate difference and heterogeneity, decenter and reterritorialize place" (Delmas and Dodeman, 7), reclaiming a form of integrity. We must ask how the host land can be assimilated or reterritorialized to offer cultural integrity, rather than uniquely how the individual can herself assimilate. Bhabha explains that the migrant's survival depends on discovering "how newness enters the world […] making linkages through the unstable elements of literature and life" (227). Linda Furiya observes the pain of her parents' war and exile experiences, yet remains silent, for she wants, above all, to assimilate in America. She consumes her mother's

[188] Luisa Weiss. *Classic German Baking*. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 2016.

grief eating her dish of Short-Necked Clams, but bows her head and continues her meal when her father talks about his war experiences and is unable to ask her mother about the photograph album that had sparked her school-friend Tracey's interest: "I just couldn't bring myself to do it. The opportunity slipped by like a passing breeze." (*Bento Box*, 80). She suffers the pain of non-assimilation because of their ache for home. "Both my parents devoted their time, heart and energy to maintaining their Japanese diet, not simply because they preferred the taste of it to Western food, but because it connected them to their culture and all they had left back in Japan." (85).

Culinary memoirs provide readers with a perception of society seen through the eyes of an outsider. Pinpointing the 'poverty' of food in America in contrast to delicious home fare, Narayan says "At Mount Holyoke I was offered a world without context, and I approached it like a child, unfettered by the American stereotype that I have since learned" (*Monsoon Diary*, 115). Her memoir describes how she is shaped and bound by the food of her childhood, such that she cannot go out into the world until she has proved, through a cooking test, that her community's identity is ingrained in her, that she has assimilated the homeland: "I had to cook for in it lay my destiny [...] using tattered family recipes, my mother's early instructions and gigantic cookbooks as guides, I began [...] the litany I learned at my mother's knee in my head" (106, 107). When she strays from her traditional cuisine in preparing a benefit dinner in America, the results are disastrous. Putting her 'world food' aside for *upma* "a one-dish dinner as simple and comforting as a casserole" (145), saves her meal from calamity. For Abu-Jaber, however, her family's collective identity is fractured in America where the lamb-killing failure shows the men that they are no longer who they thought they were and cannot create the same situation as at home: "trying to kill the lamb showed them: They were no longer who they thought they were." (*Language of Baklava*, 19). The emphasis is on collective effort, not singular ambition. All the brothers except Bud finally return to Jordan, seemingly unable to assimilate their homeland and move on: ironically, Bud alone has progressed, making the necessary compromise: cooking American food with Jordanian hospitality.

Ambivalence, confusion and doubt

Nancy K. Miller describes identity as alterity (Smith and Watson, 2010, 138), the 'otherness' within each person in relation to another. At the beginning of her spiritual journey of self-discovery, Elizabeth Ehrlich expresses her doubts in terms of hunger and food: "Some years I dressed in the scraps of that longing, and went forth with few expectations to houses of worship [...] What others felt I cannot know. Yom Kippour is a motley heart assembly, my soul a Swiss cheese of misgiving and hunger and doubt." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 12). What was for Furiya's parents a peaceful home, rich in Japanese culture, represented for her a source of shame, an embarrassing locus of identity, a chasm of difference between her and her friends: "It's not that I didn't want to have friends over. I did. It's just that I didn't want them to see how different my home life was from theirs." (*Bento Box*, 68). She perceives her oppressive private world as the embodiment of strangeness for others. Her parents would argue that a double culture was not possible, at least for them, what Tulasi Srinivas describes as multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism that create anxiety over identity, causing diasporic communities to seek in the idea of 'homeland' an important nucleus for nostalgic sentiment (Srinivas quoted in Counihan, 2013, 365).

Anxiety and doubt have multiple facets. Severe childhood trauma, and troubling home environments such as those described by Slater, Rossant and Martin, leave the narrator insecure about her identity and future. Abu-Jaber, Zonana and Weiss, as second-generation children finds themselves caught between a new world pulling them forward, and parents yearning to go back. Through Luisa Weiss' mixed parentage, transcontinental homes, multicultural dynamics and torn loyalties, she must find *her* place through troubled reflection and multiple transatlantic trips, demonstrating great moral integrity while expressing profound doubt. Joyce Zonana expressed her doubts in a tangible form. Her recipes appear as somewhat sterile postscripts to the narrative compared to the exuberant and sensual food preparations in the text, but while they remain an integral part of the memoir, their presence authenticating her search for identity, their post-narrative placement is symptomatic of Zonana's difficulty in making food preparation and celebration a totally inclusive part of her life. She is ambivalent about the place that she wants to give them in her life, held back by the shadow of her

mother's sacrificial diasporic dedication to recreating the food of her Egyptian past. Zonana's mother was not a liberated woman but pride in her role strengthened her identity. Described by Zonana as powerful and sensual, her mother channels her energy into her domestic interior and creates a world within the confines of her physical home and immigrant social space. (*Dream Homes*, 111). Zonana rebelled against this, leaving the kitchen and rejecting the community's social isolationism, but remaining, herself, in a sort of no-(wo)man's land, occupying a professional role as an academic but unable to find a social niche for herself which could take into account her multi-faceted identity.

Diana Abu-Jaber's memoir expresses a series of conflicts around food and identity, between America and Jordan. She struggles with her identity growing up, negotiating a compromise, because it is intimately tied to her father's ambivalence, regretting Jordan while wanting to make a success of his life in America. Wishing to assume an American identity provokes feelings of guilt for not defending her origins: "I believe that if I had willed myself more fully Arab in America, all this dislocation might have been averted." (*Language of Baklava*, 138). She confronts her origins in her first independent steps as a student, no longer able to accept this ambivalence and symbolically unable to hold down her father's food, prepared especially for each homecoming, her body repelling the identity he tries to impose on her of "roasted chicken, shish kabobs, grape leaves" (217). The "molten nausea" that comes several hours later is accompanied notably by a sense of confusion: "a dreadful disorientation—the sense that something is deeply wrong yet completely unidentifiable" (217). Her father tries to control and shape her identity, to make her "a good Arab girl" (194, 197), a term that to a young girl sounds like a detention that she struggles to resist, but without a distinct identity of her own, and confused by her father's sense of self: "After growing up with Bud's idea that Jordan is our truest, essential home, a part of me has come to believe it" (235), but clearly only a part. Her confusion is intense as she mourns the food that she craves on her journey home from college for the Christmas break even before she eats it, but dreads the moment when her body will reject it (223): "It's so lush and lovely, I eat recklessly, like an amnesiac, with no awareness of anything but the table, the sweet sadness of return" (225).

Abu-Jaber comes to accept her ambivalence as an inevitable part of her make-up, an unavoidable duality between Jordan and America:

> I have recently come to understand something about myself, which is that I am [...] a hopeless case [...] Come back, I want to say to my second self, *there is tea and mint here, there is sugar, there is dark bread and oil*. [...] We grow into the curve of what we know; for me, that was my family's rootlessness and my father's control and scrutiny—movement and confinement. (*Language of Baklava*, 327).

She reasons the critical case for her dilemma while at the same time, the traditional staple sustenance, written in italics as though a whispering voice, lures her to react viscerally. Her father tries to compensate for that rootlessness by controlling her, but just as he confines her, he also wants her to voyage like him as a cultural nomad. She admits to having two identities, "a second self", a hybrid persona. Community loyalty come into conflict with family loyalty. Abu-Jaber accepts her rootlessness; as a "reluctant Bedouin" making the decision not to choose one camp: "Why must there be only one home!" (328). The traditions that she learns remain nonetheless the tie, pulling her back to the source. In the final chapter, "The First Meal', an inversed reference to the truths told at the Last Supper, she seems finally to have identified those elements that are essential to her identity: "I must have these things near me: children, downtown, fresh bread, long conversations" (327).

Gabrielle Hamilton's work, that Sandra M. Gilbert describes as a *Kunstler-roman* (Gilbert, 219), a narrative about an artist's growth to maturity, represents many chefs rise-to-fame memoirs, though hers, like Slater's, describes a growth to maturity amidst, and because of, strong adversity. She has to practice self-reliance and develop resilience at an early age, but despite these survival strategies, she questions whether she can develop her own identity. She cannot find time for 'genuine' writing, yet had no lack of determination: "I was the girl who put on her coat over her chef's whites and spent an extra hour cleaning out the cruddy walk-in refrigerator" (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 91), her identity seemingly compulsively intertwined with the production of food that is associated with her mother and her childhood: "Aside from an iron-clad work ethic born of an early understanding of self-reliance, I was wondering if I had anything else to offer. I was wondering if there was still time for a life of my own choosing." (91-92). Again, twenty pages later: "Did I have something more to offer, any other talent than a strong work ethic?" (108). And again, when questioning whether she had what it took to open a restaurant: "wondering what credentials I possibility possessed" (129). It engenders in

Hamilton a desire to give: "I had always wanted to contribute in some way. Leave a little more than I took." (92). She seeks to rediscover family by giving food paramount importance in her life, stressing "how important it is to sit around the dinner table with friends and family" (93).

The family table that is an ideal of inclusion for some, is a place of stigmatization for others. Leslie Li was torn between the antithetical desires of maintaining her, often harsh, traditionalist father's ties with the past, out of respect for the memory of his own father, and an unspoken and incompatible desire to assimilate in America, epitomized by the tasteless American supper he chastises Li for not eating. The parallel structure of the text reinforces the idea that despite the fundamental insecurity they both feel, there is a nameless connection that speaks of their common identity:

> Without words I was apologizing for my inability to swallow his Friday fish-stick dinner. Without words he was forgiving me my rejection of those fish sticks with which he punished us and poisoned himself; each bite a door slammed against us, locking us out so that he might hide unseen and unknown behind it. (*Daughter of Heaven*, 64).

The term 'poisoned' is as strong as their conflict of loyalty and identity. It was a potentially tragic oscillation backwards and forwards between two continents and two cultures, the symbolically charged word 'crucified' containing the violence of their struggle, between each other and within themselves and presenting her father as the victim of an irresolvable cultural conflict: "[a] tug-of-war between, on the one hand, his American life, and on the other, his Chinese soul: between being the son of a famous father or his own individual self [...] My father pulled right and left, East and West. My father crucified." (256). Li's status, too, is confused by the grandson she presents to her father, who in perpetuating his name, casts her in a wifely role. The meeting with her father and son proved to be more harmonious in its complementarity, a sign of "a dynamic interrelationship of opposites, a continuous interplay of extremes. Sun and moon. Man and woman. Union and separation." (151). This relationship highlights the confusion of identity as a recurrent idiom. Old Man Hill, the legendary stonesmith, to whom she turns for wisdom, 'tells' her: "[y]ou gave your father the son you weren't and that your mother didn't" (268). Her grandfather was an "instead-of" (acting) president, her father a "Son-of", "I was no one's son—failed almost, or otherwise" (244). Her relationship to her father, her role, and even her gender are put into question.

Sasha Martin's own gender-neutral name contributes to her confused identity; she starts out life with the name Musashi after a famous Japanese Samurai, to later become Sashi, Sasha and then Alexandra, her family name too changing from her father's to that of her mother, the latter vesting her with "the power of her female lineage" (*Life from Scratch*, 41), as she describes it. Amidst the turmoil, emerges a desire to accept what life has served up, that working through recipes helps them to achieve. Martin is for a long time preoccupied by whether her parents are worthy of her loyalty. Ultimately, she has to accept her mother as her, albeit precarious, mainstay: "I used to try to make her the parent I needed her to be, but she is all she is. She's all I have [...] It hurts too much to be angry at anyone, let alone my own mother. And she is there for me now. I have to love her back [...] It's not even a choice any more. It just is." (329).

Ruth Reichl is not able to utter the same message of acceptance towards her mother, but rather of condemnation. She learns to differentiate between those who care about food and those who don't and through her efforts to understand food, she creates an identity and a future for herself. Her mother was little interested in food, but had no qualms about serving spoiled food, just as she 'cared' for her daughter, and made inconsiderate decisions about her life that overlooked her emotional well-being.[189] Adam Gopnik records Reichl's claim that her recipes are "intended as oases of sense in the midst of all this madness and as signs of her real identity as a cook."[190] (*Table Comes First*, 227). In this dangerous terrain of false intentions, Reichl's word 'intended' is carefully chosen, signifying her desire to create an 'oasis' of reason through her cooking to help find, and save herself.

Reichl's is a self-affirming story about forging an identity out of mixed messages. Fisher uses repetition in her chapter titles as though she is making regular self-assessments of her own progress. Eleven chapters are entitled "The Measure of My Powers", and five are entitled "Sea Change" with dates corresponding to the Atlantic crossings that took her from one life to another. Acts of reiteration in real life are often necessary in the construction of identity. The translation of these acts into

[189] While enjoying hot buttered corn in her memoir-cookbook *My Kitchen Year* some 20 years later, Reichl recognizes that her mother has never indulged herself as she herself had learned to do: "Mom never permitted herself this solitary indulgence. The thought made me sad" (*My Kitchen Year*, 280).

[190] Reichl is referring to her life of a restaurant critic in her memoir *Garlic and Sapphires* (2006).

autobiographical practices is the foundation of empowerment. We often weave these reiterations into rituals according to Helen Buss (64), and it is the naming of these rituals in culinary practices that shapes the autobiographical construction. Madhur Jaffrey and Shoba Narayan cite many examples of rituals that cadenced their childhood and shaped their adulthood. Madhur Jaffrey defines traditions that are passed from one generation to another; on a holiday when her mother must fast and pray for her husband, she places pieces of her food into her children's mouths: "Perhaps at that witching hour, when it was neither night nor day, my mother was quietly passing on an ancient tradition from her generation to ours" (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 49). The narrator must use discernment through assessment and the awareness that the narrative writing brings. Buss explains that "[t]he memoir narrator, through the three functions of witness, participant and reflective/reflexive consciousness is full of reassessments, rejoinders, doubts and reassertions." (35). Buss adds that, as memoirs indicate, self-understanding emerges in a tacit play of fluctuating perspectives in space and time, and between the participant narrator, the reader witness and the author's conscious literary creation. M.F.K. Fisher's perspective on the circumstances that determine the importance of food is pertinent also for the narrator: "Often the place and time help make a food what it becomes even more than the food itself." (*The Art of Eating, Consider the Oyster*, 181-182).

Eating as a measure of identity

Fisher introduces the idea that many of the stories have strong moral messages about finding one's place and identity by respecting elders and traditions, synonymous with valuing the concept of home that must be sought out as part of an individual journey. Moral and physical health demand a respect for ancestral foodways, a dominant theme in Asian memoirs, around making choices in line with these traditions and accepting a compromised identity. Linda Furiya's fishbone allegory, rich in family and community lore, about one's capacity for adaptation, if not understood, can make a simple plate of fish—or the banal hazards of life—potentially life-threatening. Her mother does not explain the fish bone story: "Mom left the tale at that, leaving me baffled as to its lesson or moral", but she soon learns that it is a lesson of survival, in this

case against racial attacks that challenge the integrity of her identity. She broadens the scope of the metaphor: "Growing up in the only Japanese family in Versailles Indiana, I quickly learned that I would have to overcome many fishbones." (*Bento Box*, 3). Immigrant hunger and suffering simplify the moral lessons of food memories, she writes: "The anticipation of those last bites, to me, made the meal all the more enjoyable, the eating version of the way I collected memories to enjoy later." (304). However, her father teaches her a bitter lesson about hunger and need that overthrows her childish eating habits: "'After being in the POW camp, when you never knew the next time you would eat, I changed my thinking. Eat your favorite first [...] 'If you wait too long, it won't be there to enjoy.'" (304). "'Enjoy the best first', he told me. Enjoy the moment." (306).

Meals are spaces where people give and receive social and moral approbation but also where ethical traps lie, especially in situations of displacement and travel. Li's rejection of her father's American cooking is symbolic of the danger associated with absorbing a foreign culture. This is illustrated by E. M. Forster's characters in his travel novels, who show both fascination and reticence at the idea of absorbing otherness, or the unknown. While food and appetite are suggested rather than explicitly evoked in Forster's fiction, it is in these veiled spaces that he mocks the genteel hypocrisy and moral rigidity of early twentieth century society, his novels making an important literary transition between the nineteenth century romantic and realist novels and modernism. The scenes and settings of meals are central to this and other of his works: dining rooms are spaces for comedies of manners and moral vignettes, invitations to tea define social acceptance or exclusion, and picnics, in both *A Room with a View* and *A Passage to India* are the sites of morally cataclysmic disasters. Food represents not connection and pleasure but danger and menace. A grotesquely abundant and inappropriate quantity of English food that is forced upon the visitors in *A Passage to India*, becomes an obscene aggression and thus, morally dangerous.[191] (Lanone, 240). While Forster's characters are afraid of the sensual degeneracy that foreign foods represent, Hemingway, the adventurer, embraces it, as do Lawrence Durrell and his contemporary and friend Henry

[191] "Le pique-nique dans A Passage devient monstrueux parce que le lieu se métamorphose en bouche géante, parce que l'ingestion vient punir l'ingérence dans cet orifice béant qui absorbe jusqu'à la narration" (Lanone, 240). The notion of the moral dangers of food will be further explored in part IV of this thesis, on the aesthetics of nourishment.

Miller. They taste and absorb otherness and unknown in order to lose—and at the same time find—themselves; food itself is an adventure. Henry Miller writes of the Greek peasant: "He will sit in the dark at the table and stuff himself with bread and olives, with hard-boiled eggs, with herring and cheese" (*Colossus of Maroussi*, 78). The simple meal laid outside: "a bottle of black wine, a heady molten wine that situated us immediately in the center of the universe with a few olives, some ham and cheese." (166).

Luisa Weiss, unfamiliar with hunger, recommends time and mellow patience. As she and her husband settle to a new life, she finds healing in cooking together and agreeing to differ over potato salad, her cautionary tales offering advice about relationships—like a recipe—comparing it to the dressing: "All we needed to stop fighting was a little patience and a little time. Though of course I like to think that the potato salad helped things along too." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 176). Several times, Weiss addresses her readers in the self-deprecating style of a Victorian novelist as 'dear reader' calling herself "an unreliable narrator" (*Berlin Kitchen* 112),[192] but by this injunction, invoking nineteenth-century moral tales with Jane Eyre's defiant "Reader, I married him". There is humility in her realization of the adjustments that she has made and the transformations in progress, silently negotiated over potato salad and more.

Imbricated in these tales is a metaphor of calculation and measurement. Extending the recipe analogy, where the right measurements make for the perfect recipe, narrators are able to offer moral recipes for a good life, as a way of countering their otherness and unbelonging within memoirs. One measures oneself, one's place in the world and the ingredients for the recipes: food and eating become a measure of identity. One must evaluate for oneself, rather than place trust in an unrooted environment as in the fishbone story. Mocked by her classmates, Linda Furiya chokes: "My throat tightened as if a fish bone were on the verge of lodging itself in my windpipe [...] I was filled with helpless, choking anxiety [...] I lost a sense of innocence that first year of school, but from it grew a defined measure of self that would stay with me and emerge during difficult times in my life." (*Bento Box*, 6, 9). Her next recipe is for versatile rice balls from which one can symbolically make a choice of flavours, with different ingredients and quantities.

[192] See also pages 61 and 175 in *Berlin Kitchen*.

Furiya echoes Fisher who shares the positive effects of resilience in the face of social unbelonging. The "The Measure of my Powers" chapters, almost half of the twenty-six chapters in *The Gastronomical Me*, evoke questions of freedom in the face of social norms measuring Fisher's autonomy and independence. She flees, her own 'personal soap opera' celebrating with good food and drink (*Gastronomical Me*, 130), describing domestic roles as 'a dogged if unconscious martyrdom" (3), the other face of the culinary rituals, where the kitchen was a place of duty, not joy. She found a "gastronomic liberty" in her culinary creativity and above all independence that "often saved me and my reason too" (183).

Frances Mayes defends the edict that one either measures or cooks, each a character-defining trait recommending that the culinary tradition be learned through practical application, not by reading techniques. However, reading and 'measuring' implying a respect for the past, appears for many writers to be an important moral lesson. The penultimate chapter of *A Moveable Feast* is similarly entitled "A Matter of Measurements". As well as Hemingway's assessment of F. Scott Fitzgerald's sexual prowess, it speaks of Hemingway's principal preoccupation with the quality of his writing skills, in particular in comparison with those of others. He steps out of the narrative momentarily to comment that he will write about Fitzgerald "in a book about the early days in Paris. I promised myself that I would write it." (193), implying by his narratorial position that, as a writer, he will have the final word.

Angelo Pellegrini offers the quintessence of moral recipes for a good life, citing a loss of identity due to an absence of personal significance (*Unprejudiced Palate*, 51-2). Man can regain a sense of contribution to the greater whole by following the natural rhythms of nature and finding "the value and the quality in little things" (53) in his domestic occupations, the attention to detail that comes from a respect for quality inherent in culinary traditions. He claims that the dignified, but simple meal of bread, cheese and wine is 'the luncheon that binds me close to my ancestors' (141). "Resourcefulness and self-reliance in providing for the family's immediate needs are ancestral virtues which one should strive to rediscover." (231). Although he describes Italian cuisine as 'naturalized' in America, he claims a strong link to his ethnic roots, an important attachment within communities. Pellegrini's is a rare male voice, in a space where women typically vehicle, at least domestic moral values, if not necessarily the

religious values that Pellegrini asserts. Women typically connect and communicate through humanistic principles of connectedness, wholeness, pantheistic values, and spiritual ideals that associate fundamental ideas of growth in the natural and human world.

2. Transmission

> In Berlin I worked from home, where the only other women sat sedately on my bookshelves. (*Berlin Kitchen*, 207).

The search for one's origins is compromised by a disconnection in the transmission of knowledge from experienced elders: "Rupture avec d'anciens équilibres dans la transmission des savoirs-faire et la gestion du temps." (Certeau et al., 1994, 300). It is the notion of continuity that food writers through time have sought to convey and that we find, paradoxically, at the heart of their narratives of self-questioning. Luisa Weiss remarks that she is alone in her new food writing career, but senses that she is accompanied by the legacy of female authors who have preceded her. Creative new beginnings are an important moral lesson in culinary memoirs, however locating and understanding one's origins is also essential for that creativity to take place. Memoirs are testimonies to the truth that can only communicate to others when one can communicate with oneself.

Transmission requires communication, be it written or oral, and it is that communication which Julia Kristeva identifies as one of the main obstacles to self-understanding in diasporic situations. She explains that one of the symptoms of unbelonging is the silence of the 'foreigner'. (Kristeva, 167). The foreigner or immigrant is in-between languages: "Whatever he says in a new language is disconnected from affect; it makes sense and allows him to express himself but fails to help him express his self." (167). The inability to communicate translates into a loss of contact with one's emotions, but also generates parallel constructions of expression and understanding in the form of myths. We are reminded of Homi Bhabha's declaration that in the gatherings of scattered people are myths, fantasies and experiences that translate loss into the

language of metaphor which transfers the meaning of time and belonging across distances and cultural differences (Bhabha, 139-40).

Women as mediums for traditions

Inherent in the pursuit of self-understanding lies the need to share and transmit knowledge, experience and traditions. We have discussed this earlier from a culinary perspective, with the need to pass on foodways. We look here at the broader idea of transmission as it relates to the intention of the narrator concerning questions of origin and identity. We will consider to what extent channelling is a guiding element in contemporary food memoirs, what motivates the drive to transmit: emotional trauma or nostalgia for traditions that represent displaced values. We will look at the role of food in making connections in the context of displacement and dislocation.

Modern society, particularly American, depends on cookbooks to both document foodways, and to preserve memories, since the transmission of traditions from ancestors has been interrupted. The partial demission of cookbooks, more concerned today with following food trends than recording canonical recipes, can explain the recent burgeoning of the "memoir with recipes" (Sutton, 2001). For Luce Giard writing in 1994, the rupture of transmission explained the initial proliferation of recipe books. (Certeau et al., 1994, 357). Culinary memoirs can be considered to have partially assumed the role that cookbooks once played with the shaping and articulation of collective affiliation and identification through the preparation and consumption of food and the transmission of food knowledge.

In the lineage of recipe books, women's central role in culinary memoirs can be perceived as that of the carrier of traditions related to food knowledge and its rituals. Authors are not necessarily pursuing specific childhood gustatory memories but rather the comfort of food incarnated in traditions, either inherited, adopted or created, as a form of abstract nostalgia, for something that is not necessarily lost, but is needed to cement a fractured identity. In modern society, where the transmission of culinary traditions is no longer part of familial or societal rituals, culinary memoirs are implicitly asked to assume that role for other women in an implicit sisterhood of common values, less centred on domestic concerns or even the specific traditions themselves, than the

need to understand oneself and take responsibility for sharing foodways. Memoirs enable historical transmission as well as sharing the intimacy of familial culinary traditions in a public forum. The author addresses a community of women in a language that creates familiar tones which implicitly shares needs and desires. These needs are often met by a set of values that reside in homespun foodways.

Women's role in this transmission is diluted by other influences. Molly Wizenberg follows her father's credo of home cooking to the point of allowing herself to make her own simple chocolate wedding cake, while her father was the creative source of her original story about the family, kitchen and the emotional necessity to cook and eat together. Kate Christensen writes about Maine terroir, food and restaurants discovering with pleasure that "[e]ating in a good Maine restaurant is—in its most sublime sense—like being in someone's house, at their table" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 102). Diana Abu-Jaber's daughter bonds with her grandfather over home cooking "Her favourite food is anything diverted at the last second from her grandfather's mouth to her own [...] whatever he offers—tender lamb, stuffed grape leaves, tangy yogurt." Bud delighted in her instinct: "'Look at her. She loves family-style'" (*Life Without a Recipe*, 192), as though home cooking is the only true course, of which he is the source. "He gives her bites of lebaneh, falafel, drilled shish kabobs, stuffed grape leaves, hummus, grilled halouimi cheese. 'She knows what food is. Just like her Grandpa,' he says" (193).

Women readers today, in a world where the formal and informal archives of collective memories and histories are controlled at macrocosmic levels in society, essentially by publishers, are hungry to read the associations of personal stories with foodways, particularly with an ethnic specificity. This desire is discernable in the intertextuality in memoirs and the cross-references to other writers and cooks, notably the gastronomic matriarchs David, Fisher and Child. Authors operate as moral and culinary guides. Virginia Woolf offers us the example of Mrs. Ramsey in *To the Lighthouse*, who presides, with maternal benevolence, over a celebratory meal, the lengthily prepared *boeuf en daube*, her grandmother's recipe, assuming mythical qualities. Sandra M. Gilbert rereads Woolf's words with an emphasis on the importance of mystical transmission: "Mrs. Ramsey muses that such moments of festive unity 'partook, she felt, carefully helping Mr. Bankes to a specially tender piece, of eternity.' And from a Bakhtinian perspective, the group has in a sense eaten a tender piece of

eternity" (Gilbert, 108). Memoirists, like Mrs. Ramsey, have the capacity to convey a sense of connection with the past within the security of a caring present. The sentence structure separates "partook" and "of eternity" by the serving of food, as though tasting eternity, depended on the tender meat prepared by Mrs. Ramsey.

Kate Christensen emphasises the sense of continuity and connection in her examples of matriarchal transmission in *How to Cook a Moose*. She celebrates pioneering Maine chef, Erin French whose "dishes are rooted in tradition; many of her recipes came from her mother and grandmother" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 117). While making biscuits for a food kitchen, Christensen glorifies the maternal lineage, which has not only a venerable stature, but also a symbolic persona with an idealised family: "I was referring to some mythical grandmother, an old-fashioned Midwestern farm wife, who got up at dawn to feed her hardworking family breakfast with real American biscuits." (65). Her biscuits are praised by a visitor as like those of her grandmother: "These are real biscuits!" (65).

Other stories, reflective of the genre itself, demonstrate a more compromised position. Carol Bardenstein explains in her article "Transmission Interrupted" (2002) that "there are a large number of normative disruptions in food knowledge transmission experienced as a normal part of life." (2002, 363). Some of these disruptions are societal, others are more closely related to voice in the literary tradition of food writing. Elizabeth David, for example, shares her intimate story of passion and loss through the recipes of her adopted Mediterranean traditions. Her tone has a masculine register in its uncompromising authority and defiant literary posture, as well as a tacit rejection of the traditional domesticity with which her audience would have been familiar in the 1950s. She is responding in her own way to the rupture in culinary transmission that began in the early twentieth century by opening a breach in the dam of traditional British cuisine. David takes her tone from her mentor and friend Norman Douglas[193] through whose text she channels her voice, possibly not at all troubled that he uses the masculine pronoun, and asserts omnipotence concerning man's happiness: "The true cook must have [...] a large dose of general worldly experience. He is [...] the only true blend of artist and

[193] An anthology of David's work was published posthumously in 1997 entitled *South Wind Through the Kitchen*, the title coming from an essay published in 1964 and reprinted in *An Omelette and a Glass of Wine*. It is a reference to Norman Douglas' 1917 novel *South Wind*.

philosopher. He knows his worth: he holds in his palm the happiness of mankind." (*Mediterranean Food*, 181).

Culinary memoirs serve to, once again, legitimize culinary transmission, but in an unorthodox extra-familial setting, while telling intimate tales—sometimes between the lines—in which obligation and duty share space, or are displaced even, by celebration and pleasure. The selection of recipes suggests that they are chosen 'morsels', family favourites, special dishes charged with emotional significance. They are selected for the companion reader, not the anonymous audience of recipe books which have transformed transmission into an educational posture. An atmosphere of intimacy is created, remaking a severed generational connection with foodways.[194] "Living in the wilds", as Patience Gray called it, such as a number of culturally-immersed writers like she, David and Durrell chose to do, were, as she described it "living on the margins of literacy" (*Honey from a Weed*, 11). She evokes the rural dimension of the Mediterranean as "a world rooted in the cultivation of the olive and the vine" (12), the sacred Durrellian crops that by their archaic nature situate worlds, rather than words. Gray adds that, despite the ostensible simplicity of certain communities, industrial societies have much to learn: "in the Latin countries, because of inborn conservatism, the tradition is alive and we can learn from it, that is, learning from people who have never read a book" (13), in essence, the peasant persona.

From an authorial perspective, transmission is often a secondary motivation, or even an accidental consequence of the evocation of family culinary traditions. Some authors overtly adopt the role of matriarchal channel, like Elizabeth Ehrlich who expresses the objective of giving her children a solid foundation of values, traditions and beliefs. Learning her mother-in-law's recipes is her way of building that foundation while indirectly transferring the cooking knowledge that resides in family myths:

> I wanted to build a floor under my children, something strong and solid [...] Then I remembered and unwrapped a bundle of family tales, many located in or near the kitchen [...] I had been carrying that bundle all my life. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii).

Until motherhood, Ehrlich inherited the weight of traditions and carried it within her without feeling any sense of responsibility towards them. In learning about them, she

[194] Its primitive drawings and descriptions of remote villages and unfamiliar foodways, lend *Honey from a Weed* the allure of a work written well before its 1986 publication date.

seeks to create meaning for herself and her children: "I can tie up my past, and transmit to my children something that, if not broken, is patched and coherent. They will receive the tradition. It is something to leave behind, perhaps—that will be their choice, later – but also something on which to build" (261). Her mission is clear to her: "My felt heritage was kitchen, and holiday, and attitude, the atmosphere that my grandmothers were able to protect and transmit, against odds, through time." (342). The transmission of recipes between 'mother' and 'daughter' creates a familial space within which a dialogue can take place around food, in conjunction with a form of self-expression.

Others overtly flee the matriarchal legacy. Joyce Zonana takes her reader into the halls of academia to which she fled from her mother's kitchen and intense devotion to her Egyptian culinary heritage. Zonana's handful of recipes at the end of the book are her reluctant admission of the importance those traditions represent in her life. Her mother, a first-generation immigrant, embodies the diasporic compulsion to recreate her culinary tradition as a way of staying oblivion and remaining in contact with her past. Zonana wants to assimilate into American society, and runs away from that which pulls her back to a land that represents her non-assimilated ethnic minority status in America. She resists identifying with her mother's belief in the transcendent connection with the past. Hasier Diner describes it thus: "The food which came out of ancestral ovens represents to [the diaspora] powerful legacies of continuity, linking them to faraway places, most of which they have never visited." (Diner, xvi). Zonana's turbulent journey of self-discovery is the reverse of Diner's description, as she moves from faraway place back to the ancestral oven, bringing her finally to accept the importance and influence of these traditions in her life. She initially rejected the traditionally prescribed "female" role, but in the course of her narrative disengages from the traditionally masculine stance of disinterest in the sourcing and preparation of food. While her autobiography is personal, told by a single narrator, she gradually comes to re-associate herself again with her family with her family and community in her recipes.

Zonana arrives at Luce Giard's conclusion regarding the role of women as brokers of the past. Dismissing the idea that women master and communicate traditions, Giard considers that tradition appropriated and controlled her, inextricably bound within the practice of a body of culinary knowledge. In the chapter "Faire la Cuisine", Giard explains her belief that she is a vehicle rather than one who actively holds that knowledge. (in

Moyer, 127). She takes on the voices of the women who came before her and, by extension, promotes her own. The humble yet obstinate elementary practice describes the profile of women cooks, connected with self and with others, impregnated with the family history:

> *[D]oing-cooking* is the medium for a basic, humble, and persistent practice that is repeated in time and space, rooted in the fabric of relationships to others and to one's self, marked by the 'family saga' and the history of each, bound to childhood memory just like rhythms and seasons.[195] (Certeau et al., 1998, 157).

Women like Zonana express reluctance to enter the kitchen or diffidence about their place there which is expressed in the memoir narrative. Zonana flees food as symbolic of domestic slavery, but it finds her out, as invisible roots pulling her back. She evaluated words, like her mother evaluated food. "'Hunger," I said to myself, 'appetite, craving, greed.' 'Identity,' I pondered, 'agreement, likeness, self.'" (*Dream Homes*, 30). Leslie Li also writes: "I also confess that a culinary memoir is an odd attempt for a novelist who has for a long time recoiled from the kitchen and everything it represents [...] Perhaps part of my aversion, or reluctance, is that I came late to cooking, and even later to Chinese cooking. I was not one of those fortunate people who learned to cook at their mothers'—or grandmothers' or aunts' or family chefs'—knees" (*Daughter of Heaven*, xvi). Hamilton expresses the same lack of confidence with regard to her inherited knowledge: "To imagine that a newly jogged memory about the few dishes and food experiences I had managed to collect at my mother's apron strings would be enough to sustain a restaurant." (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 115). Yet Hamilton becomes one with the Italian *Mamma* figure that her husband wants her to be, when she answers to her daughter in her place (291): "This is the woman he loves; this is the woman he hoped to find in me when he first looked into the restaurant and saw me at the stove." (283). Women represent ideals around food that men and women, alike, perpetuate.

[195] "Faire la cuisine est le support d'une pratique élémentaire, humble, obstinée, répétée dans le temps et dans l'espace, enracinée dans le tissu des relations aux autres et à soi-même, marqué par le 'roman familial' et l'histoire de chacune, solidaire des souvenirs d'enfance comme des rythmes et des saisons" (Certeau et al., 1994, 222).

The matrilineal narrative

Narratives express a repeated necessity to go back to the beginning, iterated in the repetition of recipe making, to the maternal figure who is the point of departure in the discovery of identity. A stereotypical model embodies the passing of family traditions from older generation female figures to the younger generation. We observe classic examples in the works of Ehrlich, Jaffrey and Narayan, and counter examples in the works of Rossant, Reichl and Zonana. The latter learns to cook from surrogate 'mothers', when she is commissioned to write an ethnic cookbook, rather than her own mother from whose kitchen she had fled. She is driven not by a love of food, but rather by her desire to write (*Dream Homes*, 30), the written word holding more importance to her than the oral transmission of foodways she could have received from her mother; however, in the case of the recipe book, the written word is ironically at the service of the oral transmission. Transference is typically conducted through shared preparation and conversations about food, which, in memoirs, are captured in an intimist narrative. Preparing and consuming food together solidifies social bonds in families and communities. Diner explains that: "[t]alking about food is a way of talking about family, childhood, community. Remembering foods open the floodgates of the past" (xv). Recipe books and foodoirs provide the vehicle for synoptic stories of community and ethnic foodways. We will return to the notion of recipes as an embedded literary discourse; it suffices to emphasize here that among the many literary ambitions for recipes in culinary memoirs, one of the most important is a form of conveyance, of traditions certainly, but also of self and personal values.

Julia Child, a figure-head in modern cuisine and also a memoirist[196] was a reference for young writers, a matriarchal figure in both foodways and food writing. She claims to have rejected her earlier frivolous existence for the 'discipline', but also the 'creativity' and the 'rituals' of cooking: "I fell in love with French food—the tastes, the processes, the history, the endless variations, the rigorous discipline, the creativity, the wonderful people, the equipment, the rituals" (Child and Prud'homme, 68), the history and the rituals are put on equal footing with creativity and discipline. *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, "the most comprehensive, laudable and monumental work on

[196] Child and Prud'homme, 2006.

[French cooking]" (253), was published, according to Child at the right "psychological moment" for her audience. They were ready to take on all that she herself cited as worthwhile in adopting a new culinary culture. Molly Wizenberg bakes tarte Tatin as a source of emotional comfort after a failed relationship, using the doyenne's recipe: "This recipe was inspired by Julia Child's classic method in *The Way to Cook*.[197] Child also inspired Sasha Martin and her mother to make penny-saved roast lamb: "The point was to get creative in the kitchen, and that's what Julia Child inspired—what she *always* inspired" (*Life from Scratch*, 24). Luisa Weiss becomes an assiduous follower of Julie Powell's blog[198] (the Julie/Julia Project) of her year of cooking Child's dishes from *Mastering the Art of French Cooking,* and elated by the cooking and social media-following experience that pushes her to start her own blog. "There was something intoxicating about being invited into Julie's world as a reader. In fact, it was better, more immediate, than all those cookbooks I'd read like novels over the years." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 78). Outside the scope of our current study, it is worth noting that the blog, with its intimate and communicative style, lends itself to the matriarchal narrative in a similar way to culinary memoirs.

The omnipresent matriarchal relationship in memoirs, is manifest in both mother-daughter relationships, and within communities of sisters, upheld in most narratives as the primary cooks and caretakers of culinary traditions. The mother-daughter plot, as Marianne Hirsch describes it (1989), is the intimate story underlying many narratives. Its absence is often expressed as a form of inflicted trauma or alternatively as an assertive defiance in the face of suffering as in the cases of Colette Rossant and Ruth Reichl. Helen Buss proposes that women's relationships with their mothers are a fluctuating process of separation and fusion (Buss, 88), central to which is an implicitly understood respect for tradition as a reaching back in time to embrace the women who were its source: "as a mother embraces a grown child, or a grown child a mother" (115) reminiscent of Ehrlich's "voyage of discontinuity and connection" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii).

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[197] Julia Child. *The Way to Cook*. New York: Knopf, 1993.
[198] The Julie/Julia Project, now available only in an archive:
https://web.archive.org/web/20021217011704/http://blogs.salon.com/0001399/2002/08/25.html.

Although the mother-daughter response to tradition is central, the reaction of the narrators covers a vaster spectrum. Colette Rossant, herself, tests the matriarchal ballast, describing her diminutive but forceful grandmother's outrage when she does not follow the traditional recipe for *sambusaks*: "This recipe is at least hundreds of years old. You do not change it!" (*Apricots on the Nile*, 43). Narayan also describes her childish frustration over her mother's regular and insistent sharing of culinary knowledge: "She recited complex rules, Indian rituals, and her own beliefs whenever she got the chance", but Narayan has little time at nine years old for the "mysteries of Southern Indian cooking" (49). She evokes her mother's breakfast dish of *idlis*, which she concludes cannot be transplanted, like her rooted relationship to the matriarchal tradition itself, and has to be enjoyed exclusively at home. The meal that Narayan is obliged to cook and with which she must win her family's approbation in order to be able to study in America, is the literal and symbolic proof that she has learned and assimilated her culinary traditions. She relies on both oral and literary media, "tattered family recipes, my mother's early instructions and gigantic cookbooks" (106).

The central theme of Fisher's memoir is her claim to freedom from family ties and social constraints, and the liberty she acquires through the study and appropriation of culinary practices, engaging in a narrative of non-maternal transmission in which the mother-daughter plot is absent. Like Frances Mayes in her series of books on her adoption of Tuscan culture, Fisher assumes the role of a non-matriarchal vector of culinary culture. According to Fisher, women authors can assume female responsibilities without playing matriarchal roles, choosing to countenance the importance of food traditions without reference to a matriarchal context or hierarchy. She assumes a defiant attitude wanting to introduce through food the emancipation that she has herself discovered: "I will blast their safe tidy little lives with a big tureen of hot borscht and some garlic toast and salad [...] they will have to taste not only the solid honesty of my red borscht, but the new flavor of the changing world." (*Gastronomical Me*, 102). Frances Mayes' quest is also self-discovery, cut loose from familial ties and purposefully distanced from home roots on her discovery of Tuscan cuisine, redolent of the vital immediacy of the ingredients the seasons offer. Food-centred cycles, symbolically unconnected for Mayes who makes mostly summer visits, offer an extraneous warp to her family weft, weaving meaning into family histories from memories of the past, with

notably discreet recollections of her mother. "I'm restored to my mother's sense of the seasons and to time, even time to take pleasure in polishing a pane of glass to shine." (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 88-89), or to matriarchal connections: with a litany of time-consuming and seasonal preserves: "The women in my family always have made bread and butter pickles and muscadine jellies and watermelon rind pickles and peach preserves and plum butters. I feel drawn to the scalding kettle" (72).

The female transmission of foodways can be seen to harbour a certain ambiguity. On a simplistic level, the matriarchal figure, passing on family food traditions to ensure the well-being of her family for generations to come, is a clichéd notion. Women typically perpetuate and transmit culinary, and other domestic rituals and traditions from social conditioning. This transmission is imbued with strong values of family bonds, fidelity, identity, security, support, but it also divulges traumas. Joyce Zonana learns, through flight and itinerance, how to reconcile herself to the feminine, culinary and cultural heritage she receives from her mother. Her story and recipe sharing are an act of intimate confession to her readers in lieu of a family, written in a language for which, despite her years in America and her education, she harboured an ambiguous attitude, serving as a counter point for her curiosity about her parents' language Arabic: "my parents didn't think it was necessary for me to learn the language they reserved for expressing their strongest feelings." (*Dream Homes*, 37). Excluded from linguistic access to her family's emotional core, she seeks to establish her own through her narrative and fifteen succinct recipes. In putting physical and temporal distance between herself and her mother, Gabrielle Hamilton is able to acknowledge the maternal role she played in relation to food in her life. Mothering other children through food at the summer camp where she works as a cook, she admits: "For the first time in probably the entire decade that had passed since I had seen or spoken to my own mother, I thought warm and grateful thoughts about her. She instilled in us nothing but a total and unconditional pleasure in food and eating." (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 82).

Flawed mother figures

For certain authors, one of the hardest traumas to overcome is that caused by deficient mother figures. Memoirs demonstrate that inadequate role models render

children dysfunctional, and can represent the flaw, in a microcosmic scale, of a larger macrocosmic unit. Colette Rossant suffers from a neglectful and mostly absent mother, whose nurturing and channelling role is taken up intermittently by her grandparents, or even the 'motherland' that her birthplace represents. Carol Bardenstein explains that the gendered nurturing that should have come from her mother, but did not, is displaced and projected onto Egypt" and its food, which substitute for her mother as sources of nourishment, warmth, and refuge (2002, 375). The temporal oscillation in her narrative and the fluctuations between representations of food as sometimes delicious and other times dangerous are symptomatic of the difficulties of both receiving and transmitting food traditions, in the absence of a functional mother figure. Food becomes a threat when a swooping eagle steals her lunchbox food, or when her mother refuses her daughter's dutifully prepared shrimp on her sickbed. Despite a role model, transmission becomes an important focus in Rossant's life, as Bardenstein explains: "She takes pride in and holds dear the various "restorative fragments" of "her Egypt", through her involvement with the preparation of Egyptian food and the transmission of this food and cultural knowledge to her children, grandchildren, and to an expanded audience in the readership of her cookbook-memoir." (Bardenstein, 2002, 384). The publication of two further memoirs "with recipes" suggests that Rossant's commitment to transmission was in inverse proportion to her mother's flagrant failure in this role.

Like Rossant, Ruth Reichl suffers a sense of injustice at her mother's erratic and incoherent decisions about her life, such as sending her to boarding school in Canada. Sasha Martin's mother also makes grave decisions in Martin' youth that remain incomprehensible to her even as an adult. Her mother is for a long time absent from her food adventure. She turns to books for guidance when she is secure enough in herself, her kitchen—the symbol of home—is sufficient, but she is missing female guiding company: "my kitchen, ample though it is, is silent. There is no mother, no grandmother at my side." (*Life from Scratch*, 267). It is significant that she draws inspiration from male-author Clifford A. Wright's reference cookbook on Mediterranean food[199] rather

[199] Published in 1999, Wright's *A Mediterranean Feast* is a work of exhaustive historical research from which the personal and cultural testimonies of Roden's work or the travel vignettes of David's are absent.

than from the matriarchs of the cuisine, such as Claudia Roden, Elizabeth David,[200] or even the lesser known, Patience Gray, implying perhaps that the reflex to call on female support was not established.

In memoirs, such as those of Rossant and Ehrlich, their grandmothers confirm and perpetuate the cultural pillars of family and community, while the authors affirm that there is an essential need to look back in order to move forward, transcending the simple matriarchal culinary tradition, by using the legacy that it represents as a catalyst for forming a new identity. Ehrlich's two-fold tale focuses not only on her mother-in-law Miriam's story, but also of her own quest to build a solid spiritual foundation under her children. Some mothers can be defined as abusive, others are overly discreet in providing a counter point for stronger claims on identity, such as those of Abu-Jaber or Li. Abu-Jaber's similar dual-track narrative tells the story of her unconventional father who plays the unlikely matriarchal role of custodian and active channel of his Jordanian culinary traditions, as well as that of her personal pursuit for belonging. Bud is the protagonist in a traditionally "female" cultural sphere, particularly in his culture, and also a romantic figure of the Mediterranean male tradition; he assumes the responsibility of keeping his culinary traditions alive in the host land out of a necessity to transpose his culture. Bud, the poet-cook, always in the kitchen, is depicted by his daughter, as vulnerable, erratic, childlike, qualities that define an "antic, atomic character" (*Language of Baklava*, 31), ultimately more infantile than maternal or even paternal, married to an atypical American woman who does not cook, and is drawn by food and the spirit of place to the point of irresponsibility. On a trip to Hawaii with his wife, he strays from the group to spend the day feasting with a small isolated village community, responding according to Bud to the call of the "voice of the earth" (231). Abu-Jaber describes her father as "a sweet, clueless immigrant" (4) who symbolically carried his small daughter on his shoulders while he cooked, and who grieved at the difficulty of transplanting food from Jordan to America. Fathers have a diversity of roles, from maternal channels of tradition such as Bud and Burg and Furiya's father, who

[200] Merrianne Timko draws to our attention Clifford Wright's criticism in his own work that David's *A Book of Mediterranean Food* was almost exclusively about French food. (Timko, 85).

transmits not the art of cooking but of eating as he never goes into the kitchen, to Asian fathers with a degree of culturally-shaped misogynous traits.

These memoirs take us beyond unquestioned learnings, that Ehrlich describes as the "practical, mystical teachings [...] once dished out with their soups" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xi) at their grandmothers' stoves, and yet the uncompromising matriarchal stance is also necessary, not only for certain women like Zonana's mother whose life is dedicated to reproducing the food from home, but equally for Ehrich's mother-in-law, Miriam, who must cook the past. The two worlds cannot be blurred, for the former must be preserved as a form of vital justification for having survived. Miriam represents inertia, her rituals stopping the clock, in a world of accelerating movement, and reveals the underlying paradox of the mother figure, who is traditionally, cooking and caring within the confines of the home. This observation leads us to make an important correlation between flawed mothers and displacement. Dysfunctional mothers, particularly those of Rossant and Martin, leave their children in the care of others, to travel or live in another place, even another country. In the case of Hamilton and Reichl, the narrators are essentially left at home alone without a mother. Reichl writes: "Mom hated suburban life [... she] began spending her days in town and staying for dinner [...]" asserting that "Ruthie is so mature" (*Tender at the Bone*, 73-74). Eleven-year old Gabrielle Hamilton and her brother were left at home alone when her parents divorced, overlooked and forgotten: "Our mother had moved to a profoundly remote and rural northern Vermont" (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 28-29). The displacement of the mother figure is, then, equated with uprootedness and crises of identity. Women bid for, and find freedom, yet the matriarchal figure, whether exemplary or dysfunctional, is polarized within a discourse axed around displacement and immobility.

3. Tracing roots

> [T]o be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul. (Simone Weil quoted in Said, 2000, 146).

The journey to trace one's roots, begins when the sense of abandon begins, and one acknowledges the gap between the present and the future. Turned towards the

future, places, like Colette Rossant's Egypt, as well as people, can also be vectors of transmission. However, as we have seen in the previous chapter what might seem a simple path to one's roots, is fraught with complex relationships. James Clifford has expressed this dilemma of divided identities in the context of origins and displacement: "Diaspora discourse articulates, or blends together, both roots and routes [...] new tribal forms bypass an opposition between rootedness and displacement" (1997, 253). The pursuit of roots leads to origins, while that of routes, inadvertently reveals a rhizomatic structure. The rhizome, with its multiple points of entry, offers the possibility of finding other routes and potentially even roots, by displacing the arborescent family structure, stretching it across territories, and putting aside the linear pursuit, so often compromised in diasporic communities. The exploration of culinary traditions, made current by the preparation of shared recipes, allows a lateral movement in pursuit of identity. As marginalized rather than mainstream culture, culinary traditions trace a non-linear path with reference to other genres.

The Language of Baklava is a quintessential example of these dichotomies and the ambivalence between homeland and host land, staying or returning, roots and the rhizomatic stem roots, that Deleuze and Guattari have evoked, a shallow but adaptable root system, that branches out within Abu-Jaber's story. "My father's longing for Jordan is at the center of his identity" (*Language of Baklava*, 137), while a little later, Bud exclaims "You see America the beautiful. Its right here. And it's telling you: Come here, open a restaurant, be who you are" (174). Bud's emotional and physical indecision about homeland and host land, with his multiple attempts to return to Jordan to live, as well as to create a new life in America, is reflected in Abu-Jaber's heterogenous collection of recipes. Likewise, Luisa Weiss vacillates between Berlin and New York, with a third shoot in Italy, between her parents, her multiple nationalities and identities, struggling to reconcile the different pieces of her life and her plurality. When Weiss references *The Settlement Cookbook*,[201] America's first ethnic (Jewish-American) cooking collection, and makes a literary nod to Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas as she describes walking past their house on rue de Fleurus (48), she offers her readers German *Sour Cherry*

[201] Lizzie Black Kander. *The Settlement Cookbook* (1901). It carried the tagline 'The way to a man's heart' as an indication of both the confining and empowering domestic status of women, and the encouragement to create a gourmet table to anchor the husband to the home.

Quarkauflauf followed by Italian *Peperoni al Forno Conditi* and then American *Depression Stew* (*Berlin Kitchen*, 23, 31, 52). Weiss highlights the loss of resonance in places which are no longer 'terroir'; places of memory become merely memories of places. Similarly, Ehrlich describes her childhood home as representing her incomplete assimilation: "Our lone house was dark on a street dressed in Christmas lights. Our windows were closed against Fourth of July barbecues wafting the fragrance of searing pork ribs" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 330).

Constraint and freedom

While some struggle to find and preserve their roots, others seek to disassociate themselves from their ethnic or culinary origins. Ruth Reichl, for example, does not choose to explore her family's origins, although her father's roots as German Jewish refugee must have had a marked culinary identity.[202] Rather, looking forward, she describes the kaleidoscope of eclectic personalities who shape her embryonic culinary awakening and ensuing adventure: "I think Mom had a vision some cozy mother-daughter relationship [...] But I immediately painted my bedroom red and made friends with all the wrong people." (*Tender at the Bone*, 73). Left to her own devices, she launched herself into eclectic cooking, using rebellion as a way of forging an identity combined with resilience, taking a "twenty-five step recipe" and ignoring minor burns, she delighted in discovering "the alchemy that can turn flour, water, chocolate and butter into devil's food cake" (*Tender at the Bone*, 75).

Several authors use the term 'grounded' in relation to their culinary traditions. A grounding in a subject, embraces the basic principles. It signifies well-balanced, wise, mentally and emotionally stable, and appreciating the importance of the ordinary things in life. However, it also means prohibition and prevention from moving, stranded. Understanding connection with family through food and communion is ostensibly one of the moral messages promoted in culinary memoirs. They are a counter-weight to

[202] Her father, Ernst Reichl was a celebrated German-American book designer and teacher, who left Germany for America in 1926. Reichl mentions his culture, some twenty years later, signifying that she was coming to terms with her cultural inheritance: for Linzer torte she describes how her father would go to Yorkville every Christmas to buy one because it reminded him of his Berlin childhood. "The year I was twelve I surprised him by baking one myself." (*My Kitchen Year*, 71).

deterritorialization, epitomizing rhizomatic structures. Erika Endrijonas talks of the cookbook promise that home-baked foods were the key to emotional stability (Inness, 158). We have indicated that the books themselves, with recipes and moral advice, cookbooks or memoirs, are a form of home for the rootless and disenfranchised. Although Egypt might appear, in an elemental appraisal, to play a surrogate mother role for Rossant, Erica Carter et al. explain that places are not so simply classified:

> For many people, displaced and exiled from their homelands, places have long since ceased to provide straightforward support to their identity. Though the "homes' which ground and house identities can be denied people physically by enforced exile or lost through chosen migration, they still continue to resonate throughout the imaginations of displaced communities. (Carter et al., vii).

Grounding, as the travel memoirs of Durrell have revealed to us, may be temporary, lasting as long as the period of residence, and achieved through attachments to landscape and foodways, or bearing the semi-permanence of a sense of security.

Despite her rejection of family ties, Ruth Reichl encourages her readers to find a place where, like her, they can feel "grounded, fully there" (*Tender at the Bone*, 233). She repeats the image nearly twenty years later in her recipe book-memoir *My Kitchen Year*; in her 'conversation' around cooking, it is the gestures and not recipe itself that is important: "It's not about the recipes; these daily conversations ground me in the world, anchoring me in time and place" (xvii). Shoba Narayan writes in *Monsoon Diary*: "While the foreign flavours teased my palate, I needed Indian food to ground me" (118), embracing in this statement the double meaning of both retention and foundation. Narayan describes her attachment to her family and their culinary 'history', constraining her movements, but also a solid base from which she can explore the world. Her tale is punctuated by key moments in her life where cooking enables her to push boundaries, while respecting traditions, that allow her to attain new degrees of emancipation through a series of food-related tests, imposed by her family or even herself. The first statue that Narayan creates as a sculpture student in the United States, is of a woman "rooted in the earth and reaching for the stars", an overt symbol of herself rooted in her Indian earth and searching for her dream. (134).

Elizabeth David drew her inspiration from a tradition of food scholarship, and elegantly expressed travel writing, which describe the aesthetic pleasures of gastronomy

grounded in the body (McLean, 3). Fisher developed an aesthetics of female desire grounded in gastronomic pleasure. She explores the bond between psychological and physical hunger and the psychological nuances of hungers, whether satisfied or ignored (*Gastronomical Me*, 60), transforming them into an aesthetic emotion (70). Fisher's taste culture is grounded in terroir, the land first and then the body (152-153), paralleling Durrell's landscapes and foodways. Grounded also implies embodied sensorial experiences constructing metaphors of self. Gabrielle Hamilton writes: "I want to do the cooking. It is what grounds me, gives me pleasure, and is the best way for me to communicate with the Italian-speaking family and to make a contribution. (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 280). Cooking, itself, is both grounding in terms of its practicality, its physicality and in its link to family origins.

Colleen Cotter reminds us that the recipe itself is the ultimate symbol of social grounding, a communication and an exchange: "The transmission of the recipe considered in its broadest social sense, is grounded in social interaction." (Cotter, 71). However, the dual sense of the word grounding suggests that narrators are also inhibited in their movements by ties to tradition, the weight of family and diasporic memory, and the circumscribing, and ever more eclectic nature of the recipe itself. This sense of confinement might explain why Zonana's essentially traditional recipes are confined to the end of the book, outside the narrative, to mitigate their controlling or stifling influence. Perhaps for the same reason, other narrators take poetic or gastronomic liberties with traditional recipes to create their own variation on a theme, as do Abu-Jaber and Weiss.

Elizabeth Ehrlich is faithful to Miriam's recipes as she works through her relationship with traditions and inheritance, seeking to define her own form of religious practice that respects her ancestors and her individual needs and identity. Each of the chapter titles, following a year, a cycle of the Jewish calendar, starting with the new year, new beginnings and a time of atonement, is a small foothold, allowing her to scale the wall of her uncertain faith. Each chapter is one word, opening with "Longing" and concluding with "Continuity". The names evoke origins and identity: diaspora, native ground, inheritance, then religion: obligation, observance, miracles, female religion, and finally personal engagement and commitment: decisions, the life force, community and words and deeds. She uses words that represent both constraint such as 'observance'

and 'obligation',[203] and others that, as we discover, represent freedom: 'community' and 'continuity', with a globally harmonious alliteration.

The heroic quest for origins in places of memory

Transmission is itself about choice and freedom as well as duty and obligation; we find within the quest for roots the emergence of a romantic discourse that is both literary, with the evocation of myths of origins evoking the old world and the new, of a fascination with the journey that may also take narrators and foreign places, and moral, with an attraction towards, what Bromley has called, the diasporic romance of endless hybridity. (168). As we discussed in part I B, the romantic ideal is that of the inspired individual within an idealized landscape, such as David, Roden or Fisher, representing newness and tradition within an idyllic landscape. The inspired individual is also the heroine figure who makes an ideal—or at least idealized—home within a less than ideal world: Zonana, who is forced to downsize from a three-bedroom house in New Orleans to a studio in Brooklyn, also reassesses her self-expectations, admitting that her Rosh Hashanah meal "is not at all what my mother would have made, but it's what I want just now" (*Dream Homes*, 203), or Martin, who, in creating the Global Table festival, comes to the admission that in pursuing her self-worth: "[t]here's no happily ever after, or any one person or place that can bring happiness" (*Life from Scratch*, 343).

The Indian writers, Madhur Jaffrey and Shoba Narayan tell fables that were written for them in their infancy or even before, and which they retell in their own voice. They embody notions of inclusion and belonging, and using food to trace identity, describing new experiences that emerge from their culinary traditions. Once Jaffrey leaves home, frequent airmail exchanges with her mother around cooking, connect her new world to her culinary heritage: "I was barely aware that my old and new worlds would start to mingle as soon as they touched and that so much of my past would always remain my present." (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 231). Narayan tells a fairy tale story—of which she is the heroine—of her passage to America via a cooking test, and the meal to raise money for her schooling saved by her return to simple Indian comfort food

[203] In fact, the discovery that Ehrlich makes and conveys to her readers is that, paradoxically, true freedom lies at the heart of religious practice, where one finds oneself.

(*Monsoon Diary*, 140-7) after she betrays herself and her origins in cooking 'world' food. Like a true heroic traveller, Narayan describes her solitary journey to America which starts with her visa application: "In matters of getting a visa, I had to walk alone, perhaps a precursor to a longer journey that lay ahead." (*Return to India*, 23). Full of naïvety and optimism, she embraces everything America could offer: "They [the immigrants] walked taller and lighter, as if realizing with amazement that they could reinvent themselves in this new land." (61).

Origins are thus associated with a sense of pride in one's identity, often achieved after a struggle. For Linda Furiya, ethnic pride came after many years of uncertainty and doubt: "I wouldn't experience my first taste of Asian American pride until I moved to San Francisco in my midtwenties." (*Bento Box*, 300). Memoirs reflect some of the spirit of nineteenth century romanticism in a desire to preserve history and tradition while re-evaluating ethnic cultures and ways of life (Robins, 304). Cooking, on individual journeys to find roots, is a delicate balance between perpetuating foodways and self-expression. Pierre Nora talks about the gastronomic cuisine of France which has evolved "entre romanticisme et réalisme" (847), fed by roots that were both poetic and prosaic, traditional and modern. It was a "nécessité vitale [...] une tradition [...] Le dernier signe de rattachement aux origines avant l'assimilation à la communauté d'accueil" (823), a source of attachment and grounding. The sensitivity that many narrators express to the romanticism of food, to the importance of its origins or 'terroir',[204] and the place it plays in finding oneself, is a manifestation of their own romantic stature, characters as eccentric and impulsive as Martin's mother, as mercurial as Abu-Jaber's father create a cavalier identity associated with food and with mother/father-daughter relationships.

Nora also talks of the land, the place of memory as idealized, a setting for a romantic discourse around food. "Elle ressemble toutes les valeurs d'une civilisation paysanne dont les racines plongent dans les millénaires (Nora, 54). The land, its traditions and patrimony are the yearned-for places of memory and of origins for the diaspora and remain vital to them despite displacement. Angelo Pellegrini's garden and table are an altar to his family and ethnic roots, origins representing family, heritage,

[204] Over half of the authors in our corpus describe a life-changing encounter with food on travels abroad and the discovery of 'terroir', which we will discuss in part III.

roots and inception. Narrators identify themselves by a dimension of their childhood homes, a simple identification with the local fruit for Narayan: "I am from Kerala which means that regardless of where I live at any other point in my life, I will love coconuts in any form." (*Monsoon Diary*, 80); but Furiya's is a more negatively charged association: "No matter where I lived in the world and no matter what people saw, the small-town country girl from Indiana would always be part of me" (*Bento Box*, 306), for whom life was "a collage of Americana and Japanese" (306). Zonana speaks in the same fatalistic tones, associating place and identity: "No matter how far I travelled from my family's visions of me as a dutiful Egyptian Jewish daughter—accumulating lovers, jobs, degrees, friends—I still could not integrate myself into the American mainstream." (*Dream Homes*, 145). Each speaks in repeated absolutes of "regardless" and "no matter" confirming, despite its fractured nature, that there was some element of stability.

Several narrators return to the family's place of origin to dispel myths or perhaps to create new ones, in the case of Joyce Zonana, who finds not her mother's physical but her spiritual birthplace. Searching for a physical home, she discovers an imaginary one, as she stumbles upon the "ancient home of dreams – a resting place, a cure" (*Dream Homes*, 181), at the synagogue in Cairo where her mother prayed for a child. Her journey ultimately comes to a cathartic end as she flees hurricane Katrina and discovers that a spiritual home delimited by cultural traditions is more solid than a material one can ever be. Zonana bequeaths her large-house furniture to family and friends, gives thanks in her Brooklyn studio for "having come to this time and place", and finds a "grandmother's" house in her brother's weekend home where she exchanges with the neighbours, receives peanut butter cookies, "while I keep promising to make *ba'alawa*" (*Dream Homes*, 202), the intention to reconnect with her culinary traditions affirmed even if she procrastinates in taking the full step to cooking. The use of the term "grandmother" suggests that she is now ready to assume a matriarchal role, one of responsibility for traditions, particularly culinary, and their transmission.

Morley and Robins claim that places are no longer the clear support of our identity (Morley and Robins, 5). "Where once it was the case that cultures were demarcated and differentiated in time and space, to apply Zonana's own scope, now 'the concept of a fixed, unitary, and bounded culture must give way to a sense of the fluidity and permeability of cultural sets.' (Wolf, 387). Through this intermixture and

hybridization of cultures, older certainties and foundations of identity are continuously and necessarily undermined. The continuity of identity is broken too. There are *lieux de mémoire*, 'sites of memory', claims Pierre Nora, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, or real environments of memory (Nora, 5). Multiple substitutes appear, as we have noted earlier, wherein narratives and their recipes become a replacement home and homeland, for narrators, like Zonana, Weiss or Martin are always, in one way or another, on the move, from one place of memory to another, or multiple places of memory, reflecting the far-reaching root stems of their multicultural origins. Once more, Deleuze and Guattari's notion of reterritorialization defines the way individuals and communities create nomad spaces within a rhizomatic structure. The pursuit of origins is made both literally in displacements to homelands and through individual and collective imaginations, within memory and creativity, in parallel synergy with narration and cooking. Recipes emerge as the markers of the pursuit for tracing one's origins, a pledge of the narrator's integrity, symbolized in the repetitive symbol of measurement within the kitchen and on a journey of self-understanding: a dynamic of travel within a context of traditional female-grounded domesticity.

C. The role of memory

Shall memory restore
The steps and the shore
The face and the meeting place.
— W.H. Auden, Poems, 1934.

As we turn to look at the specific issues related to the role of memory in questions of identity in culinary memoirs, Olivier Lazzarrotti reminds us of the importance of transmission in consolidating and preserving memories,[205] to be able to forge an identity with the elements that constitute one's history. The nature of transmission implies that recalling and recording memories are a collective responsibility on a shared journey. In this chapter we will look at the role of memory within the pursuit of individual and collective identity in culinary memoirs, in which memories serve as artefacts for some and even artifice for others, the process of recall and the place of forgetting particularly for diaspora and trauma victims for whom nostalgia is both a positive and negative force. As Nefissa Naguib explains, authors reconstruct the past and construe the present from the perspective of cuisine; their narratives depicting cooking as an optimistic act; it projects into the future, and symbolizes memory waiting to be recreated or relived in the next meal. (Naguib, 48). As Ehrlich says: "It reaches into the future, vanishes into memory, and creates the desire for another meal." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii)

Elizabeth Ehrlich writes that Miriam's culinary schedule and obligations "are awesome responsibilities, and Miriam's life is lived in reference to what must be done to meet them [...] this absolute, unchanging priority of duty to calendar, kitchen, home" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 126), duties that Ehrlich herself shirks for fear of facing uncompromisable truths about her personal identity. Miriam, for example, takes on the challenge of re-creating Ehrlich's maternal grandmother's chocolate cake for her longed-for first grandchild, out of a sense of duty to memory, a mission that was tantamount to sacred. She asks for no assistance, especially not the recipe; she must find the equivalent perfection herself in her precious culinary legacy. Ehrlich's response is one of awe

[205] Mémoire est faite au moment et au moyen de sa transmission. (Lazzarrotti, 109).

conveyed in her measured, understated and respectful prose, that evokes a spiritual dimension to her act:

> 'It is a beautiful cake,' murmured Miriam. There was something in her voice. I looked at her, curious. There was a look to her face I never before had seen. Something thrilling ran through me, something like what witnesses recall in the presence of greatness: determined purpose larger than life [...] Miriam never asked for my grandmother's recipe. There was a year of what I presume was concentrated thought, and possibly lab trials shared with Jacob. If it was so, we were unaware [...] 'Let me bring the cake,' said Miriam. And she brought: a sour-cream chocolate cake of her own devising, frosted with chocolate fudge. Baked in a bundt pan, even. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 132-133).

In diasporic narratives narrators must ask, according to James Clifford: "what is brought from a prior place? And how is it preserved and transformed by the new environment. Memory becomes a crucial element in the maintenance of a sense of integrity—memory which is always constructive." (1997, 44). This defends the claim that memory has transformative qualities, that in the act of recalling, changes will occur that affect the past and present. Daniel L. Schacter explains that "[w]e construct our autobiographies from fragments of experience that change over time. That is, we inevitably organize or form fragments of memory into complex constructions that become the changing stories of our lives" (quoted in Smith and Watson, 22). Telling stories are of utmost importance, particularly diasporic ones that often have multiple sources. As we saw in previous sections, memoirists emphasise the importance of mentors who support their writing efforts. Raphael Samuel confirms "history is an organic form of knowledge and one whose sources are promiscuous, drawing not only on real-life experience but also memory and myth, fantasy and desire [...]" (Samuel, 1994, x). Miriam's cake was of her own devising, but inspired in her heart, by the memory of her family, her ancestors and their tragedy.

1. Memory, memories: artefact and artifice

> Memory and identity are used as tools to increase awareness, help heal wounds and restore dignity, in an attempt to understand the past and to address the future towards an intercultural context.[206]

[206] *Road to Justice*. Exhibition guide, 22 June 2018 to 14 October 2018. MAXXI, Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo. Rome, Italy.

— *Road to Justice* exhibition guide, MAXXI, Rome.

Memoirists pursue both memories and identity in their narratives, the first to, ostensibly, redefine and restore the second. However, while memories directly serve to help understand identity, the elements of one's familial and cultural construction also serve to shape and define our memory recall. Quests for self-understanding are inevitably personal, but as immigrants, in the case of many authors, a collective identity occupies an imaginative and intellectual space in any self-enquiry. This chapter will focus on the way in which authors define, select and manipulate memories and how memories define and determine directions and prescribe the course of their journey.

As the text on the MAXXI exhibition on African colonization and deportation indicates, memoirs do not always follow a "temporal logic" but also, like the exhibition, have "distinct chronological sequences." These chronological sequences represent more recent events that are cited as illustrations of a new hybrid existence, and which describe the workings of adult memory as they relate to identity, whereas the temporally illogical episodes often correspond to the haphazard memories recalled from childhood. Vivid childhood recollections are a sign, not always of connection with the past, but with an allusion that conceals an absence of memories. One might ask whether Madhur Jaffrey really recalled her childhood foodways in such intimate detail, or whether her present-day skills as cookbook writer served to embellish those memories. Questions of temporality are paradoxical in memoirs wherein food has an immediacy that belies the fundamental notion of embodiment and corporal memory that transcends mental recall processes. As Sasha Martin cooks her way around the world map on her wall, she comments that each country captured their imaginations and became "a palpable moment in time" (276).

Memory and collective identity

> Sharing our past experiences with others is an important part of creating shared histories and interpersonal bonds. Memory is a means of 'passing on' [...] acts of personal remembering are social and collective. (Smith and Watson, 2010, 26).

Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson remind us that excavating memories, in the search for one's own identity also implies a commitment to a community. The "passing on" to which Smith and Watson refer implies the perpetuation of a transgenerational memory, which groups together individual, collective and history memory (2000, 515). Authors undertake the task of exposing the zones of overlap and even palimpsestic memory writing.

Memory is all the more elusive when it is perturbed by displacement. In diasporic cases where there are a significant number of displaced people, there is a pooling of memory resources to create a collective memory which fortifies the individual and diasporic identity. Abu-Jaber writes that memories, triggered by eating together, define her family's identity: "Memories give our lives their fullest shape, and eating together helps us remember." (*Language of Baklava*, Foreword). Eating and memory recall are intimately entwined. Our primary corpus of culinary memoirs can be seen as a form of collective literary effort within the context of this study. Similarly, on a microcosmic level, Arlene Voski Avakian's collection of personal food writing articles, play a similar role, bringing together a chorus of women's voices, not all displaced, but each with a meaningful story about the importance of food in theirs or often their families' lives. Speaking of her own story, Avakian writes that as a child she wanted to be assimilated in American society, while her diasporic family believed in the superiority of their ethnic food. While she believed food to be the creator of community, she also wanted to highlight its antithetical role in hunger as a personal, political and economic issue. (*Through the Kitchen Window*, 8).

A collective memory is shared about a homeland, regarding its location and history, as well as common suffering and achievements. Diasporic communities are often active in their preoccupation with the memory of the homeland and the question of return, as we discover in Abu-Jaber's *The Language of Baklava* or in *The Book of Middle Eastern Food* by Claudia Roden,[207] for collective memory is one of the distinguishing features of diasporic communities. Avtar Brah writes: "the concept of diaspora delineates a field of identification where 'imagined communities' are forged within and out of a confluence of narratives from annals of collective memory and re-memory" (Brah, 196).

[207] The myth of return will be discussed in the first section of part III.

Collective memory in the context of memoirs typically designates a community, an intimate group with a common ethnic identity. In retaining a collective memory of their original homeland, and idealizing their ancestral home, diasporas are also committed to the restoration of the original homeland or at least to maintaining close ties. (Cohen, 2008, 4). Restoring its memory occupies the collective imagination. Maurice Halbwachs explains that we need the other members of the community in order to recall our memories, crossing their paths "dans le rappel et la reconnaissance" [...] Entre mémoire individuelle et mémoire collective le lien est intime, immanent" (Halbwachs, 147, 512). One might perceive the truth of this in the literary gathering of Mediterranean writers in David's works, in Christensen's healing family reunion (*Blue Plate Special*, 346-348), or in Wizenberg's collection of recipes, almost all acknowledged from family and friends.

It is often hard to straddle that cultural chasm between the homeland and the host land as Abu-Jaber's experiences demonstrate. Symbolic memorial gestures such as the writing and sharing of recipes go some way to bridging the gap. Writing of Colette Rossant, Carol Bardenstein says that she "put into sharper relief the chasm of dislocation between the past reconstructed by the authors and the present from which they write; in so doing, they bring more conspicuously into view the ways that memory and collective identity are shaped and constructed within that chasm." (Bardenstein, 2002, 365). In researching her recipes, Claudia Roden called upon family and close community as well as immigrant workers in London who were unknown to her. The pulling together of extraneous elements is symbolized in the bringing together of ingredients to cook something new. As Bardenstein says: "Both individual and collective memory are profoundly and densely embedded in, enacted, and communicated symbolically through the many forms of engagement with food" (2002, 355). Recipes are the literary and emotional device in this chasm of dislocation allowing communities to bridge a gap between the loss of the past and absence in the presence, as we observe in the works of Roden, David, Ehrlich, Kamman and Toklas.

As Monika Fludernik describes it, literature is "both the creator and the critical analyst of diasporic consciousness" (Fludernik, xiv). When Ehrlich shares her family's matzo ball recipes, she records her daughter's transcription of a 'soulful' sacred memory, her mother's memory of her own mother's recipe, entitling it 'The Soul in the Dumpling', an intricate, interdependent weaving of generational exchange: "My daughter calling my

mother for the recipe? My mother who approximated her mother's recipe? Her motherless mother who reinvented her mother's recipe? The ancient and timeless matzo ball? Yes, that's my religion." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 218). She records the recipe in its present reincarnation, bridging the chasm between past and present with the words of her daughter: "Crack open eggs (my daughter wrote)." (219).

Memory, daily practices and gestures are layered. Sasha Martin entitles the chapter in which she describes the making of the childhood German Tree Cake, "Layers of Memory", the repetition of the reference to this cake throughout the book, suggests that with each allusion she is adding another layer of memory for herself and her family, having retained the memory of that original pleasure, eating it with her brother "with the kind of hunger that comes from waiting for a good thing a little too long" (*Life from Scratch*, 297). As she rationalized the eight pages of instructions, she understands that the overly intricate recipe was her mother's way of making the preparation a playful activity, adding a further poignant layer of significance. In the midst of the cake preparation, her husband has a medical emergency which provokes a resurgence of painful memories, leaving Martin feeling vulnerable and uncertain about her roots and the future. Imbricated in these two episodes is her hesitant question about whether they should move to a new home, a decision complicated by her lack of roots that tie her to a community. (Chapter 26). Feeling exposed, she realizes, "[t]here can be no peace without community, and a realization of that need. Real community—people to count on, and who could count on me" (301-302).

The German Tree Cake was one of Martin's childhood family memories, which in this new experience came to mark and recall a new moment in time. Life events are marked by one or several, more or less formal, shared food experiences. This is expressed in the chapter in which Ehrlich's family 'sits Shiva' for her grandmother in the days following her death and preceding her funeral, emotions and food mingled with observance that concentrate mourning and eating, death and life; they remembered her with images of 'living', active food: "her smell like fresh bread, and her yeasty accent (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 322), and during the concluding *Shabbas* dinner "we were hungry and everyone ate. There was that eating silence. Then an uncle spoke. 'This is a meal that mother would have enjoyed,' he said" (323). It represents the continuity of life. There is pleasure in eating and the memory of eating; reaffirming identity is an active process,

like the rising yeast, that offers a sensual, tactile memory. Ehrlich confirms when bread making: "I feel the dough, try to memorize this just-right soft resistance." (67).

Routine practices are both a testimony to a collective and family memory and a commemoration of the past and those departed, a continual act of repossessing memory in the present. Identities are defined by the domestic rituals[208] that women instigate and perpetuate. These practices, in the present, become dynamic spaces to be inhabited, everything that the 'museums' or 'mausoleums' of ritual that Ehrlich fears, are not, occupied in memoirs by recipes as perpetuating memories of loved ones. Rituals are symbolic physical acts, which in culinary memoirs, are transcribed into words. Linda Anderson describes such testimony as "language under trial" in which the speech act draws meaning from reception (2011, 130), confirming the importance of the enactment of memories, with culinary gestures, making tangible the collective identity through the bringing together of the past and the present in food and eating.

Rituals bring to the forefront the question of memory's dependence on literary representation. If language is the barrier susceptible to interpretation that Maria Delaperrière describes, culinary rituals become perhaps the only reliable transmission of memory.[209] Luce Giard summarises this observation as such: "La ritualisation raffinée des gestes alimentaires m'est ainsi devenue plus précieuse que la persistance des paroles et des textes" (Certeau et al., 1994, 218). In this sense, memoirs serve to make memory recall cyclic by recalling a memory, associating it with a recipe (or vice versa), which in its turn is performed to the echoes of the first moment in time, and in the creation of a new one by the family, community or reader. This formula perhaps avoids Delaperrière's dilemma that: "[l]iterary testimony [...] is conceived out of its continuous clash with both reminiscences vanishing from one's memory and the form of the message." (45).

[208] Our discussion on ritual in these sections relates to repeated practices that serve to trigger or consolidate memories. In part IV, we will discuss ritual as a source of healing and sustenance.
[209] "Testimony, as a form of literary representation, is based on a paradox: the notion of testimony already assumes accuracy of rendering someone's experiences by him/herself, whereas literariness (traditionally understood as a group of stylistic and fictionalizing values) seems to disqualify the truthfulness of such message in advance." (Delaperrière, 43).

Memories as artefacts[210]

Remnants of the homeland, in the form of food traditions are vestiges, tangible artefacts that assume a sacred quality. Kitchens are temples where women prepare 'sacraments' for family rituals and the weight of each utensil holds a memory. "Ehrlich envisions the kitchen as a spiritual locus where she resists assimilation and transmits Jewish identity and history to her children." (Moran, 218, 219). Ehrlich confesses the sense of duty to see for herself, to witness and perform the gestures: she had to be with her mother-in-law: "She often tells me 'take that recipe' as if the mere taking would be enough. I know I should be there to see it, to fix her process in her mind." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 8). The recipe is not enough without the living memory. The act of cooking is the creation of a ritual which much be observed, celebrated and perpetuated.

Ehrlich was no doubt familiar with Cara De Silva's 1996 edited collection of recipe memories *In Memory's Kitchen: A Legacy from the Women of Terezín.*[211] The similarity of titles is striking, both simple, banal even, belying the trauma that both contain. Culinary memoirs such as *Miriam's Kitchen*, are part of what Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer described as the "powerful memorial aesthetic [that] has developed around such material remnants from the European Holocaust" (Hirsch and Spitzer, 354). Criticism abounds of the association of recipes with the atrocities of hunger, starvation and death, but they are undeniably the material remnants as we discussed earlier,[212] which can serve as testimonial objects that transport memory traces into the present as the only vestiges that remain to them. They are a testament to the power of memory and the will to survive in the face of brutality and dehumanization. "Such remnants carry memory traces from the past, to be sure, but they also embody the very process of its transmission" (Hirsch and Spitzer, 355) "as a bequest addressed to future generations of women" (354). They returned in their imagination to their family kitchens, exchanging

[210] Refer to the work on artefact and artifice by Allen-Terry Sherman, et al., *(Re)writing and Remembering: Memory as Artefact and Artifice* (2016).
[211] The volume was published two years before Ehrlich's own memoir.
[212] "Efraim Zuroff, director of the Wiesenthal Center in Jerusalem, called [*In Memory's Kitchen*]'s publication 'sick' [and its recipes 'imaginary'], notwithstanding a forward by Michael Berenbaum, former director of the research institute at the United States Holocaust Museum in Washington, and an endorsement from Nazi hunter Beate Klarsfeld." (Jolkovsky, Binyamin. New York Magazine, 10 Mar. 1997, 17-18).

recipes reconstructed from memory, creating menus and even table settings, and imaginary tea parties as their spiritual arm against starvation.

Hirsch and Spitzer, citing other examples of holocaust artefacts, call for an expanded approach to testimony using Barthes' notion of punctum in *Camera Lucida* (Barthes, 1981, 43), where photographed elements serve as points of personal and cultural memory recall between past and present, legitimizing a place for culinary memoirs within the corpus of memorial literature:

> Barthes's much discussed notion of the punctum has inspired us to look at images, objects, and memorabilia inherited from the past as 'points of memory'—points of intersection between past and present, memory and postmemory, personal remembrance and cultural recall. The term 'point' is both spatial—such as a point on a map—and temporal—a moment in time; it thus highlights the intersection of spatiality and temporality in the workings of personal and cultural memory. (Hirsch and Spitzer, 358).

Ehrlich captures the universality of memory, recalling as well as the spatial and temporal dimension, as she sifts through her childhood home: "The basement was full of keepings, forgettings, wishes and passing interests [...] objects had lives that could not be entirely controlled by human beings" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 331), for memories, in the form of adaptable recipes, cannot be entirely controlled. The sharpness of a point pierces or punctures through layers of oblivion, challenging those who seek to understand the past. A point is also a small detail, and thus it also conveys the fragmented nature of the vestiges of the past that come down to us in the present—like scattered recipes. As Sherrie A. Inness says, if women are the keepers of traditional or ritual foods, it is only natural that the culinary autobiography would eventually come into being (Inness, 2001, 266), as the ultimate memorial artefact embracing foodways and the personal story of the perpetuators of those traditions.

Memorial recipe books and the recipes in culinary memoirs are artefacts to be preserved in a museographic approach to memory. The term eco-museum, as a living resource for the communities in which they are established, is, in fact, more appropriate than museum. Such institutions are focused on the identity of a place. They have a holistic approach to cultural heritage, and share with culinary memoirists an objective of revitalizing memories. By dealing with traumas or difficult and painful events, museums such as these open the possibility of combining various artefacts to create

new versions of history, an intention born of a collective memory rather than historical consciousness,[213] and at the heart of culinary memoirs.

Claudia Roden is the creator and curator of a memory site, a literary 'museum', that, as the following analysis proposes, must be a space for reflection if it is to serve the memory it encapsulates:

> Creating spaces that work as sites or realms of memory is problematic only if the reflection on the meaning of what is displayed ceases to be practiced [...] Contestation and alternative ways of remembering infuse motion into history and open up the dialogue between past and memory. A real site of memory exists as a question creating practice that produces thoughtful reflection and that invites the past into the present and the present and collective memory into history. (Rivera-Orraca, 37).

In the context of Roden's food books, the past is brought into the present through cooking, fostering an ongoing discussion around food that Roden encourages through her personable writing style with regard to the reader, bringing new life to the artefact ("but you may like to try marinating [...] (*Middle Eastern Food,* 179), "but if you have a good butcher [...]" (262), "I urge you to add the amount of flour slowly" (*Jewish Food,* 280). Roden explains (Roden, 2012) that when they fled Egypt, her vast extended family was uncertain whether they would see their homeland, or each other, again. She saw food and recipes as a way to tie them to each other, and to their collective memory, like a lifebuoy. Linda Furiya feels the same sense of urgency. Seized by panic at the thought of losing home comforts "I began my mental collecting, but this time I tried to capture it all by making a final sweep, like a fisherman casting out yards of netting, I tried to freeze the images and sounds I had seen all my life" (*Bento Box*, 305-306).

Memoirs as artifice

When Samuel Chamberlain, in his partially-fictionalised account of his family's experience, hastily takes his leave of France at the outbreak of World War II, he also hastily packs his memory bag with stories of his family's life in France, their passion for its gastronomy, and their 'make believe' cook Clementine, who agrees to return with them to America from where they watch the destruction of all that they loved in French

[213] Refer to Rivera-Orraca, 35-36.

society from afar. The character of Clementine is the artifice Chamberlain uses to embrace his family's memories of place and food. Elizabeth David, forced to return to Great Britain at the end of the war, proceeds to document the dishes from the various Mediterranean countries that were her home for many years. Recording these recipes was a way of preserving and sharing her memories, while serving most importantly as an antidote to her misery in the face of post-war food rationing and shortages. Alice Toklas offers us a monumental treasury of recipes and anecdotes spanning the thirty years during which she kept house in France for Gertrude Stein and their circle of writers and artists. Each author uses the memoir-recipe book form as an artifice to preserve memories and, just as importantly, to articulate a didactic discourse focused on gastronomic sensuality and gourmet sensibility in the spirit of a living museum.

The Chamberlains position themselves as saviours of a disappearing French culture with Clementine's recipes as their precious heritage. "Our immediate and determined concern was not to lose Clementine's recipes, even if we were doomed to lose her." (*Clementine in the Kitchen*, 148) The family takes notes in haste on the eve of her departure. They then exploit another artefact, the "Folklore of French Cooking" to verify them and render them accessible to their American audience. The Chamberlains had salvaged "a wealth of workable recipes" (149) that proved that the cooking itself could be transplanted to American shores, a minor victory in their symbolic war effort. Elizabeth David is equally motivated by conservation. In her preface to the 1965 edition of her book, she aspires to one day write a second instalment, as "in those regions there will always be new discoveries to be made, new doors opening, new impressions to communicate." (*Mediterranean Food*, 3). The Mediterranean, the birthplace of humanity, is portrayed as having infinite resources.[214]

David's *Sunday Times* reviewer at the time of publication praised the book for its authenticity and the uncompromising rendering of her memories. David, she asserted, refused "any ignoble compromises with expediency" (*Mediterranean Food*, 9). They were not recipes that her audience in the 1950s could hope to cook and were inevitably the stuff of dreams, while ironically, she asserts that Brillat-Savarin (whom she deliberately

[214] Elizabeth David went on to write many other cookbooks a large number of which focused on Mediterranean food. It was not until the 1970s that David published cookbooks about English food, notably on the use of spices and aromatics in English cooking and on English bread.

excludes), was the stuff of frustration. These memories are esoteric, as exclusive as personal memories can be; the collection of recipes is seemingly not intended for the casual visitor but as a private viewing for the initiated. It is the cuisine of an entire culture, written with the intention of introducing a nation to Mediterranean food, but the cookbook-memoir was for her own personal salvation. David makes no concession to her 1950s British audience; her intimation of privileged past experience is uncompromising and unashamed. She is entrenched in her world of memories in the company of her gourmet accomplices whose quotes set the tone for each chapter. A bouillabaisse, David announces, has a rich and authentic taste if made with the largest number of fish possible, rather than a passable version with just three or four; she concludes that "[…] the truth of the foregoing observation will be generally agreed upon" (*Mediterranean Food*, 59). She considers the reader a companion traveller with the same gastronomic experiences and memories as herself, assuming that a fresh water fish recipe was not comparable to the authentic Mediterranean bouillabaisse but would at least conjure up memories. Similarly, many of Toklas' recipes make little concession to France-at-war, boldly indicating truffles, oysters, pine nuts, saffron and sesame oil.

It can be understood that David's recipes are an artifice of both recollection and concealment. The personal anecdotes are short, selective memories, often extolling the inspirational or nurturing roles of others, especially women. We discern David's personal experience and memories dissimulated behind the anonymity of recipes and imported narratives that talk of places, experiences and traditions that were no doubt hers too. Discreetly she shares her gustatory and olfactory memories, the food to which she had become addicted "the bright vegetables, the basil, the lemons, the apricots […] the evening ices eaten on an Athenian café terrace in sight of the Parthenon…" the evocation is a rich, dreamlike recitation. Her accusation of the "particularly bleak and painful period of English gastronomic life" is harsh but it is this sentiment, with its "glow of a lost Paradise of plenty and glamour" (*Mediterranean Food*, 5-6), that initially moved her to write. We travel vicariously back with David to her adopted places of residence with each literary extract and emblematic recipe, the vignette offering an authentic, sometimes eccentric, colourful scene, the background to an Arcimboldo-esque self-portrait, which nonetheless lacks the transparency of later memoirs.

2. Remembering and forgetting

> [I]l est possible de vivre presque sans souvenir et de vivre heureux, [...] mais il est encore impossible de vivre sans oubli.
> — Friedrich Nietzsche, *Considérations inactuelles*, 1874.

Memoirs and their recipes serve as artifices that sensitise the palate and open memory's dam. "[T]he Chinese New Year meal anoints Leslie Li's relatives' tongues and palates 'with familiarity', at the same time that it awakens their 'mind[s] to recall'" (*Daughter of Heaven*, 113). Culinary memoirs are written around the unconscious knowledge that our bodies may be able to recall what our bodies have forgotten. Nietzsche tells us that forgetting is essential to happiness as it is the process by which we distance, and therefore, free ourselves from our past and the nostalgia that drags us down. Within the context of memory recall and its inevitable nostalgia. Recipes are history's artefact; but as we have determined, they are also vulnerable to modification, which means that a new memory can potentially palimpsestically overwrite the old. As with Ehrlich's leitmotif of "a voyage of discontinuity and connection" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 2), memoirs create a vital space for remembering and forgetting, both vital to coming to terms with one's past and defining one's identity.

Memory recall and embodiment

> The strongest wisdom is the wisdom of the body. (*Language of Baklava*, 170).

Most memoirs reach back to childhood and evoke detailed descriptions of family foodways and its preparation of food, for, as Diner explains "food is so tightly woven around childhood, family and sensuality, it serves as a mnemonic, an agent of memory" (8). Claudia Roden's list of "Special Flavorings and Aromatics" in *Middle Eastern Food* (43), or the multiple recipes for mythical dishes such as *börek*, *sambousek*, *pilav* or *keksou*[215] with their catalogue of ethnic ingredients serve as a form of mnemonic to the narrator and perhaps the reader too. We are witness to feats of recollection that take the reader on giant leaps between micro-focused childhood experiences and present-day

[215] Known otherwise as pastries, turnovers, pilaf and couscous.

macroscopic overviews of food traditions. Luisa Weiss finds the foods of her past to bridge the gap to the present:

> I'd buy cheap olive oil and imported rice at Fairway, browsing the dried beans and cereal aisle [...] Fairway sold little tubs of Quark that made me think of Berlin, and jars of cornichons and plastic bags of sliced sourdough bread from the Poilâne bakery in Paris that made me think of Max. I went to Zabar's for pickled herring that I'd eat on matzo, like my father taught me to, and for wrinkly black olives and fat smooth green ones, my mother's favorites (*Berlin Kitchen*, 72-73).

Oscillations in the intensity of food experiences also remind us that "[f]ood conservatism grows out of the sensory link between food and memory" (Diner, 9). We again encounter the dichotomy between creativity and tradition, between the desire to revive the past and the need to move into the future, where recalling the past is a conciliatory, and above all, sensory effort—perhaps even nostalgic—as we will discuss in the next chapter. The museum artefact mediates instances between past and present, allowing for healing, not only by re-examining the past but also by recreating, for the future, with the notion of recipes as a means of reinventing the past and renewing traditions. Michel de Certeau and Luce Giard emphasise the repetitive act of cooking in bringing together past and present, memory recall and the lived moment with each sense heightened, and each element contributing to a holistic experience:

> [T]he everyday work in kitchens remains a way of unifying matter and memory, life and tenderness, the present moment and the abolished past, invention and necessity, imagination and tradition – tastes, smells, colors, flavors, shapes, consistencies, actions, gestures, movements, people and things, heat, savorings, spices, and condiments. [216] (Certeau et al., 1998, 222).

The recipe interacts with memory processes through the physical integration of language, traditions and culture in the preparation of dishes, allowing access to hidden recollections through embodiment. For Sidonie Smith, the autobiographical subject carries a history of the body with her that negotiates the autobiographical 'I'. "[T]he memoir subject not only has the subjectivity/body intersection to negotiate, but the culture/body as well" (quoted in Buss, 152). These perspectives are experienced as

[216] Le travail quotidien des cuisines reste une manière d'unir matière et mémoire, vie et tendresse, instant présent et passé aboli, invention et nécessité, imagination et tradition—goûts, odeurs, couleurs, saveurs, formes, consistance, actes, gestes, mouvement, choses et gens, chaleurs, saveurs, épices et condiments. (Certeau et al., 1994, 313).

somatic sensations, for which one must seek imaginative and symbolic links with an unremembered past (Buss, 153), as Rushdie encourages us to do. Jaffrey's mangoes were the myth of her childhood, a cultural anchor and an embodied sensation: "Cool and sweet, this nectar had the taste of ecstasy, the ecstasy of our summer in the hills" (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 104). Colette Rossant recalls her French culinary awakening: "I couldn't begin to describe the joy I felt eating that truffle, an epiphany of the senses, a thrill caressing my adolescent tongue." (*Return to Paris*, 89).

Recollections from the past are recovered through sensorial stimulus. Punctum, the detail in an image, the point that pricks our attention (Barthes, 1981, 43), has the power of expansion. The ingredient of a recipe can spark a gustatory trigger, or a specific taste such as that of Marcel Proust's a tea-soaked madeleine, which awakens a memory that its visual form had left dormant, and which opens a flood of recollection:

> [J]'avais laissé s'amollir un morceau de madeleine. Mais à l'instant même où la gorgée mêlée des miettes du gâteau toucha mon palais, je tressaillis, attentif à ce qui se passait d'extraordinaire en moi. Un plaisir délicieux m'avait envahi [...] Je sentais qu'elle était liée au goût du thé et du gâteau, mais qu'elle le dépassait infiniment [...] Et tout d'un coup le souvenir m'est apparu. Ce goût c'était celui du petit morceau de madeleine que le dimanche matin à Combray [...] quand j'allais lui dire bonjour dans sa chambre, ma tante Léonie m'offrait, après l'avoir trempé dans son infusion de thé ou de tilleul. (Proust, 102, 104).

However, Barthes explains "[t]here is another (less Proustian) expansion of the punctum: when, paradoxically, while remaining a 'detail', it fills the whole picture." (45). In terms of culinary memories, the gustative detail can bring back the memory of a homeland, objects or images that have remained from the past, containing 'points' about the work of memory and transmission. Points of memory produce piercing insights that traverse temporal, spatial, and experiential divides: "As points multiply, they can convey the overlay of different temporalities and interpretive frames, resisting straightforward readings or any lure of authenticity." (Hirsch and Spitzer, 358). Shoba Narayan explains that "[a] smell can carry a memory and certain foods can compress the memory of an entire childhood into them. The tastes and smells of my childhood were the twin bastions of TamBran cooking: *idlis* and coffee." (*Monsoon Diary*, 51). [217]

[217] TamBram are Tamil Brahmins, a Hindu caste of Tamil origin.

Acts of forgetting

For Paul Ricœur, healing begins in memory and continues in forgetting (Ricœur, 1995, 80). He insists on the selectivity of memoir to contradict the ostensible banality of the notion. Not everything can or will be recalled, which reminds us again of the permanent anxiety associated with trauma infusing memories long after the events. Elizabeth Ehrlich tells us that not everything is remembered; things, including tastes are lost**:** "Once [Miriam] recalled for me a sweet pastry, made with beets, never to be tasted again [...] There was no one to ask. Far away in time, she, a little girl then, loved a pear dessert, and it is unrecoverable. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 69). In contrast, Ehrlich's parents eating Miriam's food and awakened by the tastes they find in her dishes "exclaimed in reminiscent wonder. How well they remembered those long-ago, home-flavored ways." (80). Sonia's mother's *kreski*—crumb cake "'was out of this world. But she doesn't have the recipe. I asked her for it' says Miriam. 'I was heartbroken.' I have never had crumb cake. I, too, am heartbroken." (97), expressing the grief in her own body. The loss of these recipes, ingredients, tastes, fragments and quintessence of the past are a personal tragedy.

Yet, in the process of remembering some things must be lost: there is a need to forget the past in order to better understand one's current life, and define one's home in the present. As Marc Augé points out forgetting is crucial to the process of remembering: "what we remember is what is left when we have forgotten all the rest, as happens in the process of erosion of the landscape." (Augé, 29). A selection is made, made tangible by the recipe selection. Halbwachs writes : "L'oubli est une atteinte à la fiabilité de la mémoire." (537), yet our corporal memory keeps a selective trace of certain sensorial experiences related to food. While the intention of recipe books and memoirs is to recall food, Abu-Jaber's observation of her father's torment leads her to assert that: "[p]eople say food is a way to remember the past. Never mind about that. Food is a way to forget." (*Language of Baklava*, 189). "[Bud] is eating the shadow of a memory. He cooks to remember but the more he eats, the more he forgets." (190). Bud clings to the present, losing hold of the memory as he tries to understand why he is there and refusing to make the cultural and culinary connections.

In part I, we evoked the archaic reach of mythical fairy-tale idioms used in some memoirs to talk about distant memories from the past, whose truths have become blurred. Abu-Jaber offers us a magical analogy for the evolving nature of memory, following a meandering path through remembering and forgetting, into corners of the mind that perhaps only food memories can reach, and which as such, concludes on an optimistic note, in the spirit of a true fairy tale:

> Sugar and memory. I try to look at this squarely [...] But memory runs out at the edge of the forest. And at the heart of my forest is a gingerbread house, enticing and mysterious and dark. [...] Sometimes I think the older you get, the more memories there are, and the deeper the forest becomes. A child thinks their life has one smooth shape—always moving straight ahead. Eventually, though, you start to see how crooked the path is, how the trees move closer, how birds have eaten your trail of bread crumbs [...] and sometimes you lose track and can't tell what was memory and what was a dream. You wake with the last notes of birdsong in your ears. Memories become sweeter and more persistent (*Life Without a Recipe*, 257).

Whereas reminiscence can denote fossilization, Abu-Jaber's allegory reminds us that culinary memoirs are themselves a dynamic medium in which acts of remembering through food preparation and associated rituals paradoxically lead to disconnecting or 'forgetting', offering intimate spaces or creating new identities. Both Ehrlich and Abu-Jaber take far-reaching family stories as their starting points, provoked by tension surrounding their adopted identity in America. Abu-Jaber struggles with memorizing: the thing she seemingly most wants persistently escapes her, leaving only disjointed fragments: "No matter how many times I write down the instructions, I forget it all, just as faithfully, and need to study it again. Art and pastry and memory and risk: The days arrange themselves into stories, which are themselves just moments, mere moments." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 265).

While Abu-Jaber dwells on the ephemerality of memories, Ehrlich builds a durable foundation of chosen moments, rituals and recipes. As Ehrlich starts to appropriate traditional rituals for herself, she says "I turn over the old stories in my mind and collect new ones. I choose my own history" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii). Abu-Jaber's father's stories describe a loss that is spiritual rather than material or societal, an unconscious act of forgetting. For Abu-Jaber, the immigrant condition renders the exercise difficult, writing its own story as Abu-Jaber tells her family tale, recounting

discovery as well as loss wherein "la nourriture a ce pouvoir de défier le temps comme l'espace." (Hua, 191). She explores the same theme earlier in the voice of immigrant Han in her novel *Crescent*: "'You have to let yourself forget or you'll just go crazy. Sometimes when I see those homeless people on the street [...] I think I've never felt so close to anyone as those people. They know what it feels like—they live in between worlds so they're not really anywhere. Exiled from themselves.'" (*Crescent*, 183).

Cooking the homeland is an imaginative way of dealing with loss. The narrators' parents are in a dynamic of preservation. The recipes and their associated rituals embody change as well as memory. For this reason, Miriam's recipe for egg salad cannot deviate from its remembered formula. Miriam's unspoken duty, her means of survival, is to recreate the world that was lost. A process of disconnecting and forgetting allows narrators to let go of memories, accepted as part of the diasporic journey, but also of creating new equally authentic ones. In remembering is forgetting and a new creation, an emotional 'displacement and a moving on, what Ehrlich describes as she learns Miriam's recipes as "a voyage of discontinuity and connection" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii). She adopts traditions that, while part of her heritage, mark her estrangement. Memory's journey marks a rite of passage through culinary traditions.

For Ehrlich the act of remembering is achieved through the preparation of food in a ritualistic communion with her mother-in-law, as an act of redemption, saving traditions and generations. "Contemporary women memoirists recollect 'emotion' in the broadest sense of the word." Paradoxically what appears, in culinary ritual, to be ostensibly an act of remembering becomes unintentionally a gradual process of forgetting, for in the former lies the latter. Tied to the present, the food they prepare is a "woefully compromised fragment" (Bardenstein, 2002, 354), displacement eliminating all hopes of culinary authenticity. Neither food nor ritual can be satisfactorily transplanted and maintain authenticity, neither the forlorn American-style scorched pancakes that Abu-Jaber's mother shares with the curious Jordanian neighbours, nor the disastrous front yard grill to welcome the American neighbours where they are taken for gypsies. On her return from Jordan, Abu-Jaber must recall in order to assimilate one more: "This is American food, I tell myself. I don't like it, I think, because I've somehow forgotten it. I must remember. (*Language of Baklava*, 73). When Bud finally gets his restaurant, he cooks American fare, burgers, fries and hot dogs, he casts aside his

Jordanian dream, as though in a deliberate act of forgetting, declaring loyalty to "this Amerikee, this beauty, place of lost radio songs, unknowable glances, cold blue lakes, of work, not family, of facing forward not back, of solitude not tribes, of lightness not weight" (324), but one can ask if he really has forgotten, when he calls his business 'Bud's Family Fun Center'.

Memories in time and space

The opposition of home and its counterpoint, displacement, are critical in the making and forgetting of memory. Paul Ricœur writes: "La transition de la mémoire corporelle à la mémoire des lieux est assurée par des actes aussi importants que s'orienter, se déplacer, et plus que tout habiter" (2000, 49). Abu-Jaber comments on memory functions in a description of her father's oscillation between past and present in his attempts to find a point of stability between homeland and host land "Our conversations are journeys. We lose ourselves in former lives." (*Language of Baklava*, 218). This mental and emotional movement provokes a form of perpetual diasporic journey, of remembrance and forgetting. The tightly-woven narrative of the final chapter of *Life Without a Recipe*, reflects the message it contains: Abu-Jaber moves between countries, America and Jordan, cuisines—from *knafeh* to salted chocolate brownies—between relatives, living and those gone ten years previously. In doing so, she demonstrates that distances collapse, place and time mingle and become one, as when her Aunt Aya shows an understanding of Abu-Jaber's grandmother that she had never had: "Memory persists in present tense, immortal. I felt the closeness of things, the moon shining on Jordan and New Jersey. I felt how time collapses and things draw together in unexpected ways." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 263)

As Maurice Halbwachs has described it, memory is associated with place and this fluctuation between microcosm and macrocosm is reflected in the contrasting changes of location, from intimate kitchen to limitless and amorphic homelands. Diasporas mark their host land and their hosts with their memories, regardless of their degree of assimilation, as Catherine Delmas and André Dodeman explain: "Memories impinge on the perception of the new space which is to be inscribed, appropriated, invested by the marks or traces of other traditions, cultures, languages." (6).

Paul Ricœur says "l'identité narrative n'est pas une identité stable et sans faille [...elle] ne cesse de se faire et se défaire" (2000, 33). Narratives create an autonomous space where the past exists only through memory's modification of our perception of events.[218] That modification occurs through actions in the present, the eating of the proverbial madeleine, the making of an heirloom recipe. Memory is historically conditioned and always evolving explains Raphael Samuel,

> [C]hanging colour and shape according to the emergencies of the moment; that so far from being handed down in the timeless form of 'tradition' it is progressively altered across generations. It bears the impress of experience [...] Like history, memory is inherently revisionist and never more chameleon than when it appears to stay the same. (Samuel, x).

The illusion of timelessness is bestowed on family histories by something as transient as a fleeting taste, suggesting that tradition itself is chimerical. For Ehrlich the Friday night candles were "[a] token of memory, and also of history, the collective remembrance far beyond memory's reach." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 23). Memory is a dynamic force shaping knowledge and traditions. It is activated in these memoirs through the transmission of recipes, whose structured and repetitive form embodies a timeless quality that checks the passage of time. For all that Joyce Zonana's recipes discreetly assembled at the end of the text seem extraneous, their sober orderliness represents a form of buffer between her newly-found identity and the uncertainty of what lies next. The very act of cooking to satisfy immediate hunger coupled with the difficulties of creating a truly authentic dish from, what are often substitute ingredients, detaches one from the past and the object of recollection, and opens the potential in the present for something new. A new kind of authenticity—that of immediate experience—suffuses freshly prepared dishes and ephemeral moments of conviviality, preserving personal integrity in the face of tradition.

The memoirs are paradoxes of chronology and timelessness. "The immigrant compresses time or space [...] It's a sort of fantasy to have the chance to recreate yourself. But also, a nightmare because so much is lost." (*Language of Baklava*, Foreword). Frances

[218] See Olivieri-Godet, 62. "[L]a fragilité des liens avec le passé tient à la façon dont le récit se fait le relais de la mémoire. En effet, le récit jouit d'un espace autonome qui impose au lecteur l'épaisseur d'un lieu où le passé ne revit que grâce au truchement du souvenir qui modifie la perception des évènements."

Mayes speaks of the mythical, timelessness of food "I have never tasted anything so essential in my life as this grape on this morning. They even smell purple. The flavor, older than the Etruscans and deeply fresh and pleasing, just leaves me stunned." (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 112). "I was drawn to the surface of Italy for its perched towns, the food, language and art. I was pulled also to its sense of lived life, the coexistence of times that somehow gives an aura of timelessness." (260). Mayes' words are situated within a precise temporality of repeated cycles and seasons, phases of renovation and timed visits during her California University summer break. Elizabeth Ehrlich, also, mapping her spiritual journey onto a year of ritual and observance itself overlaid by the rituals of cooking that Miriam has created, seems, like Mayes, to illustrate Philippe Lejeune's insistence that it is impossible to escape the chronology of life, with its dates, ages and milestones, so many anchors in individual and collective lives, providing order and security: "L'autobiographie est déchirée entre l'évidence du désordre (la mémoire est un labyrinthe, un fouillis) et le désir d'ordre, qui est lie au désir du sens." (Lejeune, 1988, 88). Elizabeth Ehrlich's narrative conveys a pronounced sense of temporality, not only following the months, the seasons and religious holidays, but also bodily rhythms, including exhaustion, menstruation and sexuality. As narrator she employs associational, digressive or fragmented remembering, illustrating Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's analysis. "We are subjects in time: the time of our bodies, its rhythms and cycles; the time of our everyday lives, the sense of their unfolding, the sense of succession, of one moment turning into another moment, the accumulation of our personal past; the time of history; our era, our place in a larger narrative." (Smith and Watson, 2010, 92). The fragmentation of the chronological sequence, as in Abu-Jaber's example above, are not a sign that the subject is not unified or coherent. Gullestad explains that "[p]aradoxically, it seems as if a certain timelessness in literary terms can be a precondition for a historically valid interpretation of one's understanding of self and society." (25).

3. Nostalgia – idealization and oppression

> When we leave our home we fall in love with our sadness. (*Crescent*, 143).

The more focused a narrator is on the passing of time, the more there is a split between the then and now, a condition which generates a sense of nostalgia. This in itself can be a driving force in preserving artefacts from the past, to create places of memory and a coherent identity. Nostalgia, melancholy, and remembering are key ingredients in food memoirs, where "the relationship between food and memory finds pointedly explicit and conspicuous expressions" (Bardenstein, 2002, 357). Diana Abu-Jaber, in her novel *Crescent*, suggest that we become inextricably associated with nostalgia and melancholy from the moment that we leave home, the place that engenders our identity. According to the etymological origins of the word, 'nostalgia', which comes from the Greek words, *nostos* (return) and *algia* (pain or longing), literally refers to the pain caused by a strong and seemingly unfeasible wish to go back. It is a sentiment often associated with a disordered and uncontained memory. Building bridges makes bearable the disparity between time and space, or time and place that inevitably emerges in the autobiographical pursuit of self, and implying that turning to the past provokes a form of comfort or reassurance, or as we have read in earlier critics, an ordering or even a rupture and a forgetting.

Nostalgia as artifice

The literary use of nostalgia in memoirs is complex. While Svetlana Boym's statement is undeniable, that "[f]or many displaced people, creative rethinking of nostalgia was not merely an artistic device, but a strategy for survival, a way of making sense of the impossibility of homecoming" (Boym, xvii), it has multiple other facets. The trauma of loss is expressed in part through nostalgia by authors such as Hemingway, David, Roden, Martin, and Wizenberg for diverse reasons and in different circumstances. For the diaspora, individual and collective anamnesis is an act of conservation in which women cooks are the agents of recall. The memoirs that expose food traditions are the literary 'eco-museums' that actively celebrate the history of a community through the recording of recipes. In curatorial conservation there is the implicit notion of display, and sharing for the common interest. In this spirit, the recipe book is both a personal record and a form of exhibition, exposing fragments to form a coherent picture of the past. Describing the 2013 exhibition on the Mediterranean, "Le

Noir et Le Bleu" at the Mucem,[219] curator Thierry Fabre states: "[t]he layout of the exhibition was put together from the aesthetics of the fragment."[220] The Mucem's semi-permanent exhibition space, the Galerie de la Méditerranée, includes recipes fragments, videos of food preparation and culinary artefacts, including a video for "Recipe for Marinated crushed olives" by contemporary artist, Lia Lapithi Shukuroglou. The salting of the olives is said to remove the bitterness, perhaps of individual memories or for a national cause. The recipe is prepared on a newspaper, a quintessentially temporal symbol, that carries a politically-charged headline about the fate of the Cypriot people. (Shukuroglou, Video). Inherent in the transience of food expressed in these artefacts, is a form of institutional homesickness that is articulated in such collections.

Nostalgia is then, in the first instance, a tool that pursues conservation but it is also a subtle artifice, concealing other agendas and complex emotions beyond historical conservation. It conceals intimate stories and stronger private emotions. Personal anecdotes are absent in David's work, they are restricted to culinary concerns in Toklas' book, and partially hidden behind the story of Clementine for Chamberlain. Yet if we read in paratexts what each author says about their driving force, we gain discreet insights into the functions of these nostalgia memoirs as artifices in masking other more intimate and profound motivations. Even in Elizabeth David's collection of essays, which are potentially more intimate, the only insight is provided by comments she includes about her by other writers, such as that of Norman Douglas concerning her behaviour at a restaurant (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 120).

Alice B. Toklas claims she wrote "as an escape from the narrow diet and monotony of illness, and I daresay nostalgia for the old days and old ways [...] lent special lustre to dishes and menus barred from an invalid table, but hovering dream-like in invalid memory" (*Toklas Cookbook*, xi). Elizabeth David's exotic culinary experiences were a confrontation with her home culture, the mixture of chauvinistic reception and harsh conditions that Steve Jones and Ben Taylor capture: "the nauseous flavours of continental food and the privations of food rationing" (Jones and Taylor, 172). In their

[219] Mucem, Musée des civilisations de l'Europe et de la Méditerranée, Marseille.
[220] "C'est à partir d'une esthétique du fragment que le parcours de l'exposition était assemblé." My translation. (Bouayed and Fabre, 15).

article, the authors also claim that David made her way back to a somewhat nostalgic interest in authentic British food.

Servants play a role in some culinary memories, passing on food traditions, while, as ephemeral as the food they evoke, constituting 'artefacts' in themselves. Toklas devotes a chapter to colourful anecdotes of their servants that bear witness to the diversity of temperaments, styles and cuisines to which she and Stein had to accommodate.[221] Ultimately, "[w]ith the declaration of war we, like everyone, adapted ourselves as best we could to the new conditions. The old life with servants was finished and over." (*Toklas Cookbook*, 199). Parallel anecdotes of Gertrude Stein's servant, Hélène, can be found in both David's and Toklas' book, suggesting that such nostalgia has roots in a collective imagination. (*Mediterranean Food*, 34).

The emotional force of Chamberlain's tale is discreetly hidden. His daughter drops the veil of reserve that hides her father's true self. She says in the Preface to a later edition: "The book was made, at first, and is again now, for a reason you may already have observed, for love – of family, France, food and the incomparable Clementine." (*Clementine in the Kitchen*, 159). As a statement of love, this admission repairs the ambiguous notion of possession that Chamberlain used to describe their relationship to fictitious Clementine. Like memory itself, nostalgia has its nuances and layers of motivation. Chamberlain's daughter admits, "her choices are nostalgia of another kind" (158). Chamberlain seeks to preserve two artefacts in his narrative: his trophy Clementine, and the civilized, and assuredly atemporal, pre-war French society. Clementine's notebook tells of the "way a civilized French family lives" (9). "It is a style so French, so civilized, so knowing in its use of ingredients that it cannot become impractical or ever go out of date." (158). Their home town in France was for them their "first taste of civilized living" (49). Although Clementine was more treasured by the family than their ancient wine cellar (23), both the live-in cook and the pre-war society are fated to destruction by the war. Chamberlain talks of a miracle that had to end and one can imagine that the deluge that hastens their farewell with Clementine at the end

[221] Monique Truong's novel, *The Book of Salt,* about their Vietnamese cook is a fictional but, nonetheless psychologically perceptive insight into the condition of servants, cooking and the life of the literary circle in Paris in the 1930s.

of the book is in fact a metaphor for the onslaught of modern society against which the symbol of Clementine was their final defence.

Elizabeth David revels in food descriptions which have discreet inflections of subjectivity, yet are also delivered with the authority of a self-proclaimed expert on Mediterranean food, in the same spirit as Roden. David describes sweets of mythical properties, rich and fantasy flavours with "Arabian Night ingredients". More cultural anecdotes and details reveal the pleasure with which she returns to these places with undeniable nostalgia but also with imposing authority. The Greek dried fruits are "succulent" and "tender", their ices are "elaborate", the French candied fruits "delicious", "gorgeous", and "delicate", but the elaborate descriptions are given within their specific cultural context, including explanations of meal times, the etiquette of hospitality and the practical possibilities of preparation. David creates a fascination for Mediterranean peasant culinary culture that, with time, turns into a form of nostalgia which finds echoes in more recent food memoirs such as that of Frances Mayes. It goes beyond the idealization of a foreign culture, as it resonates with something that was lost from the narrator's or the reader's own cultural identity. Mayes believes that she can develop her thinking in Italy "it's my culture, my rough edge, my past" (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 78).

From oppression to restoration

The pull of nostalgia is not always an immortalizing experience. Hemingway evokes the Paris of his youth with abundant nostalgia, the place that was nonetheless associated with the loss of his manuscripts, the substance of which he returned to repeatedly in his later and posthumous works, including *A Moveable Feast*, in which he explains that each day that he didn't write was like a day of death, implicitly equating the loss of his manuscripts with death. He speaks about the event as though he has dealt with it and moved on, but the nostalgia with which he associates his experience corresponds, according to Wagner Martin, with the flashbacks of a mind that has not yet attached 'psychic meaning' to an event. Nostalgia appears to be a false artifice that conceals a real suffering.[222]

[222] This loss is a central theme in Paula McLain's fictional recreation of Hadley's years she spent with Hemingway as his first wife, *The Paris Wife: A Novel*, an indication of the hold the episode has on the literary imagination.

Traditions which help the narrator to find her identity, and that are regarded with nostalgia, may also become oppressive. The nostalgia of parents, first generation immigrants, like those of Abu-Jaber and Furiya whose foodways become an all-pervading cult obsession. Those who 'stay behind' like the parents of Jaffrey and Narayan have the nostalgia which mutates into fear for what might be lost, should they allow traditions to be eroded, by the displacement of the next generation. Madhur Jaffrey describes a feeling of loss that acts as a trigger: "It was when I was twenty and went to England as a student that I started to learn how to cook. I was extremely homesick, and this homesickness took the form of a longing for Indian food." (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, xiv). Abu-Jaber observes the nostalgia of her father for his homeland as a force that determines his every thought and action: "Bud misses the old country so much, it's like an ache in his blood. On his day off, he cooks and croons in Arabic to the frying liver and onion songs about missing the one you love. I ask him who he misses, and he ponders this and says, 'I don't know, I just do." (*Language of Baklava*, 20). This is followed by his recipe for "Nostalgic Chicken Livers"'. "My father's longing for Jordan is at the center of his identity" (137). Talking also of her father—once more the generation who came over—Furiya writes: "For Dad, it was always food—the setting of a meal or its sensual characteristics that struck a chord of nostalgia." (*Bento Box*, 46).

There is a mixture of respect and incomprehension when narrators have one foot in each world, symbolized by the dual-genre dimension of the memoir, part cookbook, part self-writing. Both Ehrlich and Abu-Jaber resist the temptation to transform nostalgia for the unattainable into an idealization of the past as they move between two worlds inevitably comparing and creating but never glorifying 'imaginary homelands'. "Seeing the past through the shards of a mirror inevitably distorts the idealized memory one has of a "homeland" (Mannur, 11), while the pain of the loss of the homeland remains a constant undercurrent. Owing to the exigencies of displacement and dislocation certain memories are remembered, while others, literally, are recreated.

Svetlana Boym proposes a two-fold definition of nostalgia, restorative nostalgia that stresses *nostos* or return and attempts a collective reconstruction of past truths and traditions, and reflective nostalgia which focuses on *algia*, individual longing and loss, "the imperfect process of remembrance" (Boym, xviii). "Reflective nostalgia does not follow a single plot but explores ways of inhabiting many places at once, and imagining

difference time zones". This is described by Alison Leitch as a nostalgia that explores inhabiting multiple places and loci (quoted in Counihan, 2013, 423), a concept that memoirists such as Abu-Jaber and Weiss examine intimately. Instead of the recreation of a lost home, reflective nostalgia can foster a creative self. The focus is not on the past as absolute truth but on the mediation of history and the passage of time: "amateurs of time, epicures of duration, who resist the pressure of external efficiency and take sensual pleasure in the texture of time, not measurable by clocks and calendars (Boym, 49). Culinary memoirs exhibit a tension between the two types of nostalgia, committed to preserving traditions out of a sense of loyalty and self-identification, while addressing individual loss and longing in emotionally inhabiting several places at once. Mayes occupies two houses, Luisa Weiss is emotionally committed to two homes, while Colette Rossant attaches herself to her successive homes through its cook and the kitchen.

Nostalgia is dependent on the materiality of place, and the sensuality of perceptions. Luisa Weiss, divided between parents, continents and residential experiences, shares not just recipes of diverse origins that bring succour at key moments, but also her interiors, both emotional and physical, her homes, their views and the details of her house hunt. Sasha Martin's cooking takes her around the world before she finds home, while some childhood recipes turned to later in life allow her to return momentarily and safely to the past: her winter pound cake recipe follows the announcement that she and her brother will leave their mother to live with the Dumonts: "I went two decades without so much as a slice of pound cake. Too many memories were attached to those rich crumbs [...] this cake is a comfort beside any frosty window. It's true: A slice of pound cake does wonders to thaw the coldest of days" (*Life from Scratch*, 65). Kate Christensen describes the long series of homes she occupied, some reassuring, but many failing to protect her.

Narrators turn to authentic food traditions to reclaim their identity. Nostalgia is based on the selectiveness of memory (Srinivas quoted in Counihan, 2013, 369), which means that authors have some capacity to resist its pull. Elizabeth Ehrlich must circumvent the nostalgia inherent in ritual to find meaning in her heritage and create a new identity: "I want to infuse the minutiae of everyday life with something more – meaning or history or awe – and to experience it without too much sentimentality, or irony (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 291)." Nostalgia fogs awareness and resists momentum. When

her six-year-old responds that kosher law motivates his food choice, Ehrlich rejoices in the purity of his guileless answer: "That's the thing, the awareness, carried out into tomorrows when my body is gone" (299). Her sacrifice of observance focuses her obligation, strips away the nostalgia and clarifies her intention. She is coming close to achieving what she wanted and we, the readers are witness to her stumbling honesty "the wellspring must be authentic, or else it is just a museum […] It is my turn now" (327). Abu-Jaber expresses the same urgency, describing the American identity as "a melting ice cube to the vibrating heat of the identity we are forging" as she repossesses and recreates her own personal identity.

For Ehrlich, observance builds the foundation on which her family's hybrid identity can stand, tied to her ancestors and receptive to the identity she is creating. She has an intangible nostalgia for an inherited past with which she never had much sense of attachment, through an abstract dissatisfaction with her life-style, tempered by the experience of her ancestors. "As for themselves, the grandmothers chose what to keep. They had little nostalgia, no sentiment for hardship. They were the immigrants, self-taught and self-made […] They created their lives anew." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 96). When the desire or the possibility for return no longer exists, one takes root in a different way. Dislocation and personal tragedy have made family Miriam's whole life, such that time, to which nostalgia is bound, is of no importance: Ehrlich's horizon is eternity; the goal is not the return home but a *foundation* as Barbara Cassin explains.[223] As a child she and her siblings sought that anchor for which her parents had been unable to provide. For her children, Passover is no longer a "mausoleum" (215). She appropriates memories and reinvests them with her personal experiences. Both Ehrlich and Abu-Jaber succeed in constructing identities that contain strengths from their ancestors coupled with elements from their own forged experience. Ehrlich finds meaning in turning to the home, while for Fisher, in her time, her truth lay beyond. Luisa Weiss learns that another configuration is possible: "I hadn't really known that there was a door to a different life in my head and that that door was still ajar. I was homesick for Berlin at times, it was

[223] "De la nostalgie à l'exil et d'une épopée à l'autre, le but (telos) n'est plus le retour et la maison (oikade), mais une fondation." (Cassin, 64).

true. But I'd always assumed that was just the way my life would always be, living in one place, missing another." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 89).

Displacing longing

Ehrlich, Weiss and Furiya consciously negotiate nostalgia in making decisions, reflectively considering the path they should take. Other authors such as Mayes, David, and Kamman do not have the same critical distance, giving place to personal fantasies. Furiya, as an adult, manifests an awareness and respect for nostalgia, on a positive visit home after university: "One bite of her homecooked Japanese food was as comforting as a night of sleep in my childhood bed." (*Bento Box*, 302). Abu-Jaber translates desire for her traditional foods into another form of longing: "sheets of filo dough, buttered and anointed with syrup, nearly enough to compete with a night in bed." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 71). The concept of home is central to the definition of identity, and typically associated with comfort and association of close relationships. However, while offering comfort to the author and a recommendation to the reader, there is an insular and exclusive quality to 'homecoming' that Rosemary George underlines in *The Politics of Home*, with the notion of home embracing two ideas *inhabiting* a place and *excluding* others. It is a place that is both violent and nurturing, a place to escape to and to escape from, yet always desired and fought for (George, 9).

Madeleine Kamman appears to portray an idealized view of her friend Henriette, a country woman and her home, the epitome of rural traditions as an institution. The evocation of the Normandy countryside is richly sensual. She admits that her olfactory memories evoke nostalgia that above all mark the deviation between past and present: "The room where the cheese dripped and ripened was filled with dairy smells that my young nose did not always appreciate fully. But in days of homesickness I often long for those familiar odours." (*When French Women Cook*, 98). Authors recolour their past experiences to suit their present need. The place of memory is not only in the past but also in the present; never static or stable says James Olney (1972, 47). Nostalgia, a dynamic emotional force in which pain and pleasure stand side by side, is the primary vector for memory, the driving force for self-preservation and unity. When Samuel Chamberlain's daughter reworks the recipe selection in the book to balance the poetic

with the practical, she is countering the force of nostalgia whose critical perspective is ostensibly limited to the need to conserve. She seeks to give the recipes an enduring and dispassionate quality.

Salman Rushdie argues in *Imaginary Homelands* that the memory of the displaced individual works like a "broken mirror" (1991, 11) that reflects in the present a partial and distorted image of the past, creating "fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands" (1991, 10). Rushdie does not dismiss the fragmentary and somehow idealized "broken glass" memory of the homeland as a mere "mirror of nostalgia," because, as he puts it, it constitutes a "useful tool [for the displaced individual] with which to work in the present" (1991, 12). In fact, both critics claim that the intricate combination of the ambiguous loyalties and feelings towards the homeland and the experiences of present life in the host country constitute the core of the fluctuating condition of diaspora. Nostalgia turns those images into faithful mementos of "home, albeit a lost home in a lost city in the midst of lost time" (1991, 9).

Homes and homelands represent not just originary identity, but also emotional attachments with nurturing careers. Bardenstein questions how Colette Rossant could have formed such a strong sense of identity and affiliation with Egypt, to the extent of wanting to write nostalgic memoirs about its foodways, given the degree "of complexity, ambiguity, and indeterminacy" of her identity in her early years. She concludes that it "would have had to be viewed as something she had 'had' if it could become something 'lost,' as indicated in the title?"[224] (Bardenstein, 2002, 379). Bardenstein is suggesting that the nostalgia that motivated her to write (and the two subsequent memoirs) was that of commodity. Rossant, nonetheless, creates a coherent memoir formula exploiting ideas of loss of belonging: "Both Egypt (the place, its people) and food, intertwined, become diffusely gendered sources of warmth, love, sustenance, and a feeling of 'home' and belonging [...] They stand in for her "lost" mother in the manner of a reparation, a substitute and compensation for irrecoverable loss" (381).

Claudia Roden grew up in the intensely cosmopolitan culture of Cairo in a family of Syrian Jews, living a comfortable culturally hybrid daily life in the *belle époque* of a city that was anchored in a Mediterranean culture with its eyes turned towards Europe.

[224] The American edition was entitled *Memories of a Lost Egypt* (Clarkson Potter, 1999).

Roden moved to Europe to study in the 1950s, only to be followed to London shortly afterwards by her family, victim of the Suez crisis in 1956 and rising Arab nationalism, like many other middle-class Egyptian Jews. Motivated certainly by nostalgia—perhaps vicariously at first—for a lost homeland, she started to collect recipes firstly within the family circle and then beyond, with anthropological and intellectual fervour. Her fear of the loss of her family's closeness and cohesion was undeniable, but her determined and exhaustive approach to documenting culinary traditions from her former world suggests she was also confronted with the realization that she was, in effect, rootless and without an ethnic homeland. Egyptian Jewry had lived in a privileged and cosmopolitan disdain for Egypt and its Arab culture. She, in effect, only retroactively laid claims to Egypt as an emotional and cultural homeland, as Naguib explains, (along with Egyptian cuisine, or at least the selection of Mediterranean dishes that had become their own), speaking English and French as well as Italian with their governess, and only using a broken Arabic to speak with the servants. The introduction to *Middle Eastern Food* shifts from her personal story into an expansive multicultural history of the Middle East, from which she erects a literary monument to preserve the memory of a disappearing world, that she feared losing as much as the contact with her extended family. She asserts that her primary aim was to "record and celebrate the cuisines of the Middle East [...] we missed Egypt and we missed each other. We were a very big and vital community". (*Middle Eastern Food,* 3).

Nostalgia was an important driver: "it was the fruit of nostalgic longing for a food that the constant joy of life in a world so different from the Western one" (4). She speaks, using absolute terms, of a community experience, but the voice is her own yearning, for nostalgia colours and distorts memory. In Paris, the *ful medames* "the little brown beans embodied all that for which we were homesick, and became invested with all the glories and warmth of Cairo" (4), yet it was unlikely that this staple Egyptian street food featured much in her family's foodways. As in the case of Rossant, absence made the heart more nostalgic. "She had an insistently idyllic vision of (pre-Israel) Middle Eastern life that, forty years later and to the despair of her friends, remains untempered by reality" (Kramer, n.pag.). Roden presents an idealistic, even simplistic, view of her origins, and her people, "who, from a position of displacement, long for and partake of a quintessentially Egyptian [...] cultural marker in the form of food". (Bardenstein, 2002,

355). Roden's work, like David's is an example of a testimony to community, as well as her own personal suffering, with all that one can debate or question of the validity of such an 'autobiographical' testimony. She approaches the task as a scholar, researching beyond the scope of recipes, suggesting she was guided by her heart:

> What makes this book in particular 'not scholarly' is the fact that it is systematic only in the sense that it is personal. [...] It moves on by the sheer power of her obsessive curiosity with food [...] and her enchanted interest in people and their stories. (Ottolenghi, n.pag.).

The role of imagination in nostalgia stretches to more than just the homeland. It extends also to places never visited, places which grip the narrator's imagination, images or emotions generated by mythical family tales or an undefinable sense of identity. It is generated by a need which Raphael Samuel indicates for the diaspora: "Nostalgia, or homesickness, is famously not about the past but about felt absences or voids in the present." (Samuel, 1994, 356). Abu-Jaber, in her second memoir, has gained distant with age and negotiated nostalgia: "Nothing it seemed was forever. Even as I gave in to the status quo, I felt a wave of homesickness, yet didn't know what or who for." (*Life from Scratch*, 139).

Under the Tuscan Sun is an example of a modern exile motivated by nostalgia for unknown countries, a postmodern yearning for alterity: "we are homesick most for the places we have never known" (McCullers, 74), that differs markedly from Miriam's need which arises out of the trauma of loss and a forced diasporic exile. Leslie Li reminds us, in quoting Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* that the nostalgia for a lost homeland or lost identity is often itself displaced: "the traveler's past changes according to the route he has followed [...] the foreignness of what you no longer are or no longer possess lies in wait for you in foreign, unpossessed places." (*Daughter of Heaven*, 219). Implicit in Calvino's words is the reality of many immigrants for whom losing the homeland—or other tragic losses—inevitably means a shift, if not a loss, of identity which can no longer be traced back to the homeland but lies beyond in the host land or new places not yet visited, such as Hemingway's Europe, Christensen's Maine, Furiya's China and Martin's map of the world.

D. Effects of displacement

We observe that both food and displacement can be the focus of diasporic travel, leaving a trail of collective memories about another place and time and creating new traces and maps. We have touched upon the disruption to a stable or linear sense of identity through displacement, caused by a sense of conflicting needs—that of the nurturing homeland, and the need to assimilate—and the ensuing compromised and compromised loyalties. In this section we will discuss the effects of displacement on identity.[225]

The term displacement carries the double meaning, that of an act of moving something or someone from its original place or position, and the state of being displaced. Contained in these two concepts is the idea of the subject's auto-determination. Many people are forcibly displaced, but once displaced, perpetuate that state by their inability to assimilate, remaining displaced with regard to the host society. We will analyse displacement as a static state perceptible in the narrator's actions and in the narrative. While in 'displacement' we discover the idea of *deracination*, the pulling up of roots that once existed, in *dislocation* we find the notions of ensuing disorder, disruption, disconnection and confusion, suggesting that the point of departure and arrival were ill-defined or not understood.

Colonial alienation, which deracinates, is one reason for physical displacement and psychological disorientation, disconnecting subjects from their native culture. (Collingwood-Whittick, xiii). This raises the question of the relationship between displacement and personal ambition, which questions freedom and personal choice. However much order is restored to a troubled identity through the choice of memories, stories and recipes, there remains an element of dispersion in displacement, of ambiguous identities, and sometimes compromised integrity with which narrators such as Narayan and Li, constrained by family traditions, must reconcile themselves.

In the case of Elizabeth Ehrlich, despite her self-deprecation, her roots, although neglected, were still traceable and could be resuscitated with the integrity and honesty with which her memoir resonates. In contrast, the identities of Furiya or Weiss are a

[225] The question of movement in diverse forms will be discussed in part III.

source of conflicting emotions including shame, pride and alienation. As we will see in a discussion of ambivalence and oscillation, there is often an inadequate or inappropriate reaction to the host situation based on one's previous experience and the emotional trauma sustained in the displacement and the tensions of displacement, or of being "of two worlds" (Bardenstein, 2010, 161).

In Joyce Zonana's memoir, there is a lingering sense that she is still on a journey to find her identity, despite the traumatic and cataclysmic hurricane which forced her into a greater understanding of where her priorities lay. Carol Bardenstein writes that culinary memoirs "have been variably shaped, constrained, and enabled by a combination of 'exile effects' (the particular inflections of displacement and retroactive construction), the relative fluidity of food as the "carrier" or repository of memory, as well as what seem to be tacit conventions of the cookbook-memoir genre." (Bardenstein, 2002, 384). The endings of these memoirs are often written at a time of reckoning in their lives, a new beginning that acknowledges a diversity of influences, as well as an often-definitive exile. I suggest that the dynamics of displacement remain present as an emotional and literary reality,[226] even when a new home has been established.

Culinary memoirs are informed by travel narratives that evoke deliberate exile. In this case, it is commonplace for the writer to be an outsider, his exile due to the incompatibility of writing with the concept of 'home', motivated by the idea that "life is elsewhere" as Richard Pine writes of Durrell (2008, 7). We think of Fisher, David and Gray, who, by their scholarly discourse stay aloof of the average food writer. Whether the displacement is voluntary or imposed, the subject becomes an exile in an alien space. The concept of diaspora maintains the idea of suspended immigrant experience between host and home countries, native and foreign lands, homebound desires and losses, thus obscuring the possibility of a new topography which is potentially postnational.

One can lose an attachment to place when it is partially replaced by shared quotidian experience, such as eating. Attachment to place is no longer indispensable—although the primary need remains. Global spaces are also opening up, and being occupied by multicultural discourses such as those initially by Mayes, dazzled by the

[226] This reality is marked by the emergence of subsequent memoirs as continuing narratives of displacement.

wonders of alterity and the mystery of foreign foodways, and later by the multicultural and multinational spaces that writers like Weiss and Martin occupy. As a logical extension to this idea, displacement may also come to be something desirable, or even sought after such as Elizabeth Gilbert's journeys to Italy, India and Indonesia, or Tracey Lawson's residence in Italy. These iterations are overt travel narratives that explore displacement as a journey whose importance transcends its start and end point.

1. Dislocation

Traces and maps

Recipes are threads in the narrative, a map of the present, as illustrated by Diana Abu-Jaber's recipes that provide a commentary on her story, but also of her legacy. In Luisa Weiss's story, each recipe is a recollection, yet brought up-to-date to reflect her current life, notably in response to her sense of dislocation. This is illustrated by the breakfast dilemma that she faces with its diverse cultural identity, from which she produces a recipe for Poppy Seed Whirligig Buns, adapted from a German lifestyle magazine, which contain traces of her multicultural heritage, captured in the swirling "whirligig" name:

> When you grow up all mishmashed like I did, with an American passport and Italian citizenship and a birth certificate issued in West Berlin, it might take you a little longer than usual to figure out your place in the world. You're this strange little hybrid of a person, easily adaptable, fluent in many languages, an outsider everywhere [...] how's a girl supposed to know which breakfast is her birthright? [...] So how's a girl supposed to choose (*Berlin Kitchen*, 41, 43).

Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge stated that whatever their form or trajectory, "diasporas always leave a trail of collective memory about another place and time and create new maps of 'desire and of attachment'" (Appadurai and Breckenridge, quoted in Dufoix, 354).[227] Their studies described global cultural flows, underwritten by an assertive feeling that the older categories like 'folk', 'popular' or 'mass' did not capture the way cultural artefacts and icons—and their bearers, peoples—victims of

[227] Arjun Appadurai and Carol Breckenridge. "Editors' Comments: On Fictionalizing the Real," *Public Culture* 2.1 (Fall 1989): 1.

displacements—were shaped by ever-changing global forces, coming into contact with that which was once considered 'strange' and 'unfamiliar'. (Chakrabarty, 2009). Cultural media channels contemporary issues of displacement using the old, the familiar and the folk to make a new statement. Indeed, memoir recipes are modernized to reflect new realities, tracing a map between the old and the new condition. Shoba Narayan tells the story of *idlis* over which her grandfather wooed her grandmother, then she explains her personal adaptation: "Good *idlis* are soothing and filling. The trick is in the batter's proportion and consistency [...]. After many questions and experiments, I came up with the perfect *idlis* recipe. Here it is." (*Monsoon Diary*, 57). The use of the term 'dislocation' is pertinent here in describing displacement as there is a perceptible need to create order from disorder, disruption, disconnection in terms of identity that we have identified in the regular presence in narrative structures of orderly and ordering recipes.

The need to draw a new map is as much to understand where one has come from as to see where one is going. In diasporic situations where borders take a paradoxical centrality in the landscape of identity, Clifford describes how margins, edges and lines of communication emerge as complex maps and histories. (1997, 7). A bond with a small space where food is created, a kitchen, for example, can replace the anchor to a territory that is, by nature, owned and bounded. New boundaries must be defined and mapped for new spaces and one's relationship to those spaces: "to find its position in a mappable world" (Butler, 3).[228] Small spaces become identity-defining locations, concentrating the essence of an identity. Diana Abu-Jaber describes how her grandmother would transform her small apartment into a bakery at Thanksgiving and Christmas to wage war over her grandchildren's affections and impose her own beliefs, occupying every surface with cookies and cakes that were "all part of Grace's arsenal", as though a wartime invasion (*Life Without a Recipe*, 17)

Tracing a map also implies following it, defining which road to take, as well as the starting point: which one to highlight from the past, an acknowledgement of a homage due. Cookbook memoirists, like David and Roden, had to make choices about the scope and content of their recipe collection. Claudia Roden is inspired by Elizabeth

[228] Questions around postmodern definition of territories and borders and identity will be explored in part III.

David's selection in *Mediterranean Food*. She writes: "In an early edition she intimated that there were many more dishes in the Near East which needed to be discovered, that what she gave was the tip of the iceberg, and that was the spark that fired me" (*Middle Eastern Food*, 123). The result was a finely detailed, small scale map compared to David's larger scale plan, with textual illustrations. Roden's motivation was heightened by her family's dislocation. Madeleine Kamman, having left France for America, chose the cooks and the recipes to draw a map of her past, planting ethical and lifestyle signposts along the way. With her Provençal friend Magaly, she spoke "the same emotional language" (310), and learned lessons to help her on her journey, such as: "never appear rushed however rushed you must feel" (Kamman, 314). Through her memoir, she indicates that dislocation is a shaping force in the role that women must play in diasporic communities to bridge gaps created by physical, emotional and cultural separation, often through food, to assuage the pain of lost homelands and improvise a semblance of wholeness and cohesion within immigrant homes.

A sense of identity is complicated by exile, but as *Miriam's Kitchen* shows there are also natural, generational and societal evolutions, choices and changes that have little or nothing to do with exile and enable a path to be traced. Her return to traditions is an acknowledgment of the price that was paid by ancestors to keep an identity alive, and also a sense of guilt as its thoughtless rejection. Ehrlich repeatedly uses the word 'choice', a necessary part of map drawing and reading, making religious and culinary choices that would bequeath a set of traditions to her children. She chooses what rituals to adopt, but the fundamentals of kosher living, are inherently constraining. There sometimes seems to be little choice in the path to take: "Another set of complicated meals, fatiguing rituals, required forms of work that has little to do with freedom or choice. I suppose we are laboring for our families, for the perpetuation of our people, and that is the difference" (*Miriam's Kitchen,* 230), but her sacrifice ultimately offers the freedom of choice to her children: "It is something to leave behind, perhaps—that will be their choice, later—but also something on which to build" (261). She feels the urgency of offering that freedom: "The forms we love to have the choice to return to will wither and disappear, or worse yet, become hollow shells, cultural theme parks" (327).

Choices bring narrators to a new point of departure at the end of memoirs which is a culmination of the direction taken in the search for identity up to that point. Using

the language of travel, some order has been imposed and a rudimentary map is drawn indicating the future direction. Joyce Zonana makes "an exile's journey" from New Orleans to New York in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, shedding home and belongings for a simple studio. Symbolically, she is no longer teaching historical canonically-important Victorian literature but "developmental" writing, reflecting the new, multi-directional path that her life has taken. She reduces her space to the essential: "None of the furniture I so painstakingly collected fits here, so I have spread it about" (*Dream Homes*, 201-202). Beyond the basics she has acquired a new Persian rug, reminiscent of those her mother brought from Cairo, a symbol of reinvention in its newness that respects her origins. With friends she resolves her dislocation, fixing herself in time and space by offering thanks "for coming to this place and this time" (202), suggesting that she can mark a spot on her map that could be home. Before leaving New Orleans, her sense of dislocation was strong, but she drew a map that secured the way forward through 'developmental' writing, making hard choices concerning the dangers of her integrity, and recognizing her parents' cultural precarity:

> I wept wondering what I was doing. Was it better to stay or to go? […] Was I running away from the hard work of reconstruction […] Was I making a real choice or was I compulsively reenacting the family drama—fleeing from a land that suddenly appeared dangerous and inhospitable? For as I had driven frantically northward, I had remembered my father's words, 'There was no future for us there anymore. It wasn't safe. (*Dream Homes*, 200).

Still torn between New York, the home of her father, and Berlin the home of her infancy and of her lover, at the end of her memoir, Luisa Weiss has understood that she must have a world map with multiple access routes. She had "sobbed with loneliness […] resented the harshness of the Berlin winter" (*Berlin Kitchen*, 286), and fantasized about returning to New York. Yet she had also learned to follow her emotional instincts, approaching her marriage with a sense of security:

> [I]n the knowledge that I could be trusted to make the right decisions for me and Max, picking the right meal, and the right life […] what really had me glowing was the fact that I'd listened to my instincts and that had been enough. It turns out that following your heart in the kitchen is the same as in real life: full of rewards. (*Berlin Kitchen*, 270).

Foodways provide moral indications, offering truths that served as a universal guide.

Although her path had been unexplored for many years, Sasha Martin was at last able to find a way forward by making links to the past, and to accept that she can advance without necessarily having a map, as reconciliation with the past gives her the reassurance to trust the future path:

> Even as I cooked my way around this uncharted world, there were constant bridges to the past, beginning with the apricots of Afghanistan and ending with Mom's beloved cinnamon on pumpkin. Now I know my food is intricately tied to the past. It always will be. [...] There's an ease about not knowing what will come next—an ease I never could have felt before. Each bite is a flash of the past and the present" (*Life from Scratch*, 345).

Each new country enables her to extend own emotional territory. Like Weiss, she trusts the instincts she has developed as a world-traveller cook.

The metaphors of paths and bridges,[229] of which we find examples in the works of Sasha Martin, Leslie Li, Linda Furiya and Madhur Jaffrey, outline the evolution of the narrator's identity. Memoirs define a discourse which articulates, blends together and finds compromises with both roots and routes, that must "bypass an opposition between rootedness and displacement [...] Displaced people 'feel (maintain, revive, invent) a connection with a prior home.'" (Diner, 253). The immediacy of lived experience and its shared expression becomes more important than history, and language becomes a form of positioning and rearticulation. There must be a necessary letting go and confidence in the future, reflected in the symbolic trust involved in the proposed tried and tested recipe with words of encouragement. David Bodenhamer et al. state that "[m]aps are more than pieces of paper. They are stories, conversations, lives and songs lived out in a place and inseparable from the politics and cultural contexts in which they were used." (Bodenhamer et al., 26). The multi-layered, multimedia 'deep' maps that they describe provide "a representation of society and culture, past and present, with all its rich contradictions and complexities" (23), offering ways to integrate multiple voices, views and memories (8), an essential need in culinary memoirs with the clamour of voices speaking from the past.

[229] The bridge is a sacred motif in Asian art, with symbolic and spiritual as well as practical significance, the object itself often traditionally incorporating a shrine.

Displacement as statelessness

For some authors there is a necessary period of rootlessness that is both healing and creative. We sense in works by Fisher, Reichl and Toklas, who reach out to new cultures, that having the best of many worlds is better than having the worst of one. The wave of expatriation after World War I was the lure of both modernism and tradition. The homeland, therefore, remained an imaginative point of reference for the Lost Generation as they were drawn by the allure of an inverse nostalgia (apodemalgia), uprooted and questioning older guides, place and tradition. Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald and their generation of young middle-class artists were engaged in an epic voyage, an "odyssey of expatriation" as Caren Kaplan calls it (1996, 43). They experienced the complex tension between space and time, where the past is displaced to another location, and they, as the modern subject, must travel to it. The tension they experience between progress and tradition is palpable in culinary memoirs. A search for change and a deep desire for stability, caught between the fluctuating state of history and space in which one finds oneself, do not match one's memory state. Even though narrators reach a degree of harmony at the memoirs' 'denouement', there is often a compromise with where they are—in terms of personal development—and their family history.

In this respect, memoirs offer an interesting comment on the condition of 'statelessness' with the idiom of the threshold on which a number of narrators find themselves at the end of their narratives. This threshold is a junction between the old world and the new, between the blind acceptance of traditions and the shaping of a new personal identity. Examples of this state, of being on the brink, are found many of the diasporic works, notably of Abu-Jaber, Ehrlich, Furiya, Jaffrey and Rossant. Similar to the threshold concept in academic writing, the threshold at which the writers find themselves is as much about where they are at a given point in their journey, as about developing a sense of who they are, having arrived at a point where they have determined a distinction between the past and the future. There is a recognition of two spaces, a delicate, but discernable balance. These are not the border spaces that we will discuss in part III A, but a temporary closure on questions of dislocation. Like the concept of thresholds in education, the liminal moment is like a portal that leads to a transformed way of understanding or thinking albeit modest and tentative. Diana Abu-

Jaber has made connection with her writing and hungry self: "I have recently come to understand something about myself [...] The second self [...] owns nothing and it wants nothing, only to see, to taste, and to describe. It is the wilderness of the interior, the unconsciousness of writing." (*Language of Baklava*, 327). Elizabeth Ehrlich realized she had approached the sabbath in a way that seemed comfortable with her: "I shared the reference in a pale, fuzzy way [...] Still I shared something. When my husband refused to take my errand list that Saturday, I laughed but I liked it, and this stayed with me." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 358). Madhur Jaffrey blends current and future insight: "I knew less than the rudiments of cooking then, and found myself writing home to my mother, begging her to teach me [...] I was barely aware that my old and new worlds would start to mingle as soon as they touched, and that so much of my past life would always remain in my present." (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 231).

Exile is the trope that best signifies forms of displacement in modernity. It is associated with an accompanying ambivalence towards redemption and return, as well as a celebration of distance and alienation (Kaplan, 35). Thresholds imply choice which exile rarely offers. With distance and detachment as a precondition for creativity, "then dissatisfaction or alienation as states of mind become a rite of passage for the 'serious' modern artist/writer" (Kaplan, 36), seeking an effect of 'statelessness'. We see this in Durrell's travel/residence literature; in Hemingway's *A Moveable Feast*, the very title suggesting displacement as well as feasting, an itinerant hunger quest; in Fisher's *The Gastronomical Me* in which she finds herself with each sea crossing; in Weiss' *My Berlin Kitchen*, in which each transatlantic flight blurs the edges of her identity and leaves her with a profound sense of dislocation. While displacement can be defined as a static state in culinary memoirs, dislocation is a process to which narrators are subjected to and around which they build a map to guide them forward.

Language as displacement

Displacement, whether physical or emotional, causes a loss of language, be it an ethnic dialect, a language or the secret childhood code words that Gabrielle Hamilton shared with her siblings; the culinary discourse reinstates language, enabling it to cross borders and even occupy borderless spaces. Language, especially with regard to food, is

a form of home, particularly for those who have lost all else, and whose language has been displaced, lost, or silenced. Barbara Cassin describes the importance of language: "Les exiles ont perdu, foyer (familiarité), profession (utilité) et langue maternelle (réactions naturelles), la simplicité des gestes et l'expression spontanée de nos sentiments." (Cassin, 93). The culinary discourse reinstates language, enabling it to cross borders and even occupy borderless spaces.

Recipes are recounted as well as documented, with additional context and stories, terms and vocabulary like lost treasures from the past. They also awaken the mother tongue to which Cassin refers: Kate Christensen tells of her mother's comforting tapioca pudding that she and her sisters "lapped up like kittens" at bedtime (*Blue Plate Special*, 32); Shoba Narayan describes her grandmother's yogurt rice that they ate during their uncle's fantasy story time, the balls of yogurt rice and curry mingling with the words of the Blue Light Story he told (*Monsoon Diary*, 119-120); Abu-Jaber during a sleepless and tormented night at home from school, wondering who she is, delights to find yogurt *lebeneh* at the back of the refrigerator: the simplest dish in the world: yogurt that's been drained and thickened so it's mild and rich as cream [...] tonight this is the purest food in the world. Mother's milk. It is the sort of food that can't be replaced by anything else" (*Language of Baklava*, 229). Each is coincidentally a milk dish, and eaten at bedtime, the original mother's milk, the symbolic nurturing language between mother and child. Terry Eagleton, speaking of Irish writers explains: "In conditions of colonial backwardness, language is one of the few things you have left; and [...] a good deal more plentiful than hot dinners. [...] it is also a form of displacement, whereby you hope to discover in discourse a richness denied to you in reality" (Eagleton, 1998, 206), and one might also add of a lost world. In *The Garden of Eden*, Hemingway repeatedly uses eggs in the multiple meals that his protagonists eat, a symbol of new life, of hope and purity, notions which are gradually eroded throughout the novel.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari suggest that deterritorialization is a unique feature of minor literature, of which culinary memoirs may be considered a part: "the displacement and dislocation of identities, persona and meanings with the moment of alienation and exile located in language and literature." (Deleuze and Guattari, 203). 'Displaced' language's primary characteristics are defined in opposition to canonical writing, situated within marginal sub-genres such as culinary memoirs. The reader is

confronted with a plethora of foreign words, some italicized, describing dishes that are themselves displaced, isolated utterances extracted from a different narrative. Jaffrey, Furiya, Roden, Weiss and Kamman provide translations of recipe titles, moving in a multilingual universe. With other authors is it more haphazard; this multilingualism if a source of shame amongst immigrant children, notably Furiya who feels the burden of acting as her mother's scribe, writing notes in her name for school, answering the phone or translating for food purchases. They act as interpreters for their parents, of both language and situations, and confront traumatic situations when the right words are lacking. When the chance to buy a restaurant slips through Abu-Jaber's father's fingers, his disappointment is exacerbated by his linguistic incomprehension, which demolishes his dreams:

> In the old country, he might have known what to say—called upon his brothers and uncles, made threats, called for retribution—but here nothing was clear. He knew none of the American language of lawyers and count and lawsuits [...] All he knew was that here and now, at the very moment of grasping it, his life's dream had turned to dust in his hand. (*Language of Baklava*, 176).

The failure in communication means that the place Bud longed for cannot materialize, for as Carter et al. explain: "Place is space to which meaning has been ascribed." (Carter et al., xii). Language enables us to assign meaning to places that are henceforward "understood as land, the culture and traditions attached to it, home, the nation, the place of birth or origins, the community, place associated with traumatic experiences, or a site of memory and commemoration. The memory of place creates our sense of belonging, identity and anchorage, as opposed to space" (Delmas and Dodeman, 6). Bud is unable to ascribe meaning to a potential restaurant because he lacks the linguistic context. Ironically his restaurant finally materializes as a place for chatting, of verbal exchange. Linda Furiya's shame concerning her parents' language skills extends to their Japanese-style kitchen, a ghetto-like concentrated space of an alien culture within the vast American mid-West: "It became a chip on my shoulder that grew to the size of a log that crushed the pride in my ethnicity." (*Bento Box*, 70).

Joyce Zonana returns to cooking through oral interviews for her ethnic cookbook. Roden builds her reference tomes on the oral interviews she conducts once exiled in London. These examples illustrate that perceptions of identity are only clarified when

the situation of exile is momentarily lifted, as demonstrated also in the shopping trips to Atlantic Avenue[230] where they hear the homeland language, they are otherwise barely understood. Paradoxically, home, to which these values, desires and ambitions are tied, is often gone, inadequately reconstructed, or at least significantly different from that which first engendered these emotions, as well as their moral stance.

2. Existential questioning

The reconstruction of identity requires a displacement from the place where one finds oneself, across the threshold, literally or within oneself, a search for self, and also, for the other. Svetlana Boym highlights an existential diasporic state concerning one's situation: "Nostalgia is a sentiment of loss and displacement, but it is also a romance with one's own fantasy." (Boym, xiii). For many displaced people, creative rethinking of nostalgia was not merely an artistic device, but a strategy for survival, a way of making sense of the impossibility of homecoming. (Boym, xvii). This state is epitomized by the dual role in which the narrator treads a path of hesitant self-discovery, while confidently imparting culinary wisdom. Ehrlich writes of the cooking traditions that she observes with modesty and philosophy:

> I thought about my grandmother, Selina's mother steaming large square matzo crackers [...] brushing the damp warm matzo with hot schmaltz and sprinkling it all with coarse kosher salt. I thought about Selina saving the fat from the Christmas goose. I marveled at all that goes on in a single life. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 102).

She then provides the goose and the gravy, as well as Miriam's Jewish potato latkes (108). More memoir than cookbook, her narrative and recipes are a testimony to the devotion of her female relatives to ritual, even when it is not their own, as in the case of her aunt Selina, who keeps an atheist Christmas for her non-Jewish husband. The paradox of existential questioning and self-doubt lies in recipes, where that same self-doubt is not permissible. To guarantee the gravy's success, Ehrlich includes Selina's notes on the treatment of the goose fat. Recipes, chosen, tested and documented must be infallible, inspired and convincing to reader.

[230] Refer to part I B for a description of this repeated analogy.

Personal dilemmas

The overriding personal dilemma that narrators face is in achieving a degree of functional, and even emotional assimilation, without damaging the integrity of one's ethnic and cultural identity. Fisher's path to define a new social identity is marked by a need for domination and authority in her philosophy of cooking and eating. It is her means of both drawing what she needs from a local culture and retaining a certain aloofness that protects her integrity: "one of the best things I could do for nine-tenths of the people I knew was to give them something that would make them forget Home and all it stood for, for a few blessed moments at least." (*Gastronomical Me*, 101). While Weiss's kitchen is a sanctuary, Fisher's kitchen elements constitute a throne room "From them I ruled; temporarily I controlled. I felt powerful and I loved that feeling" (18). She was not however immune to failure, or more importantly, doubt, despite the strength food imbues her with, her courage wavers on a return trip to America to announce her separation from her husband: "That voyage was the one that made me most mistrust myself" (182). In the context of the other passengers she describes, mostly fleeing the untenable situation in Europe, she explains how she is saved in such desperate circumstances by her art of eating:

> I developed a pattern of behavior which I follow, on ships and trains and in hotels everywhere, and which impresses and undoubtedly irritates some people who see me, but always succeeds in keeping me aloof from skullduggery. There are many parts to it, but one of the most important is the way I eat; it not only surrounds me with wall of awe, but makes my private life more interesting and keeps me from boredom (*Gastronomical Me*, 182).

These practices are developed and employed while she is on the move, traveling, homeless and without a homeland; she is protected by other practices of food and eating.

The conditions of Abu-Jaber and Weiss are the most marked by the presence of a physical homeland (or several in the case of Weiss), meaning that a physical displacement makes the plight of their emotional displacement all the more acute and poignant. Although Furiya is in a similar situation, her narrative focuses equally on the situation of her parents, giving context but less focus on Furiya's situation. While Abu-Jaber hopes beyond hope that she will be allowed to stay in America when her mother

joins her father in Jordan, she felt a sense of failed responsibility especially concerning her culinary origins: "My sisters and I are chief among Bud's reasons for moving back to Jordan. And I feel guilty for this, as if becoming American is a weak-minded decision I've made. A better girl would have embraced the Saturday morning Arabic lessons [...] would have cheerfully made all the Arabic foods and Arabic coffees her father wanted" (*Language of Baklava*, 138). Behind this sense of guilt is the sentiment that her father feared the loss of their (and surely his own) identity, which meant he should take them back to the homeland to ensure the transmission of culture and sense of identity. Her father returns to America defeated in the attempt, and the family finds itself washed up in a desolate corner of New York State, in a cultural vacuum of nothingness. Loyalty to and guilt towards her father prevent her from uttering the words which he himself voices: "You see America the beautiful. It's right here. And it's telling you: Come here, open a restaurant, be who you are. America is like Mo Kadeem, it knows what it wants and it says to go get it. I have been crazy to want to go home. You know what Jordan says to me? It says, Be who I tell you to be." (*Language of Baklava*, 174). His speech contains a contradiction, for his host land tells him to be himself and offers him the opportunity of opening a restaurant that will enable him to accomplish his dream of feeding people and in doing to being himself, while his homeland ominously tells him to "[b]e who I tell you to be", a dilemma at the very heart of his identity.

Tormented by the same dichotomy of loyalty and guilt as Abu-Jaber, Luisa Weiss experiences a "tiny nugget of satisfaction that the flavors of my childhood, my world were at the table in Beacon [her fiancé's family home]" (*Berlin Kitchen*, 103), as she struggles amidst profound self-doubt about her decision to marry, intimately tied to her sense of belonging to New York and to Berlin: "I was starting to realize that I didn't belong to that place or to that person, no matter how much I may have beaten my brow and commanded myself to feel grateful and happy and lucky" (*Berlin Kitchen*, 100). Foods are the dependable external signposts, and internal indicators. Diana Abu-Jaber describes Sirine, her autobiographical fictional protagonist, as she prepares an Arab-American Thanksgiving dinner. Her cooking gives her clarity of vision, food offering the only reliable truth, as Elizabeth Gilbert asserts when she says "sometimes the meal is the only currency that is real" (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 115):

> It comes back to her, the small secret that was always her, for years, the only truth she seemed to possess—that food was better than love: surer, truer, more satisfying and enriching. As long as she could lose herself in the rhythms of peeling an onion, she was complete and whole. And as long as she could cook, she would be loved. (*Crescent*, 217-218).

Searching for home

My Berlin Kitchen is an example of a culinary memoir that creates spaces for self-discovery within situations of displacement. According to Barbara Waxman, such spaces allow intercultural exchanges between two worlds. Existential needs, triggered by a search for identity, involve a displacement from the place one finds oneself, in a search for self and nourishment. "If cookbooks are about the losses of exile and the trauma of expulsion, they are also opportunities for nostalgia, travel, voyeurism and emulation. They are about the ways women write a place into being" (Inness, 2001, 154). Weiss writes Berlin into being, through her descriptions, reminiscences and recipes, as her spiritual, emotional and culinary, as well as physical, home. Edward Said insists on the "nuances principally of reassurance, fitness, belonging, association, and community, entailed in the phrase *at home* or *in place*." (1983, 8).

The need to return home to 'eat' (recalling Ira Rombauer's concern about the difficulty of doing just that) became of primordial importance to many diasporic writers such as Zonana, Ehrlich and Narayan, with all the symbolism vested in the notion of home. The comforting recipes in Ruth Reichl's book of consolatory home cooking *My Kitchen Year*, are often triggered by experiences away from home. When she eats out, she finds ideas or ingredients that she takes back home to the haven of her kitchen. There is an often-repeated refrain, such as: "I had another thought: why don't I go home and make my own version [...] the house seems to be gathering us in, welcoming us home" (117, 119). Much of the book's photography is taken in Reichl's country home, images in symbiosis with nature, a place where they are often cut off when it snows, as though in a cocoon of memories, nostalgia and gastronomic pleasure.

Sasha Martin's narrative is marked by the struggle to find a place to call home; she is constantly on a journey of emotional itinerance with her mother, who symbolically carries around the essence of her home, her essential kitchen spices, in her handbag. The absence of a home, made it impossible for Martin to understand who she was. In

the space of two short pages in the chapter "On Borrowed Time", during which she considers her college applications and her first independent step out into the world, Martin alludes to her homelessness in several ways. As she begins her search for a college, her mother resumes contact with her, sending letters and even a Christmas package stimulating each of the senses, containing a letter, a keepsake box with scented spices, a book of carols and some blueberry muffins which had not survived the three-week journey. She lingeringly places each object on her desk as icons on a shrine, a makeshift spiritual and emotional home. Accepting a college with a liberal reputation for taking all sorts of people, she reasons that "[c]ertainly I could find a place there" (*Life from Scratch*, 133).

Reflecting on her relationship with her foster parents and why they chose not to adopt her, she says: "I believed myself to be broken, fractured, unworthy of their love. Their home came to remind me of who I wasn't, and who I could never be. Weary of walking on eggshells, I [...] avoided home as much as possible [...] I'd be leaving soon enough" (133). Martin's pursuit of home resonates with Avtar Brah's words: "For many people, displaced and exiled from their homelands, places have long since ceased to provide straightforward support to their identity" (Brah, vii), even as a homeland represents the jagged edges of her identity. They include her mother's Italian origins and her Samoan escapade prior to her birth, her own periods of residence in France, Luxembourg, and multiple foreign travels, create a multicultural awareness which is blurred by the absence of a diasporic community to which she could tether. In this confusion, Martin realized that her mother yearned to pass on to them a heritage, "the bombastic kitchen of her childhood, that immigrant arena" (*Life from Scratch*, 41), suggesting culinary traditions, family cohesion and a clear identity.

Linda Furiya feels the same sense of isolation, growing up in the American mid-west, as the only Asian family in her community, as well as a mixture of shame and guilt for that shame. Her parents' dining room table serves as an oasis of homeland: "Each bite, taste, cut of the knife, and addition of ingredients was solely my own experience that couldn't be diminished or belittled. As a child away from the dining room table, I was shamed of the uneasiness I felt toward my Japanese ethnicity." (*Bento Box*, 278). In order to respond to Furiya's question about her origins, her father must conjure up ancestors, family, a community by telling a myth. "We sat there for a long time before I

finally asked him why we were the only Japanese family within a thirty-mile radius. He gave a surprised grunt but didn't respond, instead letting the crickets fill the silence before beginning. 'Let me tell you a story,'" (*Bento Box*, 12). Brah illustrates this with the comments: "though the 'homes' which ground and house identities can be denied people physically by enforced exile or lost through chosen migration, they still continue to resonate throughout the imaginations of displaced communities." (Brah, vii).

Luisa Weiss' example of the rootedness of food wherein her kitchen became her sanctuary, the stove her anchor, and distance erased by the smells of home (*Berlin Kitchen*, 6), suggests that shared experiences of popular culture such as culinary traditions replace in some small way the need for a homeland and the desire for home. The outcome of displacement and deterritorialization that provokes the formation of diasporic communities and the development of diasporic identities, is emblematic of a transnationalism that evokes, but overrides, questions of borders, creating new hybrid identities and fluid cultures which, as Bromley explains, also affect members of the 'host' culture. (Bromley, 7).

Some food narratives display a lack of commitment to, or concern for tracing memories or roots limiting narrators to the role of witnesses of other people's revolutions, tragedies and other real-life events. They may have wished to feel like exiles, alone, estranged, melancholic, but they behaved like tourists, claims Caren Kaplan (1996, 43). Salma Abdelnour and Tracey Lawson are examples of such exiles, whose search for authentic experiences is continually displaced, to other places or countries, where there is no cultural or emotional home, and the pursuit of home is not a central pivot.

Literature of exile

Caren Kaplan writes: "The figure of the exile represents a single break with the past, while the tourist negotiates numerous rifts and fragments of experience." (1996, 64). She has identified a rupture that must be consolidated by making a connection with the past: "Exilic literature has come to symbolize both an attention to the legacy of the past and a break with that continuity" (Kaplan, 1996, 37), the dynamic of which, Ehrlich was aware in the evolution of her narrative. There is both a literary and an emotional

momentum in literature of exile. The collective synergy of exile narratives generates the emergence of narrative commonalities between stories. They are, above all, about emotionally vulnerable people, who weave collective tales that display common patterns, or thread, such as the repeated lunchbox episodes, the journey in pursuit of roots, or the initiatory trip to an Old-World culture resulting in a spiritually-charged gustatory awakening. These common patterns or literary devices together create an aesthetics of exile, that can turn exile into what Boym describes as "enabling fiction [...] The experience of exile offers the ultimate test for writer's metaphors, instead of the poetics of exile, we can speak of the art of survival" (Boym, 256), concentrating metaphors for alienation and exile in literary devices.

While displacement has an understated tone, in which one place is replaced by another, with more or less drastic repercussions, the notion of exile, whether forced or voluntary, is charged with momentous consequences. Ania Loomba warns against pitting hybridity and exile against rootedness, nation and authenticity but rather considers the ideological political and emotional concerns in histories of colonialism and postcoloniality (Loomba, 183). Immigrants must avoid the 'ghetto mentality' which defines narrow cultural frontiers as a form of internal exile (Rushdie, 1991, 19). In contrast, Mayes' voluntary exile is related to "the desire to enlarge the psychic place one lives in" (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 3). "The further inside you the place moves, the more your identity is intertwined with it. Never casual, the choice of place is the choice of something you crave" (86). For voluntary exiles and immigrants such as Jaffrey, Gilbert and Mayes, culinary culture is associated with emotions which take on monolithic and mythological proportions, acting as a form of spiritual guide.

In the definition of exile, as a state or a period of forced or voluntary absence from one's country or home, the word 'absence' is crucial. Exile narratives are essentially seeking to fill a space, a place, something that is missing or lost. William Safran states that articulations of identity are being replaced by diasporic claims indicating that diasporic or exilic states are an identity in themselves, a specific profile of hybridity. "Peoples whose sense of identity is centrally defined by collective histories of displacement and violent loss cannot be 'cured' by merging into a new national community" writes Safran (1991, 250). This sense of fatality is perpetuated by authors like Furiya, listening to the legend of her exiled ancestors, or the stories of her father's

traumatic double exile from America and from Japan, that she listens to with her head bowed, as though submitting to the pain of having to hear it: "I considered that it was perhaps our family legacy to be outcasts and rejects." (*Bento Box*, 14).

A myth of exile is created, centred around a loss of an Edenic homeland, manifest in the works of Hemingway and Durrell, but also in those of David and Roden's Mediterranean paradises, and even Abu-Jaber's Jordanian garden, in terms of places of residence and homelands for whom the ache is intense and for whom the strategies for symbolic return are extensive. Authors such as Jaffrey and Wizenberg describe their degree of impregnation with their childhood paradises, and how those experiences shape their futures.

Lawrence Durrell wrote: "je suis un refugiée [sic] de moi-même",[231] and fled from his cultures of origin (Pine, 1994, 8), endorsing the idea that to be a writer must one must be in a chronic state of exile, a description that also corresponds to Ernest Hemingway, and glorifies the heroic act of writing. Edward Said insists that, despite connotations of individual solitude and spirituality, exile should not be romanticized, particularly as a way of underwriting and glorifying writerly talent (Said, 2000, 173-175). Authors' preferred places for writing—Hemingway's cafés in Paris, his bars in Havana, his house in Key West, Durrell's home in Corfu—become places of pilgrimage, of creative inspiration but also 'adopted' homes. The yearned for homelands of Abu-Jaber's Jordan, Roden's Egypt are also romanticised in literature of exile, be it the material homelands from which they came or to which they went—France, Tuscany, the Mediterranean—or the symbolic home—the Jewish homestead, the Italian family.

The journeys that certain narrators make to their parents' homelands are often an attempt to understand their parents' diasporic dilemmas, their own identity confusion, to bring closure to unfinished stories and ultimately to challenge their exilic state. Because their hybrid existence in their host land is often paradoxically far from the reality of their ethnic origins, their journeys have unexpected outcomes. Diana Abu-Jaber's stay in Jordan is overshadowed by unknown tensions and ominous encounters,

[231] Pine's footnote indicates that this quotation is from an uncatalogued typescript (at the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Lawrence Durrell, at Sommières) of an interview by Jean-Luc Moreau and Jean-Didier Wagneur in 1985, after completion of *The Avignon Quintet*.

that underscore a sense of exile in both homeland and host land, notably with Uncle Jimmy and Aunt Selma who, beyond their guilt for abusive treatment of their maid servant, and their neglected handicapped child, serve Abu-Jaber and her friend a meagre lunch that is sinister in its scarcity and in rude contrast with their opulent wealth. The foreboding scene concludes with a recipe for "A nice snack to take on your journey" (*Language of Baklava*, 261), for, not only is she indeed on a journey to discover her roots, and her real home, but she also needs real sustenance to distance herself literally and metaphorically from dangerous influences. Abu-Jaber hopes to find peace and appeasing answers, unlike her mother who "had no chronic need to keep moving, trying on houses, countries, jobs", and who accepted "what you see is what you get, plain and simple"; she is more like her father for whom the answer is "out there", a sentiment of his exilic condition, (*Language of Baklava*, 268) somewhere beyond the reaches of their diasporic history and compound home. She follows this realization with the recipe which potentially brings harmony "*Fattoush*: Bread Salad – Which everyone loves and everyone can pronounce" (*Language of Baklava*, 269), a recipe that promotes harmony and generosity and distances the spectre of exile.

Reminiscences of past pleasures from the viewpoint of exile provide the reconstruction of a collective cultural identity (Naguib, 47). Identity is complicated by exile, but as *Miriam's Kitchen* shows there are also natural generational, societal evolutions, choices and changes that have little or nothing to do with exile. Ehrlich's childhood and early adulthood, much like Joyce Zonana's, were an exile from her Jewish roots and practices (Moran, 223). The return to traditions is an acknowledgment of the price that was paid by ancestors to keep that identity alive and the guilt at its thoughtless rejection. It is also the forging of a personal identity through the subjective response to exile, and the journey from the place of departure and the milestones along the road.

Joyce Zonana returns to Cairo but struggles to discover facts and even recognition of the authenticity of her quest to find herself and her country of birth, having only "the shards of memory and loss" and no tangible proof of her ancestry. When the response is that she is simply nostalgic, she experiences a reaction that we have described in the previous section, a nostalgia for that which she had not known: "How could I be nostalgic if I have not memories?" (*Dream Homes*, 173). Writers narrate their exiles from multiple perspectives, that of their parents, of the relatives or peers who stayed behind,

of host land neighbours and ultimately of themselves, endeavouring to locate the true homeland and pinpoint a home. Writing a place into being, as Sherrie A. Inness has termed it (2001, 154), can be materialized in a culinary literary existence such as Roden achieved with her work on Middle Eastern cooking. In doing so, she is also writing the memoir of her exile from it.

3. Ambivalence and oscillation

The confusion of dislocation lies on a continuum between the paradoxical states of immobility and motion.[232] Associated adjectival terms suggesting movement include border, diaspora, nomadism, migration; these terms gloss the 'in-between', the oscillation of uprooted subjects often in motion. There is, in general, a physical and emotional oscillation between 'homeland' and 'host land' for the diaspora, who describe a sort of perpetual journey. Beyond situations of forced displacement with their associations of emotional or physical movement between the point of arrival and that of departure, there are the examples of Wizenberg and Mayes, who are not so much in a state of motion as exposing and analysing their root systems, rather traditional in the case of Wizenberg, and essentially rhizomatic for Mayes. They are defining anchors to compensate for a sense of insecurity, or a need to find other more viable forms of attachment.

Diasporic groups have memories whose archaeology is fractured. Their recollections, often built on the interplay of memory and desire over time, have many trajectories and fissures which sometimes correspond to generational or political conflicts. Even for apparently well-settled diasporic groups, the macro-politics of survival translates into the micro-management of memory among friends, relatives and generations. Distance, whether physical or emotional, measures commitment. Ehrlich comments on this tormenting awareness: "Miriam my mother-in-law has started to cook. I am not there. I am fifteen miles away in my bed" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 5). In these terse sentences, are embedded statements about commitment, and obligation, as well as an awareness of spiritual distance in the geographical reminder. Ehrlich chooses to

[232] The concept of motion as a central theme of memoirs will be discussed in part III on travel.

drive the fifteen miles to her mother-in-law's house to work on the process of redefining and re-rooting (and rerouting) her identity.

Dealing with negative diasporic situations of displacement and loss generates conflicting responses, opposing assimilation and loyalty to homeland and the perpetuation of memories, thus creating a state of fluctuation within the narrative and in the authors' perception of their identity. This oscillation becomes part of the creative act, enhancing the legitimacy of the quest with the desire to simultaneously embrace what is left of a past from which one is spatially and temporally distanced, and the recognition that nostalgia can distort those memories with the intrusive emotional needs of the present.

Finding an anchor

The sensation of grounding as a common sensation, that we discussed in part II B, equates with finding an anchor, an object, a space or a cultural and spiritual awareness, which many memoirists pursue, implying a single, strong point of attachment but one that implies some movement. The uncertainty of diasporic or exilic conditions incites narrators to seek roots, or at least a point of stability which provides a sense of security. Paradoxically, traditions, particularly culinary ones, offer that anchor. Luisa Weiss seeks traditions as an anchor in a world of one whose childhood was profoundly insecure. She craved roots and traditions:

> Neither of my parents has ever been big on tradition. […] Which means, of course, that I have spent most of my life craving traditions of my own. […] My parents think it's totally bourgeois, but I like doing the same think over and over again, year after year. It fills me with a deep-seated sense of safety and coziness, for lack of a better word, to have Thanksgiving on the horizon like an anchor […] It makes me feel settled and secure, when the reality of my life has often been different. (*Berlin Kitchen*, 252).

Elizabeth Ehrlich's chapter, 'How to keep a kosher kitchen', is a fatalistic, seemingly impossible litany or rules and rituals that regulate the sensorial, spiritual and aesthetic preparation and consumption of food. Recipes and descriptions of food serve as an anchor in the present and to age-old rituals that allow the past to be explored safely. Ehrlich wants to rekindle her cultural and religious heritage, to shape a new spiritual identity for herself. The crucible for that transformation is the kitchen, and the

cooking pot. Unlike Ehrlich and also unlike her own mother, Linda Furiya did not have a sense of a spiritual home beyond the immigrant identity of her parents: "My unhappiness was rooted in not knowing where I belonged [...] Her family stayed in the back of her mind like an anchor that kept her sane and moving forward." (*Bento Box*, 173). She began, at that moment of her return from Japan to America, "a lifelong journey in search of home." (173). Furiya is aware that for all her lack of assimilation, her mother has something she could never have, for unlike her mother she didn't know what was home: "My unhappiness was rooted in not knowing where I belonged", while for Furiya's mother: "Her family stayed in the back of her mind like an anchor that kept her sane and moving forward." (*Bento Box*, 173).

Luisa Weiss uses the term 'anchor' in several situations. She finds an anchor in the talismans of her childhood that she discovers in her boyfriend Max's home, which were transmitted to him by her own mother, even before they become a couple (*Berlin Kitchen*, 133). She uses the same term to describe the vestigial findings left in mother's garden in Italy after her wedding: "They felt like precious finds, proof that we had been there" (293). We have seen, in part I, how recipes provide an anchor to the present, they also provide an anchor in the text, the presence of origins often as artefacts from the past, a reminder and a living memory because adjusted for the present. Of her *ragù* recipe, for which she gives stern directions to achieve the authentic Italian taste, concluding with "enough bossing, get cooking!" (104), she writes: "whenever I was feeling blue and out of sorts, like I didn't know where I belonged or if I even belonged anywhere at all, this *ragù* anchored me, reminded me who I was and where I came from." (98). She is anchored by cooking: "In order to anchor myself and find a new daily routine, I busied myself cooking at my mother's apartment and at Max's." (169-170). The place itself, the belongings and the atmosphere also anchor her: "The thing I would come back to again and again, even months later, is how much his apartment smelled like home [...] something ineffable and impossible to locate. And yet it anchored me" (138).

> My pots and pans became my constant companions, work wooden spoons and a dull sheen at the bottom of my cast-iron pots are a testament to how much I'd turned to them to find the tastes of home in my roving kitchen. [...] by summoning the flavors of Berlin and the foods of my loved ones, my kitchen became my sanctuary, the stove my anchor. Distance means nothing when your kitchen smells like home. (*Berlin Kitchen*, 6).

There is an important oscillation of moving backwards and forwards between places, in Weiss' narrative or between emotional points of reference, or as in the case of Ehrlich, between past and present that becomes more fluid and natural over time.

Fluidity is an important dimension of existential well-being as it relates to travel. Movement in displaced contexts is inevitable, but if the narrator and the narrative in consequence are not caught on the shards—the jagged edges of identity, a sense of wholeness may be restored. This is symbolically represented by the degree of seamlessness in narrative and recipe transitions, as well as between past and present. E. M. Forster's comfortable weaving in and around Greece and other ancient influences in his historical and travel guide *Alexandria,* is an illuminating example of this graceful mastery of history. He moves back and forwards between past and present, anchoring the past to the present by evoking artefacts, monuments, vestiges, just as culinary memoirists anchor the past in the present through the recording and sharing of recipes.

Poignant fluctuations

Small degrees of movement, especially fluid, implies that there is an anchor, but major shifts indicate instability. Abu-Jaber uses a fragmentary structure that shifts across time and space to suggest that immigration and diaspora are founded on a rift between home- and host land. Dealing with negative diasporic situations of displacement and loss generates conflicting responses. This confused rapport between homeland and host land highlights the sense of loss, and the ambivalent desire to simultaneously embrace what is left of a past, from which one is spatially and temporally distanced, with what the present can offer as a new assimilated identity, while recognising that nostalgia can distort those memories with the intrusive emotional needs of the present.

Abu-Jaber's chapter, "Country Life", is an example of this turbulent movement and fluctuation. She recalls the day her father announces his decision to move the family back definitively (once more) to Jordan. She describes the family scene, then her perception of her own identity, as she details the kind of foods she eats as an assimilating American, the taste she must readapt to with each move 'home', recalling "the memory of having to re-create [herself] at seven, at nine, and now again" (*Language of Baklava*,

135). She recounts the pain she feels listening to Bud's reminiscing over "the repository of his childhood, the place of innocence and wholeness, a brushstroke of cedar and its lingering perfume" (136), focused on watching Bud stack pita bread, yet interrupting the poignant tale with a recipe given in the most practical prosaic terms for "Lost Childhood Pita Bread", before picking up the thread again to describe the last-minute aborted return to the homeland:

> Bud flies to Jordan ahead of us to figure out, once again, who we are, where we will live, and what our lives will look like. As our departure date gets closer, I start to lose the feelings in my hands and feet [...] I can't stand the taste of food, everything catches in my throat [...] I stop eating, sleeping, speaking [...]

and then the cablegram arrives:

> I am swept by relief so powerful that I stand in my empty bedroom doorway gripping the door frame as my knees tremble. (*Language of Baklava*, 138, 139).

While the mission to find out 'who they were' lies in the hands of her erratic father, she becomes physically diminished, unable to eat, and left physically reeling, gripping the door frame for stability when she discovers that this time there will be no journey. Or at least not so far, for this reversal is followed by the next upheaval when her father decides to displace the family even so, within their host land, to a remote country location which cuts them off from all social contact: exiled even within America.

Abu-Jaber's father's longing for Jordan determines the family's errant existence as they oscillate between Jordan and America, threatened never to find peace until they accept their immigrant loss. His frenetic search stops when he opens his restaurant serving—with Jordanian hospitality—the archetypal American hamburger and fries that nourished him on his arrival in America. Ultimately, displacement becomes something tolerable and even a condition on which one can build a future, keeping others alive, as well as himself. Both Abu-Jaber and Ehrlich waver between homes, countries and even identities that are defined for them as much by movement as by location. Oscillating, both a metaphor and a medium for displacement, allows rebuilding to take place. The narrators test and taste: Abu-Jaber moving between homelands, Miriam between the houses of her family's matriarchs. Narrators, as the subjects of displacement, even if of their own volition, perpetuate the uncertainty of movement in their lives, their narratives, and their semantic constructions.

Fluctuating locations are the stage on which memory and identity creation are played out. Deprived of access to home-land-scapes, diasporas create their own landscapes within domestic interiors. Rituals, perpetuated or created, become spaces to be inhabited; the kitchen is an energizing and securing sphere. Miriam's kitchen gives off a "steady, reliable light" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 234);[233] her grandmother's kitchen was her own small domain amidst a "wind-tossed life" (147). There are also places in which choices of affiliation and cultural loyalty must be made. The anachronistic Polish village in the country is an atemporal oasis. "It is work and vacation, reality and idyll. It is the apotheosis of valuable Jewish things in my past as I knew them" (307). Their meals were "the mythical food of vanished Polish summers" (311). Landscapes are permeated with the sensorial memories of individual and collective history, emotional impulses and corporeal affiliation. Gaston Bachelard reminds us : "les espaces qu'on aime ne veulent pas toujours être enfermés" (Bachelard, 1957, 63). Culinary memoirs extend the lost territory or homeland, the imaginary extensions built on recipes and food rituals.

Desire in displacement

A propensity to oscillation that contains a debate about choice, of being able to perhaps embrace something from both sides, is initiated by the original movement, or journey, whether physical or emotional. Oscillation may also be considered a desirable state, or even preferred choice to that of rejecting one or the other dimension. Frances Mayes' displacement is in pursuit of something desirable, a form of travel and fascination with alterity, like Lawrence Durrell, motivated by a desire to explore other horizons, and his belief that "life is elsewhere" (Pine, 2008, 7), or, as Bud put it, "out there" (*Language of Baklava*, 268) in some indeterminate place. In the spirit of true exile literature, she built something new from her self-imposed exile. We must recall, however, that her exile was only partially, for a 'safe' few months a year, and her project, as we have seen, is in fact the restoration of an old house, symbolically conveying the

[233] We are reminded of Gaston Bachelard's depiction of the light at the window in his description of the house as poetic space: "La lampe à la fenêtre (à l'intérieur) est l'œil de la maison. La lampe dans le règne de l'imagination de s'allume jamais dehors [...] Par la lumière de la maison lointaine, la maison voit, veille, surveille, attend." (Bachelard, 1957, 48).

idea that she is building on existing roots—emphasizing that she felt at home in her adopted culture—rather than something entirely new.

Displacement, which is preoccupied with the journey and the dominance of alterity and otherness, should not be confused with the travel literature of culinary tourism, which is more concerned with the destination and its local colour. Not all forcible displacement is undesirable; this translates not into a fascination with the place where one ends up, but with one's place in the social context, while respecting one's personal core and identity. Sasha Martin travels the world in her culinary blog, but the recipes she tries are firmly grounded in her kitchen—or more precisely her 'global' stove stop—where she performs her culinary compromises and adaptations. Martin's weekly journey' into the food of another culture, is both a culinary and gustatory challenge, as well as a questioning of her own identity with regard to the foreign cuisine that she puts before her family at the expense of her own culture and traditions, especially as her family are challenged by the 'foreignness' and unfamiliarity of many of the dishes.

Shoba Narayan also believes that life is elsewhere and must break out of the family bonds while maintaining a delicate balance between traditions and modernity, between the past and present, India and America, her independence and her dependence which implies loyalty and humility, and self-effacement. This balance, as her second memoir explains, is not permanent, those priorities are inversed, and important adjustments have to be made which require uprooting again and another journey, firstly into herself, and a return to her homeland.

For Fisher, displacement allows her to affirm her identity as she waits out long journeys by boat between her homeland America and the Mediterranean countries in which she resided. Identity becomes something controllable, owned, modifiable and defined by place and time, in a period when one did not question the role one was given, in her case, that of faculty wife. It is within the context of choice and greater freedom of movement that memoirists develop their intimate, confessional tone. It is not only permitted to question and redefine one's identity but also to take pleasure in the process that involves emotional, sometimes spiritual and often physical displacement. In Fisher's case, one might use the metaphor of casting off an anchor, allowing herself to be displaced, and her identity reshaped within that movement.

David and Gray, likewise, exhibit an acceptance of what foreign places bring to them. Patience Gray affirms her identity also, accepting the way her bohemian Mediterranean living has moulded her: "Eccentricity: living according to priorities established by one's own experience." (*Honey from a Weed*, 111). Her book, as much travel guide as cookery book, includes a bibliography of food and travel books, as well as essentials to keep her, and her reader, from losing their way, including maps and recipes, notes concerning translation and pronunciation, and guides to understanding the languages. For all its eccentricity, Patience Gray's culinary-life-style guide is a remarkably comforting story of travel and residence, of discontinuity and connection to be read in the contexts that we have exposed in this section, including trauma, and unbelonging, ambivalence and oscillation. The creation of narratives that associate these conditions with those of displacement around mundane quotidian practices that writers such as Gray, David and Durrell, elevate to the sublime, brings these existential dilemmas into a realm where creative outcomes are possible: "when Providence supplies the means, the preparation and sharing of food takes on a sacred aspect" (*Honey from a Weed*, 11), "piety in culinary matters was a specific for preserving life" (55).

III. Travel Writing and Foodways

> Travel can be one of the most rewarding forms of introspection. (Durrell, *Bitter Lemons*, 1).

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Having explored the way in which questions of identity are a direct consequence of the problems of dislocation and displacement, we will turn to the question of genre, focusing on the memoir as a record of a journey introduced in part I, and examining the connotations of travel in relation to physical and emotional displacement as they are exposed in culinary memoirs. While exile is externally visible, with the often-forcible displacement of people, an internal exile also occurs, in which one loses contact with one's origins and identity, shaping one's way of seeing and being in the world. We will endeavour to show that the travel dimension of memoirs can be mapped as a response to issues of self and identity raised in part II that are axed around questions of trauma, unbelonging, displaced roots and existential uncertainty.

In section A we consider the ways in which the memoir allows the concept of travel to shape the genre. Displacement has the potential to provoke new forms of focus and perspective, and with it a greater awareness of one's sense of identity. Travels in culinary memoirs take on a variety of forms, from exile and diasporic displacement, through situations of residence, as well as adventure and 'culinary tourism'. Descriptions of personal, value-infused foodways provide a counterweight to culinary tourism, with the latter's emphasis on consumer culture and leisure that epitomize postmodernism, and are symptomatic of a moral rootlessness. It also explains the authorial impulsion behind culinary memoirs to recover or rediscover roots. In each of these forms, we will explore the interactions of physical journeys with endotic travel.

Displacement implies moving from one place to another, but we observe not the replacing of one place with another, but the marking effect of the emotional, psychological and even physical journey to get to the secondary place. We will consider in what ways 'culinary' journeys approach and mimic those of travel literature, and with what specific momentum foodways infuse journeys.

In section B we reverse the lens, observing the universality of culinary metaphors and symbols as cultural strains that impregnate places, influencing the aesthetics of travel and the spirit of place within memoirs. We will explore both rooted and itinerant foodways that emerge, to understand how they interact with notions of travel and emergent dominant themes, the nature of the journey and the new space that is defined or built. We will look specifically at the Mediterranean region as embodying quintessential notions of terroir, spirituality, culturally-marked foodways and belonging.

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A. Memoir narratives of travel and residence

> [...] les voyages, c'est-à-dire la mise en comparaison des lieux que l'homme habite et dans lesquels il construit à chaque fois un rapport au monde, une cosmologie, un jardin. (Clément, paragraph 1).

From the point of comparison that the homeland offers, the narrator-traveller leaves a trail of morsels of memory, crumbs of the past, from her home, which mark a path from one's origins, with the intention of moving towards a new personal space. We review how culinary memoirs, as works of travel, can also be situated on the same trajectory as works of residence, a genre exemplified by Durrell and Hemingway and more recently Elizabeth Gilbert, and also by travelled food writers such as Elizabeth David, and Patience Gray. Stopping points, the intermittence of memories, anecdotes and recipes, are junctions of comparison and assessment, as Gilles Clément has indicated, of home and one's place in the world. Jean Viviès reminds us that the act of writing according to Gilles Deleuze is to trace a vanishing point, which is not a renunciation but a new beginning, a point of convergence and fulfilment.

In chapter 1 we will review the question of genre in which memoirs are considered travel literature from the perspective of diasporic dilemmas of disconnection and loss, both literal and figurative. Borders, borderless landscape and complex relations with homelands are the stage for debate and definition in terms of a new genre of reflective

travel literature that can offer a response to the diverse forms of loss evoked in part II. In chapter 2 we will look at the ways in which memoirs as travel literature simultaneously represent place and re-placement, proposing a new form of travel that takes us into static private spaces in search of self, as well as alien spaces where food and eating serve as a form of transcription. In chapter 3 we specifically explore the role of food in travel narratives, as it evokes authenticity, and the inevitable mutations inherent in its nomadic or itinerant nature, as a unifying as well as divisive force.

We observe the creation of alternative forms of food and travel writing with a mode of food writing that scarcely existed in its contemporary form before the 1990s: the narratives are more intimately autobiographical, about residence rather than journey, and with a mythical quality. We have explored various facets of hybridity in earlier sections, notably that of genre in part I and identity, in the case of diasporic or generally displaced people in part II. The two dimensions are fused in the synergy we find between unsettled people and the pull of places.

1. Culinary travel memoirs: responding to loss

> The form would break in two; food writing, the cookbook improper, an offshoot essentially of travel literature, as in M.F.K. Fisher, preserved some of Elizabeth's [Pennell] tone [...] (*Table Comes First*, 73).

Adam Gopnik claims that certain hybrid forms of cookbooks are derived from travel literature, encouraging us to understand that displacement in its various forms goes hand-in-hand with foodways. He predicted that food writing would inevitably split, the more exotic taking the path of travel literature. He took inspiration from turn-of-the-twentieth century writer Elizabeth Pennell, of whom he said: "Her cookbooks are an anthology of evocations: breakfasts by the Loire, supper in Naples, a bouillabaisse from Marseille, or a dish of simple pasta from outside Rome." (*Table Comes First*, 72). The voices of roving memoirists and food writers encourage us to seek to relate the stories of loss, explored in part II with the narratives of travel that were presented in part I. We previously discussed the idea that cookery books could be read like novels, as a fictional 'good read', with an element of diversion as Elias (239) suggests, while they could also be read on the same continuum as travel literature. Laurie Colwin offers this example:

> I read a book that changed by life: *English Bread and Yeast Cookery* by Elizabeth David, with American notes by Karen Hess. I read it as if it were a novel: I took it to bed with me and stayed up late to finish it. I did read it as a house-bound person reads a travel book since I was now the mother of an eighteen-month-old daughter and I did not see how I could meet the demands of a loaf of bread and pay attention to a child at the same time. (*Home Cooking*, 46).

Colwin suggests that the escapism of travel, that she was no longer able to enjoy, led her into a world of food, made alluring by the alchemy of baking. The cookbook serves as a response to a loss, if only limited and temporary, as a sort of surrogate travel experience. When Ruth Reichl was immobilized by a broken foot, she turned to cookbooks for her surrogate travel experience: "I consoled myself by reading recipes" (*My Kitchen Year*, 205). During the war and food restrictions, Alice Toklas found solace in cookbooks: "I betook myself to the passionate reading of elaborate recipes in very large cookbooks [...] the recipes for food that there was no possibility of realizing held me fascinated—forgetful of restrictions, even occasionally of the Occupation, of the black cloud over and about one, of a possible danger one refused to face." (*Toklas Cookbook*, 215).

Foreign homelands: travels across space and time

> When diasporic experience is viewed in terms of displacement rather than placement, traveling rather than dwelling and disarticulation rather than rearticulation, then the experience of men will tend to dominate. (Safran, 259).

William Safran reminds us that the real focus of diasporic experience is not the new settlement, but the displacement and its consequences on individuals and communities. As we have discussed in the presentation of travel literature as a literary origin of culinary memoirs, these works take us on both endotic and exotic journeys, across real as well as mental landscapes. Paradoxically, familiar homelands can appear foreign not only to the reader but also to the narrator for whom its familiarity is mythical within the family or community rather than real. The illusion of the homeland is a sign of a lack of attachment across time and across space.

Culinary memoirs take us to foreign destinations, both real and imaginary, often providing inconclusive or compromised answers to questions of exile and belonging. We

discover the unfamiliar familiarity of homelands in the diasporic works of Abu-Jaber, Furiya, Li and Zonana, each of whom visits their homeland to uncover old myths, as well as inadvertently create new ones, their memories, propelled either by their parents' regrets and nostalgia, or their own need to bring questions of identity to conclusion.

During her childhood sojourn in Jordan, Abu-Jaber moves with a flock of children who appear then disappear, fleeting, elusive, moving in harmony, around dusty streets and courtyards where the food they try to create from home, tastes itself like dust, illusory as the memories themselves, and the answers to her questions as evasive as the children themselves. Linda Furiya visits Japan, a female rite of passage with her mother, who seeks to bond with her daughter in her homeland, something that Furiya's mother was unable to do with her own mother because of her early death, a desire scarcely articulated and only briefly perceived by Furiya herself. Leslie Li must travel to China to discover the truth of her father, her grandfather, and her ancestors, and then only uttered through myths and what she describes as the silent whispers of stones. We experience the alluring alien nature of travel through the eyes of the narrator, the strangely familiar unknown, the origins that are sensed but which hold their silence.

Within the notion of unfamiliar or foreign is the idea of the unusual, elements that are strange and, for that, exciting because they come (or seem to come) from faraway places, often epitomised in foods, aesthetics and landscapes. What seems foreign to the reader is often also foreign to the narrator because the elements are the stuff of myths inherited from previous generations, such as the stone myth in Leslie Li's memoir. The narrators have exotic experiences, where the strangeness is both familiar and intangible, elusive and incomprehensible, the term exotic implying alluring, while 'foreign' also bears the connotation of repulsive, as in Diana Abu-Jaber's childhood experiences in Jordan. The narrator's relationship to the unfamiliar is one of implied intimacy and also estrangement: Linda Furiya studies a picture book of Japan at the library, intensely fascinated, and endeavours to create a kimono with her American clothes, to get in contact with the estranged part of her identity, her origins taking root in her imagination. Only the food is quotidian, mundane, intensely familiar, yet delicious.

Abu-Jaber's relationship to Jordan is described as similar to a piece of worn driftwood (*Language of Baklava*, 234), an image that is natural, universal and familiar,

yet 'driftwood', also expressing a lack of attachment to her father's homeland. References to natural elements suggest the infinite and the spiritual, in some ways the antithesis of foreignness. Spirituality, in its most intimate and doubt-prone practice, is the opposite of exotic, yet both the exotic and the familiar are forms of response to loss. Abu-Jaber is disturbed by alien images she sees as she travels to Jordan, feeling an intense sense of unbelonging: the shocking strangeness of the veiled women at the airport in London, the presence of the soldiers in Lebanon, almost making her turn back:

> Not until I'm almost at the gate do I realize I'm actually looking at a group of women in *hejjab* [...] I step back into the busy concourse [...] my hands feel cold and slick. That is when I first understand that I'm really going to Jordan. I remember passing the dark, liquid forms of veiled women in the streets of Amman [...] There are several languorous soldiers with iridescent automatic weapons tilted against their shoulders [...] The physical fact of those oiled insectlike weapons disturbs the air and causes an instant physical contraction. I shrink away from the luxurious blue sky, back into the cave of the plane. (*Language of Baklava*, 235).

The luxurious, even exotic, otherness of the place is disturbed by the presence of strange and sinister elements, with the concealed women who incite fear, and the "languorous" men with "iridescent" weapons, strangely seductive words in contradiction with the reality of the scene. The sight offers a disturbing inversion of gender images, in which the camouflaged women provoke fear and the men are sensual, even beautiful, beneath a luxurious blue sky, putting into question the female archetypal ancestral homeland metaphor as nourishing and plentiful. It suggests that in this foreign homeland, nothing is familiar or can be taken for granted, and in which the journey itself can take on dark and dangerous dimensions, provoking in the narrator an uncomfortable physical reaction. We are invited to look at the homeland, not only as the point of departure into diasporic trauma as we discussed in part II A, but as potentially a prospect of fear of the newly unknown and threatening. It is also an imaginary space with which the narrator engages in a complex relationship, coming as part of a virtual community, linked through a matrix of known experiences and intimate social relations, often around food.

Sasha Martin introduces the foreign and the exotic into her home with her global cooking project, preparing dishes that she does not know, from countries she has never visited in order to discover herself, implying that there are areas of her identity that she

has never visited. The exotic becomes a channel through which she gains a better understanding of herself and her role as mother; she achieves this through the significant challenge of making the unfamiliar and foreign, part of her weekly family dinner. Authors such as David, Fisher and Mayes also make exotic foodways their everyday fare, their 'homeland', and their access to a clearer identity through their memoir-cookbooks. *Under the Tuscan Sun* is an example of a modern exile motivated by nostalgia for endotic as well as exotic cultures, suggesting that one's personal inner journey and landscape can also be exotic. The hunger for a sense of home and belonging that was assuaged by words as a child is satisfied by food traditions as Zonana undertakes her journey as a writer, inviting the reader on an endotic 'exile's journey', a quest in search of a home and identity.

Memoirs reveal other forms of exoticism within narratives. David, Durrell, Lawrence, and Roden tell stories of the exoticism of another epoch—the Mediterranean, Sardinia, Egypt, Paris. Narayan and Jaffrey provide non-Indian/Asian readers with the exoticism of a turbulent, emerging and evolving Indian nation. Fuchsia Dunlop takes us to remote corners and kitchens of China that few tourists have visited, to encounter obscure foodways that even fewer have tasted. Exotic food writing however, does not simply take us to foreign places, it also leads is down tortuous paths of self-understanding. Just as many homelands are exotic, foreign places, literally and emotionally, so the voyage of self-discovery is an untrodden path heading into unfamiliar places. In the diversity of food memoirs, we discover a dichotomy between what Jean Viviès describes as an endotic journey, in which the protagonist goes off in search of self, and an exotic journey, in which the protagonist goes off in search of the other. (Viviès, 2003, Introduction). The endotic epitomizes the ordinary, the everyday and mundane, contrasting with the concept of exotic as something strange, mysterious and even romantic. In this juxtaposition of ideas, we oppose introversion and extroversion, inward and intimate introspection with outward and public observation as a philosophy of life.

The analogy often translates into a belief in the pre-eminence of home values as opposed to an openness to foreign experiences. In diasporic situations, it is inevitably a 'home from home' scenario, as illustrated in the memoirs by Abu-Jaber and Furiya, Bud and Furiya's parents recreating their homeland on their kitchen stove and in their

pantry. Wizenberg and Colwin plead the cause for home cooking, suggesting that 'foreign' food experiences beyond the home are unnecessary, even dangerous. Wizenberg's often repeated credo is that of her father's "we eat better at home than most people do in restaurants" (*Homemade Life*, 1), while Laurie Colwin's opening statement is to compare cooking with travel as diametrically opposed activities. She prefers to stay at home than travel, or else, if she must travel, to stay in someone else's home and visit their store cupboards and markets. She justifies this by a reference to anthropology, claiming that "[i]t is not the Great Works of mankind that make a culture. It is the daily things, like what people eat and how they serve it." (3). This statement reminds us of Claude Lévi-Strauss's claim that cooking is part of our ethnological heritage that anchors humanity in all situations, for when diasporic loss desocialises a community, it can be saved by the humanising act of cooking (Lévi-Strauss, 1964, 177). If civilization is rooted in the hearth, all exotic travel, deviates with basic human needs.

The foodways that Hemingway and Durrell describe in their travel books are not their own 'home' cooking, but are, nonetheless, the local foodways, particularly in Durrell's case, which they temporarily adopt, as though in assimilating the daily regime of another people, they enhance their sense of belonging to a foreign homeland. In their works, the association with Mediterranean culinary traditions, emerges as a symbol of endotic travel experiences for personal betterment and for discovering authenticity, at the heart of indigenous foodways, and the key to existential serenity.

These two forms of travel, towards oneself or towards the other, encapsulate a movement across space and time, down routes and roots, into places and memories. For Hemingway and Durrell, the encounter with the other brings them closer to themselves. In comparison, the opposite truth seems to operate in the works of E. M. Forster, who like his protagonists, faced with the strangeness of a foreign land, loses his clarity of literary thought. He declares that he is unable to pursue his writing during his sojourns in India. The record of Forster's travel experiences in *The Hill of Devi* is above all the memoir of a period of intense discovery both of the exotic, and implicitly of himself. He feels great affection for the Maharajah of Dewas Senior, whom he served as private secretary, describing him as "loveable and brilliant and witty and charming" (*Hill of Devi*, 265), but states that his book is not an attempt to rehabilitate the memory of this complex personality, despite the "catastrophe" that befalls him and his state after

Forster's return to England. His emphasis is above all on recording his experience, adapting to the culture shock of his 'plunge' into an alien world and the encounter with "an unknown and probably unknowable character" (*Hill of Devi*, 7), as well as the immense changes India underwent in the lapse of time between his two stays. In a 'Note on *A Passage to Indi*a', at the end of *The Hill of Devi*, Forster records the frustration he experienced trying to work on the novel during his stay, the 'foreignness' of his experience blocking his creativity: "The gap between India remembered and India experienced was too wide. When I got back to England the gap narrowed, and I was able to resume."

These examples remind us that each travel experience is unique, and the genre is rich in diverse forms. Travel stories are above all intensely personal, as the discourse and confrontation of foreignness in culinary memoirs reminds us. *The Art of Travel* by Alain de Botton, although a travel rather than culinary treatise, offers an example of a form of hybrid travel literature mixing text and images, fusing and changing literary codes, and blurring ontological boundaries. The same metatextuality and metapicturality de Botton employs can be found in culinary memoirs in the form of photographs, drawings and decorations with a particular attention to the placement of recipes. De Botton's focus is less on destinations than on thresholds, a notion we have already touched upon and that we will elaborate in our discussion of borders, points of transitions, departure and arrival. These spaces are places and moments of solitude that transform the journey into one of introspection, stimulating the imagination to make an inner journey of self-discovery. Vanessa Guignery describes such a journey thus: "L'évasion vers un ailleurs rêvé n'est qu'un subterfuge pour effectuer un retour sur soi et s'interroger sur sa propre identité" (Guignery, 38).

De Botton achieves an intricate juxtaposing of ideas and historical exploration, using the stories of writers, explorers and artists within landscapes that marked them. He weaves together prose, imaginative speculation, poetry, visual arts and personal reflections. Durrell's opening poem, "Constrained by history" in *Caesar's Vast Ghost* (xi), expresses the frustration of one who wants to write a personal travel book that does not comply with the norms of the travel writing genre. He then proceeds in his introduction with "My own version of Provence is partial and personal". Like an unfinished quest, Durrell's narrative is an archaeological exploration that digs down to open up buried

spaces from the past: "Un voyage à la conquête de nouvelles formes [...] Un réseau ouvert, rhizomique"[234] (Keller-Privat, 150). Like the fragmentary nature of culinary memoirs with their choice of recipes, painterly in their sense of selection and accentuation, De Botton explains that, in this respect, the travel narrative can never be mimetic (37). Christine Montalbetti, however, insists that it is precisely through its fragmentation that writing, like paintings, are integral elements of real life that sublimate and give access to inner truths,[235] using already familiar situations for the sake of inner, psychological enrichment.

Transformational journeys

> You're a traveler, following your own path, seeking adventure. (*My Kitchen Year*, 169).

For Ruth Reichl "cooking is the adventure of combining ingredients, hoping they'll play well together, combine into delicious new flavours" (169). This belief emerges from an inspiring walk on the early morning streets of Manhattan that drove her back to the kitchen to cook. Each foray in her story book of bite-size culinary explorations is a journey and an adventure, which over the course of the 136 recipes, transforms her from shaken and depressed by the closure of Gourmet magazine of which she was the editor, to capable of imagining a new future. The endotic journey, for all its potential homespun mundanity, is often, for memoirists, a personal adventure, an emotional and a literary odyssey, which, as we have discussed in part II B, generates a romantic discourse around food, providing heroic protagonists with direction in the face of existential challenges. Hemingway and Durrell described exotic food and travel emphasising details that are equated with an unfamiliar but appealing lifestyle that resonates with simplicity and authenticity, for theirs were adventures imbued with romance. Memoirists perceive their quest as a transformational journey that takes them from one place, condition or mental state to another, often in response to a loss, often from the Old World to the New with all the cultural upheaval that that implies.

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[234] The rhizomatic dimension of travel narrative constructions will be discussed in part III B on finding focus within the narrative.

[235] "Activité mimétique de l'écriture est comme celle de la peinture, intégrant fragments sublimes du réel, pour que le réel se déploie comme l'objet d'art supérieur" (Montalbetti, 39).

Many of these journeys embody the notion of crossings, a romantic idiom of crossing oceans, often with their connotations of vastness and endlessness, be they unidirectional voyages with no possibility of return or two-way journeys that are often fraught with doubts and ambivalence. Authors are both lost and found in culinary travels, confronting traditions, crossing cultures and redefining genres. David crosses the Channel in 1946 to ration-stricken Britain from war-wrought Europe, leaving her beloved Mediterranean culture behind. Her initial outbound journey is the unwritten story that she captures in her recipes in *The Book of Mediterranean Food*, a journey from which she returns transformed for ever, while with each recipe she tries to eradicate the voyage that brought her back to England. With each recipe and each literary extract, the reader crosses the sea with her to her soul-countries, the book a mixture of seized moments in time, epitomized by the timelessly incised woodcuts, and implicitly vicarious journeys. That initial crossing is the birth a cookbook that is a vital antidote to the barrenness of the land she rediscovers written in a spirit of defiance, and a fight for mental survival, necessitating a deep transformation.

Claudia Roden makes the same one-way journey, first to Paris, then to London, closely followed by her exiled family. Although she returns to Egypt much later in life, the community life she had known there had long-since disappeared. The trauma of her initial crossing is the grounding for her cross-genre work *The Book of Middle Eastern Food*, which mixes personal story, details of peoples and places that constitute a detailed 'travel' book and a reference volume of recipes that marks the transformation of exile in her life. The work embodies the hybrid quality of later culinary memoirs that unite food and travel, emblematic of culinary travels that confront traditions, crossing cultures and genres, with a strong dose of culinary curiosity.

Fuchsia Dunlop writes a memoir rich in culinary curiosity and travel, demonstrating that one can be both lost and found in these crossings. After her long stays in China, she loses her sense of homeland cultural markers, requiring that Hong Kong serve her as a sort of decompression chamber to make the transition from one world to another less difficult; she loses part of herself to a no-(wo)man's land. Dunlop is so knowledgeable and extensively travelled within China that she is able to observe social and cultural changes, commenting on evolving and disappearing traditions. Faced with the freshly-steamed caterpillar that had accidentally arrived on her plate with the

vegetables from her mother's English garden, she considers the personal and gastronomic journey she has taken to arrive at a point where she is curious rather than unflustered as she contemplates tasting it, realizing that her journey has reached a "threshold":

> My Chinese friends might think I still look the same, that I was still one of them, but actually I had crossed to the other side. Whether or not to eat the caterpillar was no longer a question of whether I dared to eat it, but of whether I dared to show so flagrantly that I didn't give a damn [...] I remembered that lunch as a threshold of sorts, a moment of recognition. For weeks afterwards I went around with a sense that I had finally nailed my colours to the mast. (*Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*, 311, 312).

Dunlop, using the image of a sea-going vessel, also crosses genres and traditions; the metaphor is developed with crossings from East to West, and also within China, as an ever-deeper penetration into increasingly obscure territories; losing something of her original identity while acquiring profound knowledge of Chinese cuisine. The book is acclaimed as both travel and food writing, hailed by critics as a 'classic of travel writing', and includes a map of China with the places she visited or resided. It is subtitled "A sweet-sour memoir of eating in China". While, 'eating' suggests a passive activity in comparison with cooking, associated even with tourism, her extensive travel and intimate experiences learning Chinese foodways rectifies the balance, engendering a serious link between travel and food, although it does not include the dimension of personal growth.

Colette Rossant lives her youth as a sort of refugee who is involuntarily buffeted from one family home to another. Her destiny is shaped by her uncaring and egotistical mother. She loses, by turns, family security, loved ones and cherished places, finding comfort in food. Throughout her childhood, she crosses from France to Egypt, finally traveling to America, to a marriage, a new culture, and a career in cooking, the comforting remnant that she took with her from her tattered childhood. In these crossings she is wrenched from her loving Egyptian grandparents, their cuisine, her school and friends to take a long trip to France at her mother's whim. She describes her sadness during the "slow boat trip to France" (*Apricots on the Nile*, 126), during which her mother told her she had to hide her Catholic identity on arriving in France, such that she "once again felt confused and betrayed" encapsulating her feeling of being "torn

between my Jewish grandparents and my Catholic mother, whose love I was so desperate for" (126), the weight of her loss captured in the "slow boat" imagery.

M.F.K. Fisher's multiple sea crossings progressively instil changes in her. Her journeys and exile are determined by the old continent, finding a safe harbour in Franco-Mediterranean culinary traditions that guarantee her freedom in a world that was still hostile to independent women. Five of the chapters in *The Gastronomical Me* are called 'Sea Change', each one describing an ocean crossing, the ruptures that have provoked them and Fisher's evolution during her weeks at sea where food and eating become her security and guarantee her freedom of action. Fisher leaves her husband to escape a banal life as 'faculty wife' in America. She raises the anchor and takes to the sea (literally) with another man, once more for France. She travels alone on other occasions, the ocean separating her from her two men, the crossing offering her moral independence. After each crossing, in which she enhances her gastronomic rituals and pleasures, Fisher discovers a maturity and greater freedom of movement:

> And the eighth and ninth, the tenth, eleventh, twelfth trips? What have they to do with the gastronomical me? What sea changes were there, to make me richer, stranger? I grew older with each one like every other wanderer. My hungers altered: I knew better what and how to eat, just as I knew better how I loved other people and even why. (*Gastronomical Me,* 180).

She defends her chosen status as solitary traveller simply by the way she eats, choosing also what she ate: "but in general I preferred to eat by myself, slowly, voluptuously, and with an independence which hardened me against the coldness of my cabin and my thoughts [...] It has often saved me and my reason too [...]" (512-3), the contrasting extremes of voluptuousness and coldness giving her courage to face the dangers of the world. But does this freedom come at a price? Does transmission, a central theme in culinary discourses, get lost in crossings, diluted by the vast expanses of water? In David's, as well as Fisher's personal journeys, sharing their new-found culinary identity is essential to their personal transformation.

Linda Furiya is chosen over her two brothers to make the trip to Japan with her mother, emphasizing the transmission of knowledge and traditions, mother-daughter-bonding and a journey of healing for her mother who had lost her own mother young. Frances Mayes, like Fisher, makes regular transatlantic crossings, repeatedly 'crossing

over'—although her flight from San Francisco to Italy offers her less time for contemplation than Fisher's boat crossings—and confronting new cultures. James Clifford explains that "dispersed people, once separated from homelands by vast oceans and political barriers, increasingly find themselves in border relations with the old country thanks to a to-and-fro made possible by modern technologies" (1997, 247). Travel then becomes a form of response to loss, a way of existing, as Weiss describes her nomadic existence: "it was the only way I knew how to exist: a few times a year I had to get on an airplane to see the people I love." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 87). The ensuing memoirs are written in a spirit of giving back to others some of their lessons learned in transit. Journeys require an adaptation, a letting go and the acquisition of something new. In these memoirs, transformational journeys imply a new freedom, in wisdom and self-understanding.

Borders of hope and despair

> Le voyage en soi ne se réduit ni à la carte [...] ni à son récit. (Affergan, 59).

The journey, according to Francis Affergan, is not limited to the map that traces its route, nor to the narrative that describes it, leaving a space for more than the narrators' intentions or perceptions. Borders, both literal, and those delimiting the frontiers of personal experience, have the potential to become zones of both hope and despair, where expectations of a new life, or a return to the old are exposed, and crossings charged with significance for individuals and communities. Borders delimit nations and national identities, communities and individuals, concepts that are often challenged in travel literature as worthy definitions for distinguishing peoples. According to Edward Said, literature, and particularly popular literature (such as one might consider culinary memoirs), belongs to, gains coherence from, and emanates from the notions of nation and even race. (Said quoted in Donald, 168). Those borders may be literal—the Ellis-Island experience of their parents or grandparents—or figurative—the school playground and the lunchbox encounters for others, the moment of truth when clichés of identity confront dilemmas of assimilation. Anne-Laure Amilhat-Szary defines real borders and their mutations as reflected in boundaries between areas of

knowledge such as art and literature. They have the same artificiality.[236] Borders both enhance and stabilize territories, but in the same way that food makes the crossing of borders possible through transfer and transgression of traditions, so borders by their very exposure to confrontation, make a territory more vulnerable.

The maritime spaces of Mediterranean writers' sea crossings are symbolically free from national boundaries explains David Abulafia,[237] allowing travellers to find themselves without the constraints of national or ethnic cultures. The weight of cultural identities is temporarily suspended leaving space for imagining new loyalties. The world wars had introduced the idea of no-man's land that after World War II represented cultural and national voids that writers such as Hemingway and his writer friends inhabited, such that cultural borders became more important than real borders in postmodern times. The contemporary problem of fixing borders in virtual cyberspace contributes to the blurring of borders in literature. In displacement, borders between home and work, as well as dichotomies between the hidden and public, become confused: "Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy." (Bhabha, 10, 13), the interstitial space or "perspective" (3) as Homi Bhabha calls it. We have observed the absence of limits between public and private in culinary blogs—recipes, family and home pictures, and details of private lives are all considered appropriate material for these social media channels. In culinary memoirs, recipes are often familiar and personal in source and tone, and present a new border between intimacy and reserve, between the public and the private. This is perhaps symptomatic of humankind moving away from individualism in terms of cultural identity towards a postmodern sense of collective identity, for recipes rarely have one source, with a "tribal base" (Bellezz, 2013). In the same spirit, Elvira Pulitano encourages scholars' needs to transcend boundaries of disciplinary literature as well as the traditionally-defined geographic borders of diasporic communities (39), making an argument for a hybrid literature that gives a generic space for disenfranchised communities.

[236] Comments made during the workshop "Critical Geographies" 16 November 2018, organized by ILCEA4/CEMRA, Grenoble Alpes University.
[237] See David Abulafia. *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean*. London: Allen Lane, 2011.

However, George Steiner, like Lawrence Durrell, sees the writer as always at the border of a country or territory, as well as the border of experience, on the edge of a threshold. Steiner writes of a "literature of exile" due to the "unhousedness" of writers (*Extraterritorial,* viii). He describes "the *a priori* strangeness of the idea of a writer linguistically "unhoused", of a poet, novelist, playwright, not thoroughly at home in the language of his production, but displaced or hesitant at the frontier" (3-4). Our corpus of English language authors contains many for whom the language of their parents remains a second language, that they do not completely master. In turn, their parents' heavy accents, clumsy expressions and errors in English are a source of shame and frustration to them, as authors such as Abu-Jaber, Furiya, Li and Zonana reveal, describing their personal desperation to pass the 'border' from outsider to assimilated.

The notion of borders, particularly in diasporic literature, stimulates diverse reactions. Writers focus on bounded locations, on the route to get there, or on a place that is void of a centre, of a source of joy, and of despair, the very source of hybridity. James Clifford has described a location as "an itinerary rather than a bounded site—a series of encounters and translations." (1997, 11). A border is a barrier between one state or place and another and also the threshold of something new, a confined space and a place of passage, where encounters (with self and others) and transformation can occur. Richard Pine writing of Durrell, in an article "How to Travel Without Moving" says:

> To step into a space is to surrender some or all of oneself to the magic, the danger, the drama of that space. To hover at the threshold is to be apprehensive, to know that one is on that threshold, but to withhold oneself from the magic, the danger, the drama. It is from this context that the artist observes and creates. (Pine, 2008, 11-12).

Authors who choose to live between homeland and host land, like Abu-Jaber's father in his torment of indecision, or Lawrence Durrell in his multiple places of residence, occupy borderlands of their own creation, neither fully in one world or another. The emergence of a new genre in the form of culinary memoirs, itself crosses literary borders, seemingly creating a borderland space, for the works situate themselves somewhere between cookbooks and travel literature, seemingly precarious and unassimilated. Julie Rak talks of hybridizing as breaking genre boundaries (2013, loc. 432); it is from that emotional and psychical breach that a divided or fractured identity emerges.

The doubts and uncertainty around borders are reflected in Durrell's residence works, which occupy border spaces that Richard Pine describes as filled with questions about one's place in space and time:

> Durrell's knowledge of Greece and, later, of the Balkans, would have made him very much aware of the way that borders fluctuate - of the way in which populations can be suddenly bereft of their own landscape, culture and traditions, and even their own language. The greater picture of the Balkans, including Greece and its islands, is not, therefore, one of a stable set of borders or of nation-states, but a highly volatile, complex mixture of sentiment, identity and a sense of the past moving into an uncertain future. (Pine, 2005, 10).

Although Durrell crossed many political borders in his life, he was himself, effectively stateless, exiled from his emotional homeland of India, culturally ostracized from his national homeland in Britain and a temporary resident in his other island homes. Durrell created an alternative world, his 'Heraldic Universe', or as Durrell further describes it, his "territory of experience in which symbol exists" (Pine, 1994, 109), and whose borders were sealed to protect his vulnerability, yet as Pine writes that "[e]ven within this universe, there was another border, between what Durrell called the 'plus side' and the 'minus side' of his personality, which it was his constant endeavour to cross in order to re-integrate what he regarded as his fragmented self" (2005, 17). Pine claimed that Durrell was torn, like many contemporary writers between "insistence on the rootedness of one's culture and one's very identity within one's own borders, and the ubiquity, the pervasiveness, of universal culture which is intellectual, economic, technological and increasingly political" (2005, 19).

While occupying a marginal border territory, Durrell was also negotiating his place in a universal culture from the perspective of a local one. His self-defined borders were a no-man's land, a hybrid state, where food, landscape and even peoples were assimilated. For Clifford that hybrid border space is an inevitable part of diasporic manoeuvres: "We need to conjure with new localizations, such as the 'border'. A specific place of hybridity, struggle, policing and transgression." (1997, 37). Travel leads to borderlands where social and cultural traditions and certainties can no longer be assumed, and the border becomes a new destination. This is where Sasha Martin finds herself when she decides to take a world tour with a set of cookbooks and the help of a local ethnic grocery store. E. M. Forster also occupies a literary border space in his travel

novels that mark the modernist transition in genre from the nineteenth century to that of the twentieth, in which food, be it in pension dining rooms, tea rooms or at picnics, occupies an imaginative as well as a literary place that presages its rising importance in the second half of the twentieth century, while maintaining a nineteenth century reserve about what was consumed in those places.

It is debateable whether Durrell focused on border spaces, for he was engaged in his exclusive Heraldic Universe. Rather, he felt the pull of a borderless, timeless landscape, which he saw as offering absolute truths, a path to his origins. In these terms, space is not regarded as something physically or psychically bounded. Rather it is a 'multiplicity', which extends also to its metaphorical dimension (Massey, 2005, 1, 250). In *Prospero's Cell*, real and fictional landscapes merge, mixing historical and metaphysical speculations about customs and foodways. Adam Jaworski and Crispin Thurlow discuss the notion of the social construction of landscape and people's 'sense of place', drawing together into this idea close to Durrell's own of 'spirit of place' the notions of an unbounded space that people seek to associate with an idea of home in a pursuit of origins and a sense of belonging. This 'sense of place' is exemplified in Durrell's landscapes which he indeed appropriates both sensually and intellectually:

> As people and cultures are located in space, it is particularly the idea of 'home' (understood as points of origin and belonging) that is inevitably bound up with specific geographical locations which we come to know and experience both sensually and intellectually through semiotic framing and various forms of discoursal construal (Entrikin quoted in Jaworski and Thurlow, 7).

Jaworski and Thurlow use the term 'spatialization' to define the processes by which spaces come to be represented, organised and experienced in order to create a defining space in which Durrell, Mayes and others locate themselves. Mayes' landscapes, which are defined by history, offer a universal perspective to the beholder, which allows an outsider such as herself to make her home.

The universality of semiotically-defined natural landscapes have a singular importance in culinary memoirs in terms of their descriptions of place and food and their aesthetics. As such they are often represented as idyllic, infinite and universal, with a focus on the bounty of their produce, rendering them, in effect, borderless, offering hope, as a moveable cultural backdrop to the disenfranchised, allowing 'travellers' to

assimilate. Durrell talks about the landscape in such a way as to convince himself of its universality, its eternal and yet familiar quality, as though it is a return to the cradle of humanity,[238] to the universal mother figure. Hélène Cixous expressed it as such: "The country from which we come is always the one to which we are returning [...] You have already passed through here: you recognize the landscape. You have always been on the return road." (Cixous quoted in Bromley, 120).[239] Her statement is an indication that cultural and culinary nostalgia is always regressive, and despite the reinvention or adaption of recipes with an approximation of the traditional ingredients, the desire that drives the narrator is to experience the sense of belonging transmitted by homeland foodways, however and wherever possible.

Diana Abu-Jaber suggest that recipes, particularly diasporic, do not necessarily constitute a solid corpus, but emerge from borders as spaces of hope and doubt, where "[e]ach recipe is someone else's mistake or discovery", employing a vocabulary of trial and estimation, of "uncertain" ends, "fading", "rarely duplicated" tastes, with steps "mislaid" and "ingredients tampered with":

> Most dishes aren't written down: They hover in the memory, a bit of contrail, the ends uncertain. What lingers are the traces, like the way the vanilla dallied with the ginger, fading from the tongue like a last thread of salt. The taste, as it's remembered and past down, can rarely be duplicated; the steps are mislaid, the ingredients tampered with. The taste is desire itself, the yearning for completion, in love or sugar or blood. Each recipe is someone else's mistake or discovery. (*Life Without a Recipe*, 41).

Borders in memoir writing, adhere to Avtar Brah's definition of arbitrary constructions, using metaphors, and embodying a unique narrative (Brah, 198). In diasporic spaces, traditions are continuously reinvented, the myriad processes of cultural fissure and fusion that underwrite contemporary forms of transcultural identity (208). Recipes, while embodying traditions, when emerging from diasporic spaces, such as Abu-Jaber's second-generation immigrant's kitchen, occupied by her own ambivalent identity and assaulted by her Jordanian crusader father, are prone to the vagaries that she describes here of forlorn unauthenticity.

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[238] We will discuss the specific role of the Mediterranean in memoirs in part III B.
[239] Hélène Cixous. "Fiction and its phantoms: a reading of Freud's 'The Uncanny'" *New Literary History* 7: 3 (Spring 1976): 544.

Border spaces like other places are also unstable; Catherine Delmas and André Dodeman write that "place is not fixed but continually undergoes transformation", according to Bill Ashcroft, it is "never simply location, nor is it static"[240] (Delmas and Dodeman, 6), for it is a consequence of the way in which people inhabit space. New centres of belonging can emerge and sites can materialize as functional equivalents of the original homeland (Cohen, 2008, 123). The diaspora, however, are able to maintain the idea of a suspended immigrant experience between host and home countries, native and foreign lands, homebound desires and losses, thus obscuring the new topography and practices of citizenship which are multi-connected, multi-referential and postnational. Miriam's kitchen is a timeless capsule of immutable cooking traditions; Furiya's parents' kitchen is a sealed cultural capsule, even though they experience the stress of procuring the genuine ethnic produce they need to make their traditional Japanese cuisine. Until Luisa Weiss realized that Berlin was her emotional and spiritual home, she occupied her other homes with a sense of incompleteness, as though on the border of another life. In the course of her journey, Berlin comes to emanate a sense of immutability: "Given that I'd partly moved back to Berlin to reclaim my childhood, I wanted nothing more than to be part of the city that felt like it had never changed." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 173).

Indeed, in these border territories lie questions of otherness, that associate not only the traveller but also the host: "[d]iaspora space is the point at which boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, of belonging and otherness, of 'us' and 'them' are contested. […] 'inhabited' not only by those who have migrated and their descendants, but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous." (Brah, 209). Within this context, communities are formed; Roger Bromley writes that "[t]he outcome of displacement and deterritorialization has been the formation of diasporic communities and the development of diasporic identities" (Bromley, 7), which have become emblems of transnationalism because they embody questions of borders, as well as transculturalism, in the case of culinary memoirs.

Borders represent containment and exclusion; narrators must often negotiate their destiny within limited spaces, such as Abu-Jaber, who listens, marvels and dreams

[240] (Ashcroft, 156).

as her father plans the restaurant that he will buy "this golden place, no mere restaurant, will be a Shangri-la that finally heals the old wound between East and West [...] we are all characters in my father's restaurant dream" (*Language of Baklava*, 172, 173), a dream that keeps her family teetering between homeland and host land for many years. Ironically however, the seesawing ultimately ceased when her father opted for a single cultural identity in his cooking. These hybrid identities and cultures also affect members of the 'host' culture as we saw of Abu-Jaber's front yard grill in the previous section.

The concept of diasporic space (as opposed to that of diaspora) includes the entanglement, the intertwining of genealogies of dispersion with those of 'staying put'" (Brah, 209). Linda Furiya occupies a small diasporic space, living in a border land with her parents, culturally isolated and assailed. They struggle throughout her childhood to find their indigenous foods in Indiana, travelling long-distances to secure precious articles, as though their very identity depended on it. She feels ill at ease with other Japanese people: "I saw the same confusion, unhappiness, and avoidance in their eyes", as well as with the newly arrived Vietnamese girl, who reminded her of the border land she herself inhabits: "She made me remember the insecure girl who saw her true Asian reflection in the store window at the mall" (*Bento Box*, 195), only able to see her true self in a reflection as though the truth was held in a mirror. In her second memoir, describing her life in China as an adult, she finds herself in another twilight border territory, unable to communicate, but mistaken for Chinese, hurt by the label because she was called a 'chink' growing up (*How to Cook a Dragon*, 74). "I was at odds with my Japanese identity. I felt that I had to be either Japanese or American, and that there wasn't room for both." (75). Her diasporic space accompanies her as she travels through life: "I felt alienated and detached throughout my childhood and adolescence. As an adult I spent many years vacillating between caring and not caring about how my ethnicity was received [...] To this day, I still seek this sense of belonging" (240-241).

David, Fisher, and Roden, as creators, curators and even cartographers, by nature of their monumental compilations of Mediterranean food traditions and recipes occupy a border space, in between home and dream home. Zonana's ultimate home has become her dream home, for the spirit of her ascetic studio in New York, divested of material memories, has found its place in her heart. Movement around this border space is infused with the hope that food makes the crossing of boundaries possible. These

authors anticipate that their recipes will bring family and communities with them to a new land. Philippa Keaney writes about the literal and figurative border crossing of immigrants' lives and food practices: "the adaptability around food procurement and preparation is one of the ways in which borders can be crossed" (Keaney, 113). A map of the borders is provided by foodways of which recipes are the landmarks. Culinary memoirs reinstate voices for those who, displaced, are not able to locate themselves on a map, often because they are marginalized even from a diasporic community. One thinks of Sasha Martin whose multiple ethnic origins and childhood experiences meant that moving to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she has no ties, was no less incoherent or relevant than symbolically posting a map of the world on the wall to track her cooking journey, representing her simultaneously diverse and non-existent roots. Tangible food replaces her voice like that of other anonymous cooks, and plants them on the map.

Cooking, as Adam Gopnik explains, becomes a peace-making practice, a human act of reconciliation and repetition, of curation, that helps to define territories. "It also presses borders, turns corners, suggests extremes" (*Table Comes First*, 154). Food symbolically redefines boundaries by bringing together traditions with host land food. Women used cookbooks as a vehicle "for constructing, defending and transgressing social and cultural borders [...] points of departure for reflection" (Inness, 139). Routes lead to and from borders and boundaries, for authors such as Furiya, Abu-Jaber, and Zonana, at the border of their homeland. They make repeated trips to preserve their ethnic identity that take on the form of pilgrimages, creating illusions of return: to the Middle-Eastern food shops on Atlantic Avenue, or to Cincinnati or Chicago for Japanese food items for Furiya, to Atlantic Avenue for Abu-Jaber, Rossant and Zonana, or into downtown Beirut to "recharge" herself in what Salma Abdelnour calls her "food pilgrimages", a cultural as much as a culinary experience (87). While they shop, they hear their language, see their foodstuffs, and mingle with their own people, as though at a gateway to their homelands. Rossant claims that when she shopped on Atlantic Avenue, she finally felt that New York was her home (*Apricots on the Nile*, 165). These roads ultimately represent the limits and boundaries of their existence. "When borders contain a paradoxical centrality, margins, edges and lines of communication converge as complex maps and histories." (Clifford, 1997, 7). The currency of culture and identity as performative acts can be traced to their articulation of homelands, safe spaces where

the traffic across borders can be controlled. The making and remaking of identities, takes place in these contact zones.

Myth of origins and return

While border thresholds suggest the possibility of crossing over for many memoirists, especially of diasporic origin, they must often deal with the reality of no return. Steven Vertovec reminds us that diasporic archetypes were accompanied by a dream of return. (277), however inaccessible that might seem. William Safran calls this element of the diasporic state, the 'myth of return', which he says permeates all stages of diasporic consciousness as a shared drive and "movement that gains collective approbation" (Cohen, 2008, 26). Return is often unrealizable because there is no longer a homeland to return to, because going back would be highly traumatic or politically dangerous, or because there is a cultural alienation. Avtar Brah distinguishes between "home as "as mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" and as such a place of no return (even though visits to the geographical territory, considered as the place of 'origin', frequently occur), and home as "the lived experience of a locality" often far from such originary location." (192). Brah goes on the explain that "the centering of diasporas around an axis of origin and return overrides the specific local interactions [...] necessary for the maintenance of diasporic social forms. The empowering paradox of diaspora is that dwelling here assumes a solidarity and connection there" (269). Ehrlich's parents-in-law's summer cottage is just such a home built upon the solidarity of a diasporic community which enables them to maintain an imaginary connection with the homeland. Their lives in the community are centred around shared meals, the dominant unifying element of their diasporic culture.

The impossibility of return assumes a mythical nature, related to the way that the past is remembered. Svetlana Boym explains that

> Modern nostalgia is a mourning for the impossibility of mythical return, for the loss of an enchanted world with clear borders and values; it could be a secular expression of a spiritual longing, a nostalgia for an absolute, a home that is both physical and spiritual, the Edenic unity of time and space before entry into history. (Boym, 8).

In the "enchanted" homeland that Boym describes, where one belonged and felt a freedom of movement, there are borders that contain, protect and define the

community. Clifford explains that: “Diaspora usually presupposes long distances, and separation as an exile, a constitutive taboo on return, or its postponement to a remote future." (1997, 246). The unsatiated hunger to return is an illusory, but a persistent theme in memoirs. Return movements gain collective approbation but ultimately many are happy to live it vicariously (Cohen, 2008, 17), or imaginatively, by the reenacting of traditions that recreate a facsimile homeland situation, as do Elizabeth Ehrlich’s parents-in-law, gathered in the ‘utopian’ Polish Jewish village, ‘Green Gardens’, “a glimpse of both idealized future and part” (*Miriam’s Kitchen*, 304). “Miriam’s bungalow colony is socialist, private, foreign, American, New York, past and present. It is work and vacation, reality and idyll. It is the apotheosis of valuable Jewish things in my past, as I knew them. It is an oasis out of time” (307). The myth of no return is distanced, momentarily suspended, for a few short weeks, a summer, they eat in the style of the old country: “It is a bit of the fabled Borscht Belt on Saturday night […] There is a sit-down meal, delicatessen or smoked fish, salads and cookies and cakes.” (306, 307).

For Rossant, returning to Egypt was vital to her for she questioned her memories, the details and the stories that had assumed a mythical value for her family. “The more they denied the stories of my past the more I wanted to return.” (*Apricots on the Nile*, 168). “Were my memories so wrong? Did I invent those images that haunted me and made my heart burn with nostalgia?” (169). The original journey of exile—or home-situated trauma—assumes a mythical status that occupies the individual or collective imagination and finds echoes in the patterns of behaviour that accompany identity quests.

Zonana transplants her home according to her academic posts, guided by books, words, writing. Like Abdelnour, who spends a year in Beirut to rediscover her roots, many authors make trips to the homeland, to find elements of truth about their roots, including Abu-Jaber, Furiya, Li, Rossant, Zonana. While the trip to Japan brings Furiya a strong sense of identity, the fluctuating hopes and frustrations in the year preceding the trip due to the severe conditions that her mother imposed on her behaviour, engender a sense that the trip is an almost unattainable treasure, a scared pilgrimage, a dangerous journey that could at any moment fail and which costs her as much anxiety as it did joy. She applied herself to learning the Japanese characters, a code that provides her ticket to travel to the homeland, dependent on her not forgetting them: “The

characters I learned that summer stay with me to this day, but at the time all I considered was how impossibly long a year was" (*Bento Box*, 126).

Memoirists seek a home, a birthplace, traces of a family, often finding incomplete answers and disappointment. As Stuart Hall puts it, a narrative of displacement "gives rise [...] to a certain imaginary plenitude, recreating the endless desire to return to 'lost origins', to be one again with the mother,[241] to go back to the beginning" (Hall, 236), to the symbolic birthplace, the cradle of identity. Furiya's trip to Japan with her mother is a return to origins that she did not know existed, finding a new relationship in the return to her mother's roots:

> [...] in all of my ten years, I never felt as happy as I did that evening, strolling along the busy sidewalk, pulling tender chicken nuggets and sweet green onions off bamboo sticks with my mother [...] My mother and I were close, but we had never spent this much time together [...] There in Tokyo, it was just the two of us. I languished in the way she confided in me like a girlfriend. She was sharing her city with me, and I knew that in many ways she was seeing it anew through my eyes. (*Bento Box*, 146).

Zonana in searching for her home, discovers the place where her mother prayed for a child and where she was 'spiritually' conceived. It is a mythical return whose meaning is only partly accessible to her:

> I cry, hot steady tears rising from within, as if I have stumbled upon an ancient spring that flows upward from the stones again [...] I am crying, no doubt, for the history of the Jews in modern Egypt, for our communities dislocation [...] But my tears have their source elsewhere, in a place I cannot name or understand. I sense that they embody gain as well as loss. For, once again, I have the sensation of homecoming. (*Dream Homes*, 178).

Although she struggles to find traces of her family, she is touched by an overwhelming sensation of homecoming, her senses replacing words in a mystical moment: "this astonishing new sensation, the sensation I have felt ever since stepping off the plane that I am, for the first time in my conscious life, in a place I can unambiguously call home." (173).

Even if a form of return is possible, it is often unsatisfactory and cannot be successfully fulfilled. For Rossant, visiting Egypt was more than returning to a childhood home. It represented moments of her childhood when she has been secure and happy. Returning to her convent school, she claims: "I had lost my mother then, but at least I

[241] The mother figure will be discussed with regard to place in part III B.

had had Cairo, a city and a family that nurtured me and gave me a strong identity." (*Apricots on the Nile*, 177). It is telling that she places Cairo, the city a myth in itself, particularly in the collective conscience of the diaspora, before her family, as the space and its foodways were as much a home as her family. Carol Bardenstein writes: "[her memoir] can be read as an extended act of mourning for her 'lost mother', while 'Egypt' has come to stand in place of the mother she never had as a source of nurturing and nourishing love" (2002, 383).

Abu-Jaber's first family trip to Jordan resonates with unuttered or misunderstood words that bring no clear answers and articulate the harsh reality that returning is impossible. She plays a talking game with her friend Hisham, stringing words in an incomprehensible trail "swimming through our private thoughts" until one day she starts speaking Bud's "confetti language" which triggers an infinitesimal reaction in her mother that instantly made her feel she didn't want those words in her mouth anymore, like a food that she rejects (*Language of Baklava*, 34). The idea of confetti suggests frivolous, insubstantial fragmentation and disintegration, mirroring the 'dust-like' (36) American food, an ineffective language. According to her mother, Jordan does not feel the way her father remembers it, and as they leave the Bedouin encampment he claims "I've already forgotten everything [...] I forgot how good the food tastes under a tent. And the wind in the valley" (68), even whether he asked the Sheik his question about his destiny, suggesting that in the disorienting homeland, the future as well as the past become unclear.

The myth of return is closely related to the non-transplantable food in the new country. Powerless to return to the homeland, the eminently impossible act of accessing even a "woefully compromised fragment" by opening a precooked tin can of fava beans at a far-flung point on the map of exile, brings not just some small comfort but 'ecstasy', for at least as long as the taste remains in the mouth. (Bardenstein, 2002, 354). Recipes create brief spaces of intercultural contact mediating between two worlds, temporarily dispelling diasporic anxiety about the inability to successfully transplant food, because they either believe in its infallibility or suggest the necessary adaptations. Madhur Jaffrey has consulted with her diasporic community: "[fenugreek greens] are not universally available. What most Indians do—and this I have learned from the generations of Indians that came to the West before me—is to use a decent amount of green coriander

[…] as a substitute to get the correct texture" (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 264). Rüdiger Kunow talks of food as being a Janus-faced signifier, pointing to the *here* of the uprooted diasporic life and the *there* of the homeland that they cannot go back to (Kunow, 173). The narrators may be at a place of no return, but the food that entwines the personal story, offers an escape route, a path of hope. Fisher's gastronomy helps her rise above society's strictures, David's Mediterranean food saves her from post-war depression, Narayan's meals win her a ticket to America, Reichl and Hamilton cook themselves out of teenage despair. Food becomes a symbol of what was lost, the tangible thus coming to represent the intangible, that which has disappeared, and cannot be recuperated if there is to be no return.

2. Memoir narratives of place and residence

In the age of globalization, returning exiles and itinerant migrations, once unidirectional, patterns of migration are changing for asynchronous, transversal and oscillating flows. Global spaces are opening up, as seen in the blurring of culinary traditions, or even the sharing of singular ones through culinary memoirs. The need for return becomes less critical, dispensable even, but attachment remains of fundamental importance, be it symbolic or real. Origins may have been left behind, but they remain part of a forward-looking focus and the object of creative narratives of travel and residence.

We pursue further dimensions of endotic and exotic travel in this chapter, looking firstly at static travel through memoirs, extending our study to analyse food writing as travel literature, pursuing this with an interpretation of the specific role of food as a channel of communication, and finally with an examination of influential trends in contemporary culinary travel texts.

Static travel

> Mac opened a whole new world to me. My parents had taken me traveling abroad, but now I discovered another country here at home […] It was Mac who first made me think about the way food brought people together—and kept them apart. (*Tender at the Bone*, 120).

Discovering the possibilities of broad horizons in cooking, as Ruth Reichl describes here, speak as much about a respect for traditions as an opening up to new worlds, about the capacity to unite and divide dinner guests. As narratives of emotional journeys, these works recount lives in a state of flux. They celebrate the dichotomies between real and metaphorical journeys, between the journey of the narrator and that of the reader, and between the permanence of tradition and the ephemerality of experience acquired through travels and that of the food itself. As well as describing physical and emotional journeys and displacement, memoirs describe static ones that explore place and self, within borderless landscapes that create symbolic spaces for self-discovery. Static travel narratives are not simply designated by the notion of home, and traditional, eclectic or exotic foods, but also by a certain instability within stability, the notion of being on the verge of change or disruption, an invisible precarity.

Alice B. Toklas offers the example of stability within instability in the form of constancy in gastronomic habits, as well as a form of locally-focused exoticism in their approach to eating and entertaining in defiance of the life-threatening war situation. Despite the devastation of the French countryside in the days following the end of World War I, Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas are in pursuit of good food, in their quaintly personified cars: "Auntie Pauline took us to lunch and dinner parties" (*Toklas Cookbook*, 72), "now we could go on excursions out of town again. On the road to Chartres we made acquaintance with an excellent little restaurant [...] [Godiva] took us into the woods as Auntie had" (77). Their gastronomic excursions are scaled down travel experiences that offer a further travel dimension beyond exoticism within Toklas' cookbook.

The postmodern travel idiom reflects the need to find a means of escape from a particular social constraint and a preoccupation with the effects of movement in an unstable world (Burford quoted in Graves, 2006, 17).[242] Movement is counterbalanced by the immediate pleasures of eating and discovering eloquent, fantastic or fairy-tale narratives, often told with eloquence, humour, luscious descriptions and pithy aphorisms. Mayes' *Under the Tuscan Sun* is one such example of fantasy food writing, we can also cite Madhur Jaffrey's delicious childhood story, Wizenberg's family idyll or

[242] See Burford, 1983.

Weiss' generous collection of transcultural comfort food from America, Italy and Germany.

The security of home is constantly challenged by forced displacement, in Rossant's multiple upheavals, or the long litany of places where Martin and Christensen find refuge. It is with the hindsight of accumulated experience, the Global Table Adventure made real in a celebratory community event, that Martin is able to admit that it is not the journey but the destination that matters for food is more than mere sustenance: "I find the right stride, savouring the process, not the destination" (*Life from Scratch*, 337). We have discussed in part II A, women's relationship to the concept of home and in part II D, the search for home as part of existential questioning. Let us consider how the home not only offers an anchor, stability, a locus of values related to nurturing food, but also engenders a travel or migratory dimension of departure and return. Adam Gopnik writes that, the table, the site of consumption is more important than what is consumed. It is solid and immobile, while the story of food itself travels:

> The table also comes first in the sense that its drama—the people who gather around it, the conversations that flow across it [...]—is more essential to our real lives, and also to the real life of food in the world, than any arguments about where the zucchini came from [...] (*Table Comes First*, 9).

Gopnik goes on to say that questions about food "imply most of the big fights about who we are [...] Civilization is mostly about the story of how seeds, meats, and ways to cook them travel from place to place." (*Table Comes First*, 9). The kitchen is the inner sanctum of endotic travel, of comfort and home, but it is also the scene of personal and family dramas. It represents immobility, and also travel. In culinary memoirs, the diaspora finds a creative space in which to address existential and emotional needs related to journeys. Stefan Herbrechter writes: "Travel is a sort of 'metaphysical' journey – an outward symbol of an inward march on reality. The real journey is an inward one and can only start by forgetting the real place and can only start after one has already arrived." (Herbrechter, 256). The first chapter of Luisa Weiss' *My Berlin Kitchen*, entitled "I never want to leave", describes the warm, fragrant and inviting kitchen of her nanny, Joanie, who provides comfort and reassurance in contrast with her mother's instability, through her generous and tasty home cooking. Paradoxically, she leaves Joanie many times during her childhood, accentuating the impression of leaving a haven. "Busying

myself in the kitchen was how I conjured the people and places I loved the most in the steam rising off the pots on the stove. And when I came down with a rare and chronic illness known as perpetual homesickness, I knew the kitchen would be my remedy." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 2). Nostalgia for another place is both confining and liberating. "As I grew up, moving around from Berlin to Boston to Paris to New York, I discovered that cooking was the most reliable way to feel less alone." (6). Yet, in a dilemma about her future "[t]he kitchen—my refuge—became a place I no longer wanted to go to. I was losing my appetite and fast." (106).

Kitchens can be considered limiting, socially-conditioned, their inherent traditions denigrating even, yet they have a function that goes beyond the preparation of food. In Martin's case, they enable her to recover some of her lost childhood "good kitchens are not about size" says Nigel Slater, quoted at the beginning of *Life from Scratch,* implying that one can travel far in the small space of one's imagination, propelled by creativity. Kitchens were a literal vital space of comfort for Sasha Martin: she longed to be allowed to help in Patricia's kitchen, a place where primary needs are fulfilled to stay the pain of absence and protection. However, Patricia's kitchen is a cold, inhospitable place. At the Dumont's Martin could not cook despite a visceral necessity: "I missed the feeling of shaping the dough into whatever I wanted—that feeling of creativity, control, and, above all, closeness with my mother—any mother." (*Life from Scratch*, 78). "Food, I realize, is family, not just survival. It's peace." (258). Repeated in multiple literal images, cooking offers a space where one can take one's destiny into one's hands, a notion associated with travel, in order to reshape one's future.

The journey of self-exploration, the very act of writing the memoir itself is infused with some of the trepidation of a journey. Colette Rossant writes: "Looking at the photos of her mother and feeling nurturing tenderness towards the little girl "I am painfully pulled from the beginning of a journey I was afraid to take [...]" (*Apricots on the Nile*, 4). This fear can be traced to the terms with which Rossant evokes the kitchen, her refuge from the pain of the compulsive travels of her mother. Like Martin, she is ostracized from the warm security of the kitchen, deemed by her grandmother an unseemly place for a child of her sex and class (*Apricots on the Nile*, 91), although it is, poignantly, the only place in which she feels reassured, for her mother, like Martin's, failed to offer her security. Kitchen memories are as rich and detailed as a journey, as family memories

are vague, bitter and painful. (12). In the spirit of travel, the kitchen was a place of discovery, escapism, comfort and sensual pleasure; in the large house, she was "[…] running from one kitchen to another to breathe in the smells of glorious cooking" (30). Yet smells are also triggers at the edge of memory recall. We are in the present, she with her grandson, while: "I am in the kitchen […] *Ful medames* simmers in a saucepan […]" the mythical cultural and familial dish (41). She is transported back to Cairo and hears her mother telling her off for smelling of garlic. (43).

Kitchens, spaces for endotic travel, also imply installation, setting up home, establishing culinary roots in a place. Several narratives describe periods of residence which, while confronting the narrator with new traditions, are foremostly endotic voyages of self-discovery intensified by nostalgic recollections (Viviès, 2003, Introduction), notably the works of Hemingway, Durrell and David, but also Fisher and Mayes, who describe food and culinary traditions in their travel books as part of the 'spirit of place', in a real or mythical landscape. Patience Gray explains how to set up a kitchen such as she had in the Mediterranean, with details of the utensils preceding the explanations of ingredients, as though a travel guide to eating in Greece, starting with the "nomadic cook's equipment" mounted on muleback and moving on to the "poetic and inspirational […] batterie de cuisine" (*Honey from a Weed*, 20, 23).

Durrell claimed to write books about periods of foreign residence rather than travel. Durrell said "I am not really a travel-writer so much as a 'residence writer'. My books are always about living in place" (*Sprit of Place*, 156). In his essay entitled "How to Travel Without Moving", Richard Pine wrote that Durrell:

> […] was not so much concerned with the locale in which he wrote as with the idea of a writer searching for what he frequently called the *quiddity*, the *nub*, the *haeccitas*, not merely of a place or the 'spirit of place' or the presiding deity or *deus loci*, but also, and more importantly, the *quiddity of himself*. Spirit of place was not as important in itself as it was as an enabler for the artist to be at peace – perhaps in a *hortus conclusus* provided by his environment. (Pine, 2008, 2-3).

The place of residence was a locus for self-exploration, and the spirit of place, the catalyst for the discovery of his essential self, an enclosed garden of his own definition, where the artist could be "at peace". Pine explains: "Durrell travelled much more extensively in his *mind* than he did in his foreign residences, because he re-imagined the people and the land amid which he lived and wrote. However much he travelled in his

body [...] it was in his *mind* that he made imaginative journeys as if in a form of philosophical expedition" (2008, 6). Pine records Durrell expressing his ultimate sense of loneliness and homelessness during his itinerant life: "It's been superficially very *mouvementé*, but I've never had a *foyer*, a hearth, a home. Every time I've tried to build one the British came along and put a bomb up my arse"[243] (Pine, 2008, 8), explaining that his multiple residences were, in fact, a forced nomadism. What appeared to be a perfect blending and assimilation in the Mediterranean life and landscape was, if one can accept Durrell's words, a deception and a façade. His adopted homes were illusions, poor replacements of the real thing, his paradisiacal birthplace in India. Pine also suggests that while Durrell seems to be the epitome of the seasoned traveller who immerses himself in each adopted culture or place of residence, he in fact cloistered himself in his 'Heraldic Universe',[244] within which he travelled without constraint.

In many memoirs, the reassurance and comfort of immobility, represented by the home, is contrasted—because mutually dependent—with the agitation of travel. In sedentary home-focused activities, of cooking, eating, reading and writing, there is meditation about journeying, to which Sasha Martin alludes: "I cut into the last slice of pie and ate it slowly while thinking about the journey ahead." (*Life from Scratch*, 190). Kate Christensen talk about writing as a superior surrogate to real-life experiences: "writing about food gave me a sense of heady power that was in some ways even better than eating the forbidden item in real life." (*Blue Plate Special*, 102). Writing itself, memoir or otherwise, is for many memoirists an ideal of static travel.

Food writing as travel literature

> Le voyage, cette recherche d'un lieu où le temps sera propice à l'épanouissement de l'instant est inséparable de la vocation de poète.
> — Hector Bianciotti, *Le Monde des livres*, 16 Dec. 1995.

[243] Richard Pine's footnote: "Conversation with the author; cf. also *Nunquam* 138: 'I really have no *foyer*, no hearth of my own' and the passages in the *Quintet*, particularly pp. 1091-2, where the need for an informal, congenial locale for those without a home is reiterated; cf. also L. Durrell, letter to A. Perlès, in *Art and Outrage* p. 7: 'to walk in this milky dusk with the smoke rising from the *bistro*. Click of billiard balls, click on the zinc of white wine glasses [...]'" (2008, 8).

[244] Durrell's Heraldic Universe is described in chapter 1 of this section.

Spinach Stuffed *Fetayer* for those
in Search of Home
A nice snack to take on your journey
(*Language of Baklava*, 261).

Kate Christensen's writing experiences capture the moment of fulfilment that Hector Bianciotti associates with travel. This exclusive experience that Biancotti suggests travel can bring, often occurs through food. Diana Abu-Jaber offers her readers a snack for the journey, one specifically for those in search of a home, full of the sincerity of her own home as she leaves the troubled house of her uncle. According to Smith and Watson, early autobiography was travel writing "the migratory subject of early modern travel narratives" (Smith and Watson, 2010, 109), the roots of culinary memoirs. While Estelle Jelinek comments that autobiography is not known for its use of metaphor or symbol (Jelinek, 1986, 181), these acts of self-writing contain a metaphor of travel, for each is an odyssey. The memoir form constructs a concentration of wanderings and displacements that forefront trauma, hardship and painful self-questioning.

Margaret Atwood describes the escapism that one can experience in reading cookbooks, not simply because they take us to exotic destinations, but because they take us on a journey: "Any cookbook read in its entirety, creates its own imaginative view of its world." (Atwood, 1987, 1), implying, as Gopnik says, that cookbooks and, by extrapolation, food writing in general, tell stories and create poetry. In part I, we discussed how certain works of travel literature can be considered forms of culinary memoirs, in this section, we will consider the excursive quality of food writing, that transform them into travel literature. Our focus here is not on diasporic journeying but a subjective and personal experience of travel, whether that experience be home-focused, or on foreign and uncharted terrain.

Let us consider for a moment, the culinary memoir less as a memoir that as an exotic cookbook. We will examine works in which place dominates as much as food—even if they are shelved next to cookery books—and we are made aware of the particular characteristics of a place as it influences the land's produce, while at the same time following the narrator's personal journey of self-discovery. These memoirs highlight traditions, ceremonies, and idiosyncratic features of society. They join an eclectic corpus of self-writing, of which Caren Kaplan lists a variety. In Kaplan's view, such written forms

as prison memoirs, testimonials, ethnographic writings, biomythography, cultural autobiography, and regulative psychobiography are means of combining an author-centred approach to autobiographical writing with a critical one: the 'out-law genres of autobiography[245] are means of producing "a discourse of situation; a 'politics of location"' (Kaplan, 1992, 119). The theory of autobiography as an 'outlaw' genre suggests that self-writing is moving away from a traditionally textual narrative towards a range of multimedia culture practices such as oral, visual and performative. The disruption of narratives with recipes, and the focus on journeying, shifts culinary memoirs within the scope of this definition.

Paradoxically while Elizabeth David ostensibly wrote cookbooks, it is the places from which her recipes come and the regions that she evokes, which constitute the literary thread that dominates the subjective experience. This is also true of other authors who write about the food of a specific country or region including Kate Christensen, Fuchsia Dunlop and Barbara Kingsolver. The list is not exhaustive as we may also include Claudia Roden's Middle East and Alice B. Toklas' France. Roy Andries de Groot's *The Auberge of the Flowering Hearth*, described by Julia Child as "a whole way of life", and in which the identity of the gastronomy is the subject, is not merely about French cooking or even a region, but the specific local cooking of an auberge in a small village in the Chartreuse Alpine mountain range. Half of the book (150 pages), describes in intimate detail the sourcing and composition of each meal, in "The Art of the Perfectly Balanced Menu" (de Groot, 28), preceded by several chapters dedicated to the route to get there, the "Journey to a High and Lovely Place" (3). In contrast, while Abu-Jaber's and Furiya's narratives offer evocative scenes of their homelands, overriding questions of identity dominate the discourse. Similarly, M.F.K. Fisher's wrote about the delights of food and the places that procured her those pleasures, but the reader is, above all, aware of the emergence of a revolutionary vision of food as a panacea for many evils including, most notably hunger, as well as a personal story of loss.

Kate Christensen was inspired by M.F.K. Fisher when she wrote *Blue Plate Special, An Autobiography of My Appetites* (2014), personifying her numerous hungers in the

[245] Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson's edited collection *Getting a Life: Everyday Uses of Autobiography* (1996), also elaborates this idea of the broadening of autobiographical forms to embrace everyday cultural practices that are in fact identity practices.

spirit of Fisher, quoting her in her epigraph, and emphasising the importance of place and the moment in time as the overriding experience: "Often the place and time help make a food what it becomes, even more than the food itself" which could be, in itself, the summary of her second memoir, this time subtitled *A Culinary Memoir* (2015) conform with the emerging genre, and with a Fisher-inspired title *How to Cook a Moose* mimicking Fisher's wartime publication on how to cook with wartime shortages and rationing, *How to Cook a Wolf*. The moose in question refers to the state animal of Maine, about whose regional foodways, the editor of the Maine publishing house, Islandport Press, commissioned a book from Christensen. Although the table of contents clearly states that each chapter focuses on a different food type from lobster, through moose, mushrooms, blueberries, oyster and potatoes to local 'donuts', much like a gastronomic travel guide, the memoir picks up where her previous story leaves off to describe her personal evolution. It describes her sense of having finally found a kindred spirit as well as home in a place that resonated for her as authentic, inspiring, beautiful and in every way coherent with the person that she had grown into through the troubled years of her childhood and youth, marked by several family reconstitutions, multiple moves and a long journey to find herself as a writer.

She speaks protectively of the people of Maine "whose livelihood is tied to the fates and fortunes of the land and its vicissitudes, to the fish, lobster, oysters, shrimps, and crabs who live in the waters along the coast of Maine" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 230). The memoir is structurally and narratively a form of travel literature, a guide to the food and quality of life of Maine, connected with the thread of the background story of Christensen's setting up home in her adopted 'country'. The request to write the book was, according to Christensen, perfectly aligned with her own literary ambitions and personal situation at that point in time: "my editor, friend, and Nordic sister, Genevieve Morgan, who asked me to write the book I most wanted to write at exactly the right time, and shepherded me through it with grace and wisdom, warmth and love" (291), as though accompanying her on a journey. There are several repeated ideas that align the narrative with the author's own and resonate a coherent echo with her previous memoir, notably authenticity, hard work and literary enlightenment through reading.

These ideas convey a moral message about self-sufficiency and respect for the land with which the editor introduces the book, and which echoes that of Angelo

Pellegrini. Christensen quotes Erin French of the restaurant The Lost Kitchen as saying: "it feels so good to touch people—to give them memories, sustenance, community". Christensen's reading gave her all of that too. Reading about the Maine way of life, she wrote: "I love the vicarious sense of adventure I get, reading about their unforgettable experiences [...] These are some of the most purely joyful books I have every read." (222). While becoming a permanent resident of Maine, she journeys with those who embarked on a life adventure in the harsh environment through books, much as her reader is doing. Significantly, Christensen never learned to drive out of fear, until she moved to Maine, yet she returns home by car from her final interview for the book-in-the-making, demonstrating a new mobility and independence of travel, as well as a sense of wholeness, in harmony with the integrity that the food and foodways of Maine offered her, anchoring her text with words such as "authenticity", "honesty", "quality", "sustenance", "humanity":

> As I drove I thought about my life here, how happy I was—not an easy, superficial happiness, but the quiet internal daily joy of living in a culture based on authenticity and integrity, among people who valued hard work over glamour, honesty over style, quality over quantity.
>
> It was an old-fashioned value system, one based on survival and sustenance, and it was reflected in Maine's food [...] there was a recognition of something that spoke to the deepest part of my humanity (*How to Cook a Moose*, 286).

The Islandport Press editor, Genevieve Morgan, chose Christensen not only for her writing ability, but for the journey she had undergone to get to where she was: "Her joy has been tempered by her own fair share of hardship, and she has earned her rights to be, as Wendell Berry said 'of this place'" (xii). Christensen emphasises in the Introduction and the Bibliography that Maine had a strong population of writers:

> [...] this place also seems to be filled with people like me, people who came here 'from away'—a summary term, like 'of this place' that resonate with concepts of belonging and unbelonging—and fell in love with Maine's strong sense of community, and fierce work ethic, granite and hemlocks, cold north Atlantic, marshes and coves: people who arrived as newcomers and stayed because they felt a deep sense of belonging here, of being at home. (*How to Cook a Moose*, 1).

Like the food that is fresh and bought close to home, there is a strong sense of rootedness. Chefs, whom she interviews, talk of wanting to farm in order to put down roots, and use recipes that are "rooted in tradition", while Christensen is aware of her

life as having been inversely "fractured and uprooted" (9) which is the thread of her previous memoir. Healing lies in respect for place, mirrored in the Victorian or Edwardian novels she read as a child: "what appealed to me in the novels I read was that often they were about place as much as character. I learned from books about tightly-knit villages, the gossipy goings-on of the upper and lower classes, the severe repercussions of going against your place in tradition and society" (9). Maine's acceptance of a stranger in its midst, and Christensen's ability to adapt to this hostile region of deeply engrained values, is symptomatic of a rhizomatic form of attachment that reflects the resourcefulness for survival of its inhabitants, and, in Christensen's experience, of a similar resilience to early traumas.

Christensen writes of *terroir*,[246] the essential taste of a place, regarding the food of Maine as an element of her journey, but interestingly presents a form of literary terroir, as part of her own writing's travel odyssey, basing her book on the writings of M.F.K. Fisher and making numerous references to books read, past and present, their literary qualities, as well as back-to-nature travel narratives, which have inspired her. She refers to Fisher, Julia Child, Hemingway, Brillat-Savarin, Wendell Berry, Irma Rombauer, as well as Louisa M. Alcott, Jane Austen and other writers from her childhood. She quotes from Fisher's book *How to Cook a Wolf*, the inspiration for her title, on how to handle the challenges of a new and unfamiliar environment, be it a country at war or a foreign climate and explains its importance to her: "The wolf is back at the door these days, but his time, he's howling and hungry for food that's not only cheap, but also delicious, nourishing, and not unduly harmful to the ecosystem and natural environment." (*How to Cook a Moose*, 7).

Award-winning novelist like Kate Christensen, Barbara Kingsolver, in *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle, One Year of Seasonal Eating*, takes her readers on a similar back-to-nature journey that describes her return to her home state to take a locally-sourced food sabbatical on her family farm. She commits to a year of exclusive dependence on what she and local farmers could bring forth from the land. Kingsolver offers us a paradox of discursive style, a memoir that is both intimate and practical, promoting tradition and

[246] We will explore the notion of *terroir* fully in part III B in the context of the influence of place and culture.

invention. As Sandra M. Gilbert explains, like Christensen, Kingsolver creates a postmodern pastoral in the same vein as Alice Waters, Carlo Petrini, Michael Pollan.[247] (Gilbert, 337). With her, the reader travels to the heart of self-sufficient living. She and her family choose to live a year in an intense symbiosis with the land. The family decided to allow themselves one luxury, that did not adhere to the locally grown/sourced rule: coffee, dried fruit, chocolate and spices (*Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, 35), that finds a fitting echo in Alice B. Toklas's cookbook where she describes the self-sufficiency of the Bugey residents: "they never, but never bought any provisions except coffee and sugar (*Toklas Cookbook*, 114).

While humorous and self-deprecating, Kingsolver's narrative is driven by an overriding timeline and pragmatic detail, weighted in a three-voice chorus with the scientific study-based call-outs by her husband, scientist and teacher, Steven L. Hopp, that provide the technical and empirical framework and the ideological reasoning for their adventure, and the voice of her daughter, Camille Kingsolver, from the kitchen. It is, notably, the daughter and not the mother of the family who provides the anecdotally-embroidered enticing kitchen content with detailed meal descriptions and recipes, occupying a sensual, timeless space: "In our house, the kitchen is the place to be" they made "dinner from scratch".[248] Their egalitarian rhizomatically-structured entrepreneurial family emphasises the idea of undertaking a shared journey. Despite her pragmatism, Kingsolver is ultimately caught up in the absolute mystery of the cycle of life that she witnesses in the year's journey that comes full circle. The last chapter "Time begins" carrying the notion of "the creation story, a sort of quantifiable miracle", hovering on the edge of a scientific approach yet intensely aware of the "Beautiful Mystery […] we'd gone the whole circle […] and time begins once more" (*Animal,*

[247] Michael Pollan is a professor of journalism, author and food writer concerned with the cultural and environmental aspects of food consumption in America. His works include *In Defence of Food, The Myth of Nutrition and the Pleasures of Eating* (2006), and *The Omnivore's Dilemma: The search for a perfect meal in a fast-food world* (2008).

[248] Her expression echoes the title of Sasha Martin's book, *Life from Scratch*, which describes an emotional journey that returns to essential roots—that of cooking—to rebuild a dysfunctional and rootless life grounded in trauma. In the Bibliography of Culinary Memoirs, we find another work entitled "*From Scratch*" (Locke, Tembi. *From Scratch: A Memoir of Love, Sicily, and Finding Home*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2109); the use of this idiom resonates in each instance with the idea of starting anew from nothing, although our study shows that there where there are memories, there is the vestige of a foundation.

Vegetable, Miracle, 352), in which "the garden, phoneless, meditative and beautiful" (177) has the final word. It could be entitled 'Time Begins Again' for they return to their former lives, from a journey suspended in time, albeit following the seasonal year.

Elizabeth David, as we have previously observed, pursued the tradition of food scholarship, travel writing and elegant self-expression. Her scribbled down recipes of Mediterranean food became *The Book of Mediterranean Food* published in 1950. Four more books and articles for *Vogue*, *The Sunday Times* and *The Spectator* followed in the next decade. Widely-read in literature, food, travel and history, she put her food in a historical and travel context, and used literary material to illustrate the recipes she chose. Her articles for *Vogue* on the markets of Europe were early examples of food travel journalism. Whether inspired by rebellion or a desire for cultural and social independence, David travelled around, and lived in the Mediterranean, letting its foodways inspire her imagination and delight her palette. She adopted the traditions as her own and used her personal desolation at the war-torn British diet on her return to England to enlighten the public to her discovery, reflecting Clifford's observation of the class-bound nature of travel: "Travel has an inextinguishable taint of location by class, gender, race, and a certain literariness." (1997, 39). Her numerous cookbooks together create a library not just of foreign food but also of foreign travel. It was in this cuisine and these journeys that she identified herself, although she admits that it was not always easy: "I know that finding the kind of food one is looking for in Italy can be hard work. My own voyage of discovery in that country was far from easy." (*Italian Food*, xx). She pursues with clear indications of her emotional journey: "Italy was a country to which I had come long after Provence and Greece had put me under lasting spells [...] It was possibly for this reason that the sense of discovery which in the end Italian cooking brought me was so potent." (xxii).

Madhur Jaffrey's memoir is structured in such a way as to offer a clear roadmap with the section titles announced at the head of each chapter providing guidelines to the content, like signposts, but also as tasters for there is always one signpost that points to food. While food is central to the memoir, recipes placed as an appendix enhance the work's guise as an 'authentic' travel book. Jaffrey interprets national and personal history through the eyes of an eater, as a coming-of-age story at a time when her country was also coming of age, acquiring independence and opening up after colonial rule. "The

new independent Delhi was in an extroverted celebratory mood and restaurants became the place to express this new freedom." (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 182). It is also a personal and family history set within a broader national context, between personal joys and traumas and national dramas.

Gillian Whitlock has suggested that postcolonial autobiographical writing is based on a tension between utopian and dystopian elements: aspects of longing are inseparable from the presence of estrangement (Whitlock, 179). Jaffrey's idyllic childhood with tantalizing feasts of food, is also tainted by tragedies that include her sister's illness, her uncle Shibbudada's alimentary cruelty to his children and the cataclysmic Partition of India. Whitlock argues that this is a "tension between history and myth, between colonized spaces and sweet places" (182), that in Jaffrey's narrative, takes us to new spaces. Jaffrey perceived the Partition through the liberalising of foodways that allowed her to taste delicacies from other ethnic and religious cultures, bringing about "a revolution really, in the city's food" (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 177), creating "food with a new attitude" (181). As in Shoba Narayan's narrative, Jaffrey expresses an awareness of the wind of change that was blowing through the country and her generation: "I was convinced that I belonged in another world. I had no idea what that world might be. I just knew I hadn't found it yet. One day it would happen. I would step out of one life and into another one, the one I was meant to be in." (206). As Jopi Nyman explains Narayan's "soon-to-be-extinct section of colonial Indian culture is pitted against the forces of modernity and globalization" (Nyman, 288), as she follows another destiny, leaving India for America.

We accompany Jaffrey's journey into the world of modern India with the revolution in foodways after the Partition, which marked a shift away from home-cooking to street and restaurant eating and above all eclectic food choices, which aroused a feeling of freedom and indulgence. Personal choice and preference emerged in the new order, where momentous and tragic decisions about states, as well as easy and indulgent decisions about food had to be made. (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 179). Food, a trope for partition as well as communion was, to Jaffrey's naïve eyes, belyingly simple; other cuisines than hers presupposed less complicated preparations and tastes. "Its very simplicity and freshness were modern and exciting." (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 181). She observed that history shaped and defined culinary traditions with Punjabi food

coming to a new restaurant Mohti Mahal, "plain village cooking to a city of culinary sophisticates" (181), reflecting her own migration towards a new world of sophisticated cuisine.

Visiting the old city where the humbler branch of her mother's family lived was a special gastronomic outing as they ate usually forbidden street food (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 119-127). Jaffrey focuses the reader not just on the taste but also to the geographical location "what a taste it was—vegetarian, pure old Delhi and exclusively Parathe Vali Gulley [Lane of Fried Bread]" (123). Her description reads like a Tom Thumb fairy-tale leading from a series of idyllic and paradisiac food stops to home, embracing exotic magical monsoon mushrooms, (125), and forbidden *Khumbi*, (126, 134). Also, food-sharing at school is equated with an idea of extreme tolerance during the times of Partition, drawing Muslim and Hindu culinary traditions into the political argument, with all their complex nuances (166-9). Throughout the memoir, Jaffrey remains within her homeland, movingly seamlessly between houses in the family compound and even between her home and their summer residence, between Delhi and Kanpur. On the last page she writes: "I found myself sailing due west on a Pacific & Orient ocean line, all alone but breathless to taste a new life." (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 231). She seems almost caught off guard by the new journey she is undertaking, retaining the food metaphor to that last, set to "taste a new life".

Eating as translation

Immigrants travel with essentially only two enduring, if fragilized, possessions, their language and their foodways. While they struggle to understand the host language and culture, they are nourished by tastes and flavours of home, albeit through what are often become poor imitations, striving to emulate their authentic flavours. While Jaffrey anticipates that she will discover her new host land through food, Ruth Reichl helps us to understand the metaphor of translation surrounding food. She includes the recipe for a nineteenth-century sponge cake from the Boston Cooking School Magazine, and then offers "My translation" of the recipe, simplified and modernized for success (*My Kitchen Year*, 133). Fuchsia Dunlop writes about her culinary adventures in China, where her expeditions take her into deeply remote places and obscure foodways, her narrative

providing a form of translation of the country itself—much like that of Jaffrey—its regional traditions and foodways and its people, that were inaccessible to many. A much earlier introduction to Chinese food by Buwei Yang Chao, *How to Cook and Eat in Chinese* (1945), describes a culinary pilgrimage to her homeland that serves as an act of translation, by bringing authentic Chinese food into American homes and thus crossing a cultural boundary. It allowed Americans to travel without leaving their homes on a voyage of cultural understanding. (Inness, 2001, 146), offering the safety of consuming another culture without risk.

We have observed that food preparation and eating are in themselves a form of travel, with the confrontation of new or transformed culinary cultures. The process of acculturation and assimilation is an act of translation of the world, particularly for immigrant families; food is a way of articulating their place in the world. Culinary writer Betty Fussell says "Eating is the primary act of translation. One ingests the world of things and articulates a world of ideas." (Fussell quoted in Inness, 2001, 143). This act of translation allows immigrant families to literally and metaphorically consume the host land culture and the adaption from one cultural tradition to another. Mary Douglas, however, claims that food is a metonymy rather than a metaphor. Each meal carries something of the meaning of other meals, which can be interpreted as building a bridge or making a connection between the two foodways for which the memoirs of Jaffrey, Li, Narayan, Weiss or Zonana serve as examples: "Each meal is a structured social event which structures others in its own image." (Douglas, 69).

Ingredients and their origins provide a code that deciphers a meal, providing a means of expressing social structure or relations. "Social rituals create a reality which would be nothing without them. It is not too much to say that ritual is more to society than words are to thought. For it is very possible to know something and then to find words for it. But it is impossible to have social relations without symbolic acts." (Douglas, 63). Both narrator and participative reader travel to old and new worlds in the creation and consumption of culinary memoirs. Claude Lévi-Strauss spoke of food as a language that provides a meal for translation: "[…] the language of cuisine, unlike the language of ordinary life, 'translates' unconsciously; it is not used to communicate between men as much as to express a structure." (Lévi-Strauss quoted in Goody, 25). This unconscious translation reminds us of the importance of sensorial memory. M.F.K.

Fisher shows the examples of the association of food with literary translation: in her translation of Brillat-Savarin's *Physiologie du Goût*, that inspired the first century of food-writing in French and English and "one of the monuments of the movement" (*Table Comes First*, 44), says Gopnik.[249]

Abu-Jaber's father, Bud, finally makes a living from a feeding establishment serving the food that he ate when he first arrived in America, his original host land sustenance: "rows of burgers, sizzling French fries, blistering hot dogs and grilled cheese sandwiches. These basic foods recall my father's first meal in America [...] at a table in Cosmo's Malt shop—a daily regime of hamburger and coke—that began all his other meals." (*Language of Baklava*, 324). It translates a personal circumstance and not the situation of the other. Yet, "in the end, the type of food doesn't matter so much to Bud; it's cooking and feeding people and watching them eat, keeping them alive in the desert of the world – that is all he really cares about." (325). Ultimately, his restaurant and cooking translated a reality for him that he had not understood, that ultimately, he had in fact become more American than he thought: "Though it was filled with Americans, the shack resembled an over-crowded, talk-heavy Jordanian coffeehouse. But Bud is no longer—not entirely—Jordanian." (326). Feeding others is for Bud a way of communicating: he uses the food stuffs he was first given when he arrived in America, symbolically the first words with which he communicated. His principal activity at Family Fun Center is communicating with others: "gossiping with his customers and friends and passersby" (326).

Food translates language and needs at several levels. As its most fundamental, a communion occurs in the simple sharing of food or its preparation between people who do not speak the same language. Gabrielle Hamilton writes of her experience with her family-in-law in Italy:

> At first I needed Michele nearby to translate, but very shortly it became obvious that cooking itself was a way of if not exactly speaking, at least a way of being together in a room doing something that felt comfortable and interactive. [...] We both soon grasped that we had that as a 'language', and I could understand everything she was doing and she could understand me too. And for all of the years since, we have cooked together in place of talking. (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 232).

[249] This work is one of the series of culinary works, several of which are in translations, in the Modern Library Food series, of which Ruth Reichl is the editor.

The preparation of a dish can also represent another form of translation, as described by Delia Chiaro and Linda Rossato:

> The simplest analogy could be the comparison of the act of translation with the preparation of a dish. Translation begins with an alien text made up of words that are strung together through syntax, in turn upheld by grammar; similarly, a foreign dish consists of a number of unusual ingredients, combined in such a way as to create a dish that is acceptable within a diverse culinary culture. (Chiaro and Rossato, 2015).

Ingredients are magically transformed into something new. The alchemy of cooking is both a process and a result which offers immigrants the possibility to understand their environment, their hosts and their culture, adapting their foodways and sometimes adopting the foodways of their hosts to better understand them and their environment, as do Jaffrey and Narayan when they emigrate to America. Roger Bromley contributes to the argument of transformation—the essential chemical process in cooking—quoting Walter Benjamin: "translation passes through continua of transformation, not abstract ideas of identity and similarity" (Bromley, 6).

Durrell, Hemingway, and even the contemporary Gopnik also express sensitivity to this alchemy. Hemingway writes of the Nègre de Toulouse restaurant, "where our red and white checkered napkins were in the wooden rings in the napkin rack waiting for us to come and have dinner. I read the menu mimeographed in purple ink and saw that the *plat du jour* was cassoulet. It made me hungry to read the name." (*Moveable Feast*, 99). Hemingway was anticipated at the restaurant, as he himself anticipated the food they would serve. There is a simple culture connection of need and desire. Durrell's Heraldic Universe is a totally exclusive realm, self-affirming and autonomous, a world of symbols for him, that serves as a place of personal translation and transformation. Adam Gopnik allows food to translate a temple of French culture to him. He takes the motif of the *leçons des choses* from Deyrolle posters, practicing the repetitive gestures every day as though he was learning a language: "The beautiful part of cooking lies in the repetition, living the same participles, day after day: planning, shopping, chopping, roasting, eating […]" (*Paris to the Moon*, 175), capturing the therapeutic essence of memoirs with recipes, through the repeated words and gestures that translate the world and provide healing.

Translation is also about changing the means of communication, and thus redefining borders. This is not without its dangers and can sometimes fail, as when Diana Abu-Jaber's parent's barbeque on the front lawn hoping to invite the neighbours, who see the behaviour as shocking and unseemly. "Both food and language are inextricably part of a person's identity, and toying with either can trigger strong emotions" write Chiaro and Rossato (241). The authors go on to explain that "By adding fennel to fish, and too many vegetables to a Tuscan panzanella, Oliver is not simply getting the recipe wrong; he is toying with the memories and identities of others, and that is no-go territory for them." (Chiaro and Rossato, 238-239).[250] Linda Furiya experiences this sense of identity assault with the realization that she cannot protect her parents from the foreignness of the country which they are unable to fully call their own when her father is misunderstood at a store's meat counter. She feels anger, guilt and shame that she has to intervene in the basic situations of food shopping to translate for them. It was a moment that challenged her own identity recalling the fish bone fable: "I swallowed hard several times, trying to dislodge the imaginary fish bone at the back of my throat." (*Bento Box*, 211). Both a linguistic and a cultural translation are necessary.

In reality, both host and immigrant are exposed, according to Homi Bhabha, who sees cultural translation as desacralizing the transparent assumptions of cultural supremacy (Bhabha, 228), offering a cultural equalizer that challenges the status of host and immigrant. Bhabha equates this with a form of translation, explaining that the liminality of migrant experience is not less a transitional phenomenon than a translational one (224): "In the restless drive for cultural translation, hybrid sites of meaning open up a cleavage in the language of culture, which suggests that the similitude of the symbol as it plays across cultural sites must not obscure the fact that repetition of the sign is, in each specific social practice, both different and differential." (Bhabha, 163). Bhabha's claim for cultural translation encourage immigrant populations to propose new discourse to the ones into which they are destined to assimilate in their host country. Culinary memoirs take two familiar genres, the recipe book and the memoir, and propose a new discourse which encapsulates in the narrative, the very journey that brought them to the host land as well as the personal journey that will

[250] The quotation refers to the British chef and cookbook writer, Jamie Oliver.

enable them to adapt and assimilate. Furiya's parents and even Furiya herself, in her second memoir in which she struggles with racial discrimination and her own identity, have not yet discovered that new discourse.

Jopi Nyman explains that the text's construction of memory appears to resonate with the notion of trans-memory coined by Agnieszka Bedingfield on the basis of Marianne Hirsch's term "postmemory," a concept originally describing the experiences of those growing up under narratives of trauma to which the authors themselves have no access, such as the children of Holocaust survivors (Nyman, 334). She describes trans-memory as involving a cultural as well as a linguistic adjustment-translation into a language of 'the present'. Blending the codifying systems of the old country and the new country is an element in the process of progressive substitution of the parental language by the language of the new continent (Nyman, 334). While Abu-Jaber's emerging identity in *The Language of Baklava* is a composite one, with both American and Arab elements, the text also evokes the problem of untranslatability by showing how the language of the old county is carried into the language of the new country, and foods mimic but fail to convince in either language:

> [...] hard cookies that taste of a million miles away. These 'biscuits' disintegrate between my teeth, falling into basic component flavours—jam, sugar, flour. They aren't very good, and the tea is a weird mystery of crushed leaves, and condensed milk—none of it is especially American, British, Jordanian, or anything else." (*Language of Baklava*, 58).

Abu-Jaber seeks to bridge this 'translation' gap with explanations of the recipes for the reader. While the language gap can be bridged, the cultural chasm follows her across her two memoirs.

Food can nonetheless simplify communication, through a form of translation, manifested by its susceptibility to aphorisms. Elizabeth Gilbert in her memoir *Eat, Pray Love*, offers another concept of the translation of consumption, summarized by her philosophy "'Speak the way you eat,' or, in my personal translation: 'Say it like you eat it'" (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 87). The first chapter is entitled: "Italy or 'Say It Like You Eat It' or 36 Tales about the Pursuit of Pleasure", in which she undertakes an overtly hedonistic pursuit of gustatory pleasure to assuage the trauma of a painful divorce. This trope has a persistent validity in the further two sections of the book in discovering spiritual and balanced living. The ideas in 'speak the way you eat' are essentially those of honesty,

authenticity and transparency to yourself and others such that the pursuit or the message is clearly understood, and translation is scarcely necessary. Food and eating play the role of translator in exotic or foreign spaces, translating place and *dis*placement, the textual recreation of displacement in narratives. The double lives with journeys of migrations and dwellings of the diaspora that Bhabha describes (Bhabha, 212) require interpretation for the immigrant and, from the perspective of memoirs, the host.

3. Food that travels

We continue by looking at how the subject thread of food operates with the narrative flow as a form of connection as well as of movement, firstly as a culinary plot and the thread of multiple minor journeys. We will then consider the concepts of nomadism and itinerance as an idiom of immigrant travel in relation to food. Travel literature has adopted food as a central theme approaching it from such diverse angles as those of Christensen's emotional ethics, and cultural intelligence, Gopnik's journalistic perspicacity and Mayes' aesthetic sensitivity. Eating is a means of communicating social position and relationships, as well as individual identity. It embodies repetition which provokes change in communities and individuals, the evolution of groups and foodways. As Alexia Moyer emphasises eating as a means of expressing and measuring movement—physical states, food preparation, both variously used and inhabited (Moyer, 162). Eating expresses a form of exchange that has the power to unify and divide, both creating and breaking down barriers. Hasier R. Diner explains: "Foodways include food as material items and symbols of identity, and the history of a group's ways with food goes far beyond an exploration of cooking and consumption. It amounts to a journey to the heart of its collective world" (Diner, 9-10), a journey at whose centre lies the truth. As James Clifford says, human location is "constituted by displacement as much as by stasis." (1997, 2).

Travel writing and the culinary plot

Elizabeth Gilbert's work is a contemporary travel memoir that is deeply intimate in tone and pursues a spiritual quest through the discovery of several foreign cultures.

This work, together with Adam Gopnik's *Paris to the Moon* (2000), describe the influence of place with food at the centre of their travel story; they allow us to observe how new forms of travel literature are influenced by the genre of culinary memoirs and food self-writing. Categorised as travel literature, their hybrid forms make them complex, border-bound cases.

Gilbert presents a travel book manifesto that, in the context of culinary memoirs with their exploration of self against the decor of a significant place, homeland or host land, summarizes the approach of many of the narratives under discussion:

> It wasn't so much that I wanted to thoroughly explore the countries themselves; this had been done. It was more that I wanted to explore one aspect of myself set against the backdrop of each country, in a place that has traditionally done that one thing very well, I wanted to explore the art of pleasure in Italy, the art of devotion in India and, in Indonesia, the art of balancing the two. It was only later, after admitting this dream, that I noticed the happy coincidence that all these countries begin with the letter *I*. A fairly auspicious sign it seemed, on a voyage of self-discovery. (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 29-30).

Under the literary influence of such sub-genres as culinary memoirs, travel has become a personal right as part of a voyage of self-exploration, reiterating the first person pronoun whose centrality in her narrative pleases her for its therapeutic qualities: "I'm loyal and constant in my love for travel [...] Because I adore it. Because it's mine (41). This healing journey is accompanied by the act of writing as a source of healing in the memoir itself (53): "Be the scientist of your own experience. You're not here as a tourist or a journalist; you're here as a seeker" (164). Gilbert continues: "Your treasure—your perfection—is within you already. But to claim it, you must leave the busy commotion of your mind and abandon the desires of the ego and enter into the silence of the heart." (197). Gilbert argues for finding balance, at the heart of the compromising immigrant discourse, offering a literary reminder that what appears globally to be a perfect formula is not always so ideal, and using the concluding section, where she describes her time in Bali, a garden of Eden (235), to remind us that the word "*paradise* [...] comes to us from the Persian, means literally 'a walled garden'." (236). It is an allegory of the exploration of self, suggesting that travel, whether inner or outer, is essential to self-understanding, although what might seem like paradise can be a containing and constraining space.

In this context, culinary memoirs provide a framework as well as a forum for liberated self-expression. Like Gilbert's proverbial walled garden, culinary memoirists may be perceived as working themselves into a generic corner, following a normative structure and a commercial genre. While idealized foodways and exemplary values lean towards a possible banalization of the genre, the travel dimension serves to demarcate and individualise the works. Elizabeth Gilbert undertakes a deliberate and carefully structured spiritual journey, in the spirit of Ehrlich's memoir organized around the twelve months of the Jewish calendar. Gilbert's narrative is separated into one hundred and eight chapters corresponding to the Buddhist Japa Mala prayer beads: "Spiritual investigation is, and always has been, an endeavour of methodical discipline." (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 2). She calls the work her "spiritual memoirs" (198). It is also fully a memoir-travelogue. Gilbert, indeed, insists on the importance of travel: "I believe that all the world's religions share, at their core, a desire to find a transporting metaphor. It has to be a big one this metaphor—really big and magic and powerful, because it needs to carry you across a mighty distance." (205). Her travels are devoted to her personal journey of healing and self-discovery, remaining celibate and focused.

In the designation that is extensively explored in Durrell, Gilbert realizes that she is a resident and not a traveller when she gives guidance to a backpacker. "I am not technically travelling in Rome, but living here. However temporary it may be, I am a civilian [...] Traveling-to-a-place energy and living-in-a-place energy are two fundamentally different energies" (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 73, 78). The residential dimension is also emphasized by Gilbert's weight gain (80, 110) in Italy; she is symbolically installing and rooting herself with her increase in body mass, losing the concept of lightness for ease of flight. She is also allowing the place and its food to metamorphose her, changes which she acknowledges but to which she offers no resistance**.** From Rome she radiates out like Hemingway from Paris, traveling to other places to discover local culinary traditions, such as the trip to Naples to eat pizza. (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 79-80). Her memoir is paradoxically about control and letting go, the discipline of a religious practice and the acceptance of what life has brought her, that are embodied in the 'Instructions for freedom' that a fellow Ashram disciple gives her (184-185). The prime place of food in her healing process epitomizes the need expressed in the response she receives to prayer—"Go back to bed, Liz" (16), to take care of herself.

Gilbert's abandon to the delights of Italian food in Book One, is also a form of spiritual trust, in this case, in the healing benefits of gustatory pleasure. While her journey is ultimately a spiritual one, she begins with a sensual exploration that is nonetheless chaste and purely gustatory. Despite her gastronomic indulgence in Italy, she exerts control over her other passions. Traveling for the pleasure of eating: "Just for a few months of one's life, is it so awful to travel through time with no greater ambition that to find the next lovely meal?" (113). Her food appetite dominates her sexual appetite in Italy, and also in the exotic destination of Bali, where she tries to satisfy her physical desires with a mundane pound of fried potatoes (286). She employs a further food image to illustrate the formation of her new identity and her self-control, until the cake is ready to be 'eaten': "I'm the cake that just came out of the oven, and it still needs some more time to cool before it can be frosted." (284). She plays with the opposing concepts of self-discipline and self-indulgence, describing yoga as a spiritual food, while her time in Italy was ostensibly the opposite: "Yoga is about self-mastery and the dedicated effort to haul your attention away from your endless brooding over the past and your nonstop worrying about the future so that you can seek, instead a place of eternal presence from which you may regard yourself and your surrounding with poise. Only from that point of even-mindedness will the true nature of the world (and yourself) be revealed to you." (122). The analogy can be applied to the culinary travel memoir that juxtaposes the immediacy of cooking and travel experiences, and the reflectiveness of the memoir.

Gopnik's *Paris to the Moon*, published in the early years of the culinary memoir expansion, is the story of Gopnik's years in Paris with his young family, a move, he claims, destined to spare his small son the worst of American culture in his formative years. He is seduced by the romance of Paris (9-10), and describes his passion for a city that he explores and analyses with journalistic rigour. He fell in love with Paris as a young boy, and lived as a teenager during his parents' college professor sabbatical. While he documents many aspects of French culture, including politics, cultural life, the winter circus, sports facilities, and fashion, it is above all his personal story and the memoir of a resident, focusing on the importance of food in that experience. Eleven years after the writing of this memoir, he publishes the unequivocally titled work *The Table Comes First: Family, France, and the Meaning of Food* in which he claims that food is the primary focus of all our travels and pursuits. Although he acknowledges the rise of Anglo-

American culture and the decline of French cultural and social model, his enthusiasm does not wain. "There was no big story in France at the end of the century, but there were a lot of little ones, and the littlest ones of all seemed to say the most about what makes Paris still Paris." (*Paris to the Moon*, 13). Culinary memoirs are the 'little' stories, offshoots of the larger story of food and appetite, that themselves comprise myriad tales in the form of anecdotes and recipes that create a quintessential message about the healing nature of food. Gopnik writes: "This is a story of the private life of a lucky American family living in Paris in the last five years of the century, less a tour of any horizon that just a walk around the park. [...] What I find is left, after the politics have been removed, are mostly stories about raising a kid in foreign parts." (*Paris to the Moon*, 13). On a world scale, his journey is localized, the 'park' of Paris, representing focused and personal pleasure and recreation, from the intimate perspective of a family's personal experiences, its gardens and its cafes.

Yet he insists on the universal appeal of Paris in the spirit of the Lost Generation writers with his "Tale of Two Cafés', the Café de Flore and the Deux Magots (78-85). The latter was frequented by the literary clique of the early twentieth century, associating his eating and drinking experiences with the writers who went before him: "it was there that Joyce went to drink Swiss white wine, with everybody except Hemingway, with whom he drank dry sherry, because Hemingway wasn't everybody. (That's how Hemingway tells it anyway)." (84). He also evokes mythical American food writer, A. J. Liebling: "Some of Liebling's joints are still in business too: the Beaux-Arts, the Pierre a la Place Gaillon, the Closerie des Lilas." (150). Despite a general disenchantment amongst food journalists, Gopnik writes:

> I would still rather eat in Paris, than anywhere else in the world. The best places in Paris don't just feed you well; they make you happy in a way that no other city's restaurants can [...] Even in a mediocre Paris restaurant, you are part of the richest commonplace civilization that has ever been created and that extends back visibly to the previous century. (*Paris to the Moon*, 150).

His tone is reminiscent of Hemingway's in the closing lines of *A Moveable Feast*, moved also by the myth of a place and all that he has received from it: "There is never any ending to Paris [...] We always returned to it no matter who we were or how it was changed or with what difficulties, or ease, it could be reached." (*Moveable Feast*, 211).

Gopnik uses the book to question his own sense of identity and otherness, about how a North American liberal came to view "the existence of minute variations among peoples: which ones really matter and which ones really don't." (*Paris to the Moon*, 14). He defines travellers in terms of their degree of openness and expectations, offering a perspective on the tourist and the resident traveller:

> There are two kinds of travelers. There is the kind who goes to see what there is to see and sees it, and the kind who has an image in his head and goes out to accomplish it. The first visitor has an easier time, but I think the second visitor sees more [...] his struggle to adjust the country he looks at to the country he has inside him at least keeps him looking. It sometimes blurs, and sometimes sharpens his eye. (*Paris to the Moon*, 16).

Immigrant writers struggle with the second identity, trying to reconcile myths of the homeland, their divided identity and the intruding host land. While his temporary exile is voluntary, it puts him in a position to understand the immigrant experience of his grandparents. Gopnik is the inevitable immigrant father to his son: "I had thought to bring him the suavity of the French gamin, and instead I had brought unto him the shame of the immigrant child" (*Paris to the Moon*, 260). "It is, perhaps, a truth of expatriate children that rather than grow up with two civilizations, they grow up with less that one, unable somehow to plug in the civilization at home with the big one around." (263).

Frances Mayes, whose food-infused books are most likely found on the travel shelves, was "drawn to the surface of Italy", its picturesque architecture, art and language, and its food. (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 260). The use of the word "surface" might suggest superficiality. Elizabeth Gilbert's words have the same idealized resonance: "I was drawn to the idea of living for a while in a culture where pleasure and beauty are revered." (*Eat, Pray Love*, 29). "I wanted to experience *both*. I wanted worldly enjoyment and divine transcendence—the dual glories of human life" (*Eat, Pray Love*, 29). For Mayes, understanding of herself and the new landscape emerge slowly like the seasonal maturing fruit. In her second memoir, *Bella Tuscany*, she writes: "*I walk from window to window taking in the view*. When I wrote the last line of *Under the Tuscan Sun*, I wrote the first line of *Bella Tuscany*. I knew I was at the beginning of my experience of Italy, the inner experience as well as the outer." (Mayes, 1999, xiii). In her third volume, *Every Day in Tuscany*, she returns again to her growing understanding: "This third volume of

my Italian life revisits that time of change—internal and external—and allows me to explore what I learned about myself and about this green place where I made my home." (Mayes, 2010, 7). Mayes sought food and history, sensual experience and spiritual transcendence. Like recipes, the senses are an anchor in the present reality: "one should only trust what one can experience with one's own senses," and *this* makes the senses stronger in Italy than anywhere in Europe [...] the appreciation of pleasure can be an anchor of one's humanity" (Mayes, 2010, 114, 115), emphasizing the pursuit of gastronomy in travel as both of sensual and aesthetic value.

Culinary memoirs have inspired in travel writing the possible pursuit of beauty and pleasure, especially gastronomic, as a right and a source of healing as well as a postmodern effort to find one's place in the world. Memoirs have also influenced travel writing with their fragmented form and stories and 'recipes' of everyday life. Gopnik's story is a multitude of vaguely connected tales[251] that are a reflection, according to him, of the place, while Gilbert's narrative is divided into three parts, three countries, three objectives and three focuses. They are both focused travel memoirs, a walk around the park rather than a tour of the horizon for Gopnik, a scrutiny of prayer beads with one's head in the stars for Gilbert, extended over several continents. They are a form of travel literature that focuses on the quality of the personal experience, and its authenticity, as in the discovery of foodways, as well as the exploration of universal values. These are also journeys that start in one's head, as Gopnik describes the traveller who is able to see more from his perspective—as well as one's place. Authors undertake voyages of self-discovery, against the backdrop of a new and unfamiliar environment, taking control of their lives and their experiences, deliberately seeking truths and exploring one's heart and the heart of a place. To achieve this, the travel experience is evolving into one of sporadic residence rather than perpetual displacement.

Food as the thread of multiple journeys

> Eating is a form of travel, and no matter how high the price of cardamom, taste-bud tourism is a real bargain. (Gabaccia, 215).

[251] This impression of approximate structure is largely due to the fact that much of the work was previously published as articles in *The New Yorker*.

The two works we have reviewed, are a clear indication of the development in parallel of two genres that nourished each other mutually: travel writing and culinary memoirs. It has become permissible, fashionable even, to focus travel stories on food, and to supplement food narratives with an element of travel or at least encounter with the other. Food allows the narrator and reader to travel, through exotic recipes, through the preparation and consumption of food, through the reenacting and sharing of foodways; it is a literary device which embodies dynamics of travel and becomes, in culinary memoirs, a metaphor for the travel itself, whether literal or imaginary, exotic or endotic. Memoirs focus on connections and disconnections, as moments of self-realization and rupture, in travel, displacement and location through mythologized practices and multifarious identities, including immigrants, exiles, nomads, and tourists within their own stories.

The gift of spice jars from Sasha Martin's mother as she sets up home represent the transition to a more sedentary life, as well as guaranteeing the presence of exoticism with spices in her kitchen. They are the symbol of her much-travelled life. In contrast, her mother, while forever seeking a peaceful home, carries her spices around with her in her handbag, as though she has never really found domestic stability, always seeking a home, while being prepared for all culinary eventualities. Happiness is represented by the spice itself—that fragile speck, beholden to the heat, always and forever tempered by our environment. Her mother's pocket supplies are available for her to sprinkle each moment with happiness at any moment. In Martin's discourse, food has magical and self-determining properties: "If I put the right ingredients in my spice jars, I realized, they'd be portals to that bygone era. My thoughts turned to all the countries I hadn't been to yet, to all the exotic food I had yet to experience. What would it be like if I could fit this uncharted world in those jars, if I could use them to season my future?" (*Life from Scratch*, 247). The presence of the spice jars affords Martin some clear-sighted retrospection:

> Though I may not have secured a new future, I'd secured something much better by filling those empty spice jars nearly four years ago. Cooking the world has opened my eyes to the other ways of being, loving and mothering. Most importantly it has taught me to savor the present moment, sinking into the ephemeral like the ripe fruit that it is. […] Each bite is a flash of the past and the present. (*Life from Scratch*, 345).

The spice jars, that were a gift for her new home, ultimately allowed her to travel the world over, a portal into her inner journey. We are reminded of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927), for whose protagonist the success of her dinner is essential. Mrs. Ramsey is also persuaded that the journey is more important than the destination and the preparation than the final dish, a combined moral lesson on traveling and cooking.

Food mediates the journeys between the past and the present, between the world of the living and the world of the dead, symbolically traveling, in certain cultures, into the world of the dead to feed the spirits (with a complicated set of rules about the preparation of the food (*Daughter of Heaven*, 204, 210), filling their stomachs with the quintessence of food and drink. Food is a form of non-verbal communication, a way of communicating with spirits and with one's own spirit, blending nature and the elements in the myth of stone soup. Feeding rocks to Old Man Hill feeds the memories of those who have died, communicating with previous generations. Leslie Li writes: "A myth doesn't come alive [...] until the tale has both a teller and a listener, unless it evokes both memory and imagination." (263). In the quotation from Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* that precedes the Afterword, we understand that the rocks, like food, are the bridge between generations, allowing the transmission of memories, and the family or community history: "Without the stones there is no arch" (260), the arch which she considered fell and brought the bridge in her relationship with her father tumbling. When Li comes to make her offering, she has omitted to bring the real food: "From my bag I extracted the requisite gifts, rock and paper. I felt that I had forgotten something. I should have brought an offering of food. Or had I forgotten on purpose, food propitiating both the living and the dead, but not the mythic?" (271). Ultimately, when she had wrapped her stone, she discovered that it resembles a *zongzi*[252] and pronounced: "I'd brought food after all, nourishment for the numinous" (273). The food and its passage are invisible, but the beliefs remain intact. Ehrlich's family similarly connects with its past through immutable dishes. Her father's Aunt Dora, sent an annual food package at Rosh Hashanah, including a sacred honey cake that he consumed by himself: "In the package were history, family, culture, tradition, heart." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 18). Her mother-in-law makes a salad that cannot be altered, a staple of her mother's

[252] A Chinese stuffed sticky rice dumpling.

restaurant in Poland: "It is egg salad transported, egg salad rescued from a vanished place." (8).

Madhur Jaffrey's readers are transported through food to a privileged colonial India with the precise and elaborate descriptions of the multiple dishes that comprised even the simplest lunch:

> [T]his day we lunched on fresh *phulkas* (fluffed, whole-wheat flatbreads); *alan ka saag* (a kind of dal made with chickpea flour, *moong dal* and spinach), eaten with squeezes of fresh lime juice; small bitter gourds stuffed with fennel and browned onions; homemade yoghurt and *kakris*, long, pencil-thin, curling-at-the-end, summer cucumbers, eaten raw with their delicate pale green skins still on. (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 11).

Jaffrey writes as one for whom this abundant fare is intensely familiar, for, in the chronology of her memoir she has yet to travel. It is in Linda Furiya's memoir that the dualism is felt. Food descriptions are used as antithetical contrasts. The author's home, is a sanctuary of traditional Japanese food, but outside the narrator is confronted with Midwestern convenience food of the 1980s. Both narrator and reader discover new worlds, dishes defining paths from the old world and into the new: "Dad and I grazed on cold Japanese appetisers-spicy wilted cabbage pickled in brine with lemon peel, garlic, smashed whole red chili peppers, and kombu (seaweed). Meanwhile, Mom prepared hot dishes-cubes of tofu garnished with ginger and bonito flakes (dried fish shavings)." Her friends' lunch boxes contained bologna, cheese and miracle whip sandwiches. (*Bento Box*, 73, 83).

Luisa Weiss prepares vast quantities of vegetables each time she explores another part of the city of Berlin looking for a sense of home, of comfort, of exoticism in "rich, dark greens", by subway, by car, by foot. (*Berlin Kitchen*, 182-183). They also represented the exotic, from the humblest plate of steamed vegetables to David's fantasy Mediterranean dishes, or Jaffrey's exotic Indian feasts, food descriptions evoke images of other places that transport the reader and the narrator: "Livres de vraies recettes [...] comme un livre de voyage" (Vierne, 153). Martin writes of the reception of her memoir: "When the NPR interview airs, thousands of visitors flock to the website [...] Some read to remember travels; others come to dream about trips they'll never take" (*Life from Scratch*, 315).

John Lehmann had suggested that *A Book of Mediterranean Food* be named "The Blue Train Cookery Book",[253] since he believed that the romance of Mediterranean countries was to be found in the exotic train journeys undertaken to reach them.[254] However, the evocation of a train journey was hardly necessary when one was plunged into David's gastronomic travels: "In the rose-coloured city of Toulouse there is scarcely a street without a confectioners' window showing little boxes of candied violets, and one of the best of all French sweetmeats are the delicate diamond-shaped little almond paste *calissons* of Aix-en-Provence." (*Mediterranean Food*, 161). Her descriptions are poetic and exotic, as we recall from our exploration of the memoir discourse in part I, both poetry and place as Abu-Jaber's own ethnic sweetmeat, baklava (*Language of Baklava*, 191). Taste is place, in which distance is eliminated, offering nostalgic and comforting experiences: "I buy bags of *zaatar*, cumin and sumac, sometimes to cook with, sometimes just to have their comforting scent circulating in my apartment." (319). Scents circulate, as though food is vitalizing, conjuring up the atmosphere of a place, transporting the narrator back to her father's kitchen. Without the scent, sensual stimuli, the atmosphere is immobile, there is no journey: "the air slack without the scents of mint, olive, jasmine, and an immobilizing silence." (71). The raw ingredients of Furiya's parent's cuisine have a double exoticism for they are both exotic by nature and by their procurement. They arrive in special much-anticipated packages from Japan every few months, or must be collected on long, carefully planned odysseys to Cincinnati, or even on a six-hour trip to Chicago on a recommendation from an acquaintance, in specially prepared recipients, white cloth grain bags and coolers (*Bento Box*, 94-103). Furiya captures a further image of gathering food when she is seized by panic at the thought of leaving home comforts and evokes the image of gathering in nets of memories, like a nourishing haul of fish (305-306).

The recipe sections in Frances Mayes' book are witness to the journeys she herself makes between America and Italy, typically in the summer and at Christmas. She

[253] The title probably makes reference to the luxury French night train, the Calais-Mediterranée Express which operated from 1886 to 2003. Its reputation was earned during the inter-war years when it became the preferred transport of the wealthy between Calais/Paris and the French Riviera. It was referred to as *Le Train Bleu* in French (which became its formal name after World War II) and the *Blue Train* in English.

[254] See "Our Summer 2000 Books" (PDF). *The Persephone Quarterly*. 6 (Summer 2000): 4. 2000.

presents two chapters of recipes, her "Summer Kitchen Notes" and "Winter Kitchen Notes", each one crowded with recipes, symbolic of the relatively short, densely packed trips to Italy on vacation from her university teaching job, two short seasons where much restoration must be accomplished, as well as intense cultural impregnation, adaptation, and consumption in a short time span. The journey is drawn out for we have to wait for the second memoir, *Bella Tuscany*, for the Spring Kitchen recipe collection. Recipes are condensed, several on a page, like her trips, with twenty-two in the first chapter and twenty-three in the second, averaging three recipes per chapter, more than most memoirs. Entitled 'kitchen notes', they are anchored in the seasons and in her Italian kitchen, grouped around the courses on an Italian menu. They are short recipe collections, fragments, moments in time, with fresh, seasonal ingredients defining the recipes. They are evocative of the notes for travellers that Durrell includes in *Prospero's Cell* and *Reflections on a Marine Venus*, the first on peasant remedies, a brief history of Corfu, as well as succinct indications of things to see, visit and eat; the second also on peasant remedies of equally apocryphal origins, a calendar of flowers and saints of Rhodes—the natural and the spiritual—and a bibliography; both a sort of guide to the place and the people.

Shoba Narayan's chapter "Night Train to Mumbai" reads like a travel guide to local Indian food, filled with descriptions of the ubiquitous and idiosyncratic tiffin carriers and other street—or rather platform—fare that occupies the landscapes of long train journeys. "The most important thing when traveling by train in India is not the location of your seat [...] whether you have confirmed tickets, or even your destination. The crucial element is the size of your neighbour's tiffin carrier." (*Monsoon Diary*, 60). The contents of the tiffin carriers change with the season, while the train and platform food changes depending on the station and the region, each station having its own specialties. (61). The train rides are represented as food odysseys, an allegory of life, in which the solicitations are incessant, culminating in the perfect taste of *vadas* cooked on the station platform at the journey's end (61). The journeys are rich in the regional differences in food and character. "It was access to this glorious, multicuisine, home-cooked food that made the train journeys of my childhood memorable." (61). The chapter is a profusion of food that displays itself like a map of India with dishes to indicate the cities and regions. The journey is inherent in the food. Food is in itself in

transit, a reflection of the condition of the passenger herself. The food incites travel: "Almost every station in India sells a regional specialty that causes passengers to dart in and out of trains" (63), like journeys within journeys. "Kerala, where my father spent his childhood and still leaves his heart, is where I've eaten the best banana *appams*, fried in coconut oil on the platform. A few stations down on our journey to Bombay was the summer resort of Lonavla, where my mother would hop out of the train to buy *chikkis* (peanut brittle)" (63). There is a backwards and forwards movement of fluctuation; the passengers go to the food or the food comes to the passengers: "As if the stations weren't distraction enough, a steady stream of vendors brought food into the train." (63). The movement of food echoes the descriptions of the non-stop round of meals and snacking in America with which Narayan concludes the book, demonstrating her family's adaptability to the eating styles in their new country (221-223). Each of these inner or outer travel experiences are examples of the multiple smaller journeys within the central journey, the narrative thread that leads from the diaspora-trauma exile to the voyage of self-discovery.

Nomadism, authenticity and evolution

In the perpetual movement of the tiffin carriers and railway food, lies the inherent nomadism of eating, integrating displacement into foodways and shifting loyalties. Nomadism is typically practiced by a group, with a cultural and ethnically-charged identity, as a way of life. Within perpetual displacement is the suggestion that there is hope of a better life, with more to eat, and greater comfort, but the reality does not always match. The traditional motivation for nomadism is the search for food and water, for a piece of land that can, for the duration of its resources, provide sustenance to a group. There is no start or end point, and stopping points are part of an inevitable and endless continuum. Nomadism implies no fixed home and no ultimate destination, which can be seen as a counter argument to the essential argument of culinary memoirs – to find oneself, one's identity and one's home. For some, perhaps none of that is possible and narrators such as Narayan and Zonana appear to be in a perpetual state of

transition. For residence travel writers such as Lawrence Durrell, a form of nomadism is a permanent state of being.[255]

Writers look for a place that will provide resources to fulfil their primary needs. The idea of moving is found in several memoirs, notably those of Abu-Jaber, Christensen, Martin, Rossant, Weiss and Zonana. The quest is seemingly endless. The spirit of nomadism can be inherited from parents who have immigrated, as a sort of spiritual or emotional obligation or unconscious necessity. In the search of 'food' to satiate diverse hungers, memoirs describe nomadic displacements, reciting recipes formulas as incantations that preserve a vestige of loyalty to the point of origin. Nomadic writing maps displacement as a response to issues of identity. Food itself, like diasporic groups and migrants, can also evolve as a separate entity to that of its ethnic source. Food preparation and eating are in themselves a form of travel, with the confrontation of new or transformed culinary cultures. Food plays the role of a cultural and identarian go-between, as well as the temporal emissary of which we have spoken earlier. The writer's dilemma of essential nomadism is a commonplace of which Hemingway and Durrell are examples, but theirs is not the case for the majority of memoir authors who find their writing voice in the kitchen, a space of confrontation and challenge.

Nomadism is interruptive, challenging fixed ideas—often imposed by the country of adoption—of immigration and genre (Braziel, n.pag.). Multicultural and plurilingual 'border crossings' occupy nomadic migrant writers, writing the linguistic and identarian vicissitudes of migration. The mere presence of foreign names for dishes and ingredients, which are not always translated, creates linguistic turmoil in the text, while the narrative journey itself is interrupted by itinerant pauses for recipes and culinary commentary, giving the reader a sense of a nomadic route with abrupt changes in discourse, temporal location—from the past to the present—from narrative to anecdote, from trauma to well-being, and at the same time creating exilic spaces and fixed identity categories. Robin Cohen reminds us of the way that the evolution of foodways parallels human evolution; in the postmodern world of the 1990s, identities had become

[255] Following his intensely nomadic existence in the 1940s and 1950s, Durrell settled in the Languedoc town of Sommières for the last 25 years of his life.

deterritorialized and constructed and deconstructed in a flexible and situational way (Cohen, 2008, 2), symptomatic of a form of nomadism.

Paradoxically, nomadic writing is impregnated with the idea of home, emblems of nomadism infiltrating the home space. Sasha Martin gives the example of her mother's peripatetic spice jars; Jaffrey and Narayan, their life-formulas ritually marked on their tongues, in their bodies; Weiss, and Zonana their roving ancestral household relics. Nomadism implies that deterritorialization is a permanent state. However, Martin writes: "the nomads are never truly homeless. Never alone. For starters, the hospitality is extensive; everyone who turns up at a nomad's tent will be invited for a meal and even an overnight stay." (323). Her words imply a solidarity amongst nomadic writers, reminding us that nomadism is typically practiced in groups.

Nomadism also raises the question of authenticity that we have addressed previously in the context of diaspora. Authenticity can be seen to engender inertia and a state of immobility, an adherence to traditions in the domain of foodways, while inevitable mutations imply a permanent evolution. With the pluralism of globalization, identity is questioned, and no longer taken for granted. Food consumption is seen as a 'narrative of affiliative desire' [...] Fuelled by a 'narrative of anxiety' over 'authentic' foods—'as mother made them'—the act of eating is transformed into a performance of "gastro-nostalgia" (Srinivas quoted in Counihan, 2013, 356), that we witness in the works of Jaffrey, and Narayan, who express a sense of mission in their nostalgic desire to keep tradition alive to pass on a sense of their Indian identity. We have talked about the difficulty of transposing foods in a way that respects the foodscape and foodways of origin. Recipes evolve so that once the immigrant lands in a new host land, she, in effect, continues to voyage with the transformation of her foodways.

Contemporary literary nomadism can potentially be considered superficial, not merely because the journeys have none of the epic qualities of nineteenth century travel, or the dominant discourse of home and home cooking, but also because the authors, many of whom are food writers, use a normative globalized language, associated with established food writing of a specific socio-economic environment. Their vocabulary is lavish, precise and globalised. Christensen is effusive: "toothsome animal deliciousness" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 201), "muscular and chewy and tender and sweet" (132), "warm and sweet and bursting with juice" (166). Food and home cooking are portrayed as

resisting the dangers of globalizing transformation that might accompany nomadism for food traditionally represents security,[256] with an emphasis on authenticity, yet, we find the same lexical range in other works. Authors use the language of contemporary food journalism, a form of linguistic culinary seduction. Furiya is equally predictable: "The savory rich beef broth and zesty spices and onions were like a melody that played on my tongue, but it was the fresh homemade noodles, cooked to a perfect softness, that made the dish." (*How to Cook a Dragon*, 287). Multicultural writers ultimately speak the same language of food, as culinary memoirs shape a place for themselves within the corpus of gastronomic food writing.

Differences according to Carol Bardenstein lie in the taste, the "woefully compromised fragment" (2002, 354), of another place and time that cannot be fully recuperated: the bungled lamb slaughter that leaves Bud and his brothers traumatized with spoiled meat, reminds them that "they were no longer what they thought they were" (*Language of Baklava*, 19), and the American-style pancakes cooked in Jordan that taste "dense and chewy and smack of fried butter, wheat, olive oil, and scorched iron (38). Bud's ambivalence to the two destinations pulls him in opposite directions, as he oscillates between homeland and host land, and is the source of culinary failures, revealing the potential instability of foodways. For food, subject to diverse oral and written influences, develops its own form of nomadism and continues to evolve without the community; it is constantly in movement.

Robert Louis Stevenson claims that there is no foreign land; it is the traveller only that is foreign.[257] The front yard barbecue that should have brought the neighbours together, casts them as outsiders. The neighbours come by to say: "Well, they saw you-all out here eating or burning things or something [...] maybe some kind of trouble going on out here?" (81). Abu-Jaber's friend on the school bus: "If your family doesn't know how to behave, my parents will have to find out about getting you out of this neighborhood." (82). Furiya also dreaded this type of reaction from her friends to her parents' life-style and foodways. However, her mother's adaptation of a western omelette seasoned with special Japanese sauce, received approval, devoured by her

[256] This position will be discussed in section B of part IV on food as nourishment.
[257] *The Silverado Squatters*, part II, chapter 3. 1883.

friend "I couldn't read Tracy's expression, but one forkful turned into another, until her plate was empty except for streaks where she had run her portions along the plate to sop up the last of the *tonkatsu* sauce." (*Bento Box*, 79). She stood a test of assimilation and the nomadic Japanese food had adapted to the new country: they had evolved together.

Itinerance and self-discovery

Itinerance embodies the idea of a journey of self-pursuit, seeking identity within a movement of roaming and journeying, at once aimless and purposeful, undertaken momentarily to answer a specific need. Itinerance has two facets, that associated with diaspora travel that is imposed, inevitably associated with flight and homelessness, and that associated with class privileges from which one leaves a secure home to travel with or without a clearly defined destination. Clifford states that when travel is foregrounded as a cultural practice it requires that we reconceive dwelling (1997, 44). Contrary to the notion of nomadism, where one's home is where one places one's bag, such that one must perpetually carry and kindle the notion of home in foreign environments in the spirit of Sasha Martin's or Kate Christensen's mothers, itinerance embodies the presence of a home from which one has come, to which one is tied, and to which one will return. Hemingway epitomises the nomadic state, ostensibly with no fixed home, moving seasonally in search of sustenance. Writers such as Abu-Jaber, and Furiya have family homes but share with their parents a relationship of regret and frustration with regard to their land of origin. Christensen has a locus of familial contact with her mother, but her nomadic existence is essentially an itinerant journey seeking a place to call home, making her journey a form of flight in the pursuit of emotional nourishment. She is fascinated by literary examples of erstwhile stability: "[…] the severe repercussions of going against your place in tradition and society […] I was fascinated by the literary evidence that they existed, as my own life went on being fractured and uprooted." (*How to Cook a Moose*, 9).

Traditions and travel are a source of reconstituting self, of rewriting one's story. Gabrielle Hamilton describes travel, food and self-discovery as "a slow meandering trip around the whole world" (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 117). Sasha Martin believes that her blog project will "quell some of my wanderlust […] Little did I know that it would be nearly

impossible to separate my history from the future I wanted to create." (*Life from Scratch,* 248). Her initial eccentric project is transformed into a philosophy of life. She describes her travels as "our family's journey to eat our way around the world [...] In this marathon of food, I find the right stride, savouring the process, not the destination [...] Happiness is not the destination..." (251, 337, 342). The foodways of others are suggested to contain knowledge that will help one to understand oneself and others. Fisher describes the first tastes of chocolate and croissant arriving in Paris as "really the first thing I had tasted since we were married ... tasted to remember. They were part of the warmth and excitement of that hotel room, with Paris waiting." (49) She confesses her ignorance of gastronomical ways—food is a new world of discovery and exploration. "We felt we had seen the far shores of another world. We were drunk with the land breeze that blew from it, and the sure knowledge that it lay waiting for us." (*Gastronomical Me*, 59).

Itinerance is inward focused too, a quest for self-discovery. Itinerant food that one encounters in travels, or simply the food of another tradition, are by their nature, not personal home cooking, and yet they prove themselves to also offer self-understanding. Martin cooks food from dozens of foreign cultures, yet she does it within the confines of her own kitchen and finds it helps her build a home and unite her family. Fisher and David, on the other hand, travel to discover other cultures in which they immerse themselves. Food takes us to other places and confronts us with otherness, leaving behind the safety of one's own traditions. Culinary memoirs, in approaching alterity oppose home with external foreign spaces, as an individual versus a collective dichotomy. Seeking home is "a form of fundamentalism, built around what Rushdie calls the 'absolutism of the Pure' [...] the longing for home is not an innocent utopia." (Morley and Robins, 8). Anita Mannur explains: "Food, as a central part of the cultural imagination of diasporic populations, becomes one of the most visible and valuable sites from which to enquire into the richly layered texture of how race is imagined and reinterpreted within the cultural arena, both to affirm and resist notions of home and belonging." (Mannur, 8). The need for wholeness is not simply a desire to return to the hearth: "The desire to remember home by fondly recreating culinary memories cannot be understood merely as a reflectively nostalgic gesture; rather such commemorative acts must be read as a commentary on what it means to inhabit different diasporic

locations while constantly battling the implications of routing memory and nostalgia through ones relationship to culinary practices." (Mannur, 20).

Authors such as Abu-Jaber, Weiss and Zonana must learn to occupy different diasporic locations, assembling a coherent whole through the names and ingredients of recipes and dishes, as a way to anchor cultural identity; their itinerance is as necessary as reestablishing an attachment to a concept of home and its symbolic representation in the form of culinary traditions. In front of the derelict synagogue, Zonana has a sensation of homecoming (*Dream Homes*, 178). It is a place of healing as well as worship and also the place where she was spiritually conceived. Her mother, respecting an ancient belief, came to sleep there in the hope of conceiving a child: "'When storms and tempests threaten us', Maimonides wrote in 1167, 'we used to wander from place to place.'" Zonana's diaspora finds rest and cure, identity and home. (*Dream Homes*, 180).

The journey of self-discovery is one of internal reflection, which is nonetheless partially stimulated by a period of wandering, whether literal or metaphorical. Francis Affergan writes: "se découvrir soi-même, à travers autrui—versant endotique du voyage" (14). Opening up to oneself means opening up to others and other cultures as Affergan explains: "M. Eliade conclut que le voyage en soi est un support initiatique puisqu'il permet de renaître Autre et Ailleurs" (61). The association between another state and another place is an important dichotomy that is central to memoirs. However, the other place is not neutral and its otherness must be negotiated. Georges Perec declared that we should find our own 'endotic anthropology' in reaction to our 'pillaging' of the exotic through the mass media.[258] He considered that an abundant documenting of the ordinary in daily life—the 'infra-ordinary' or the 'endotic'—was an antidote to this. Through an obsessive and meticulous accounting for everything and anything in one's immediate surroundings, this 'endotic anthropology' would actively attempt to uncover the unimportant and the insignificant.[259] Perec's remark is related to the colonial

[258] Sarah O'Brien. (2017). "Not the exotic anymore, but the endotic": Georges Perec and Performing the Ordinary. *International Journal of Cultural Studies and Social Sciences*. Pending.
[259] "Peut-être s'agit-il de fonder enfin notre propre anthropologie : celle qui parlera de nous, qui ira chercher en nous ce que nous avons si longtemps pillé chez les autres. Non plus l'exotique, mais l'endotique. Interroger ce qui semble tellement aller de soi que nous en avons oublié l'origine [...] Interroger ce qui semble avoir cessé à jamais de nous étonner" (text published in *Cause Commune n°5*, February 1973, reprinted in *L'infra-ordinaire*. Paris: Seuil, 1989. 11).

arrogance of travel which belittles the exotic and the other through simplistic generalizations of mass media.

At the risk of being considered banal and mundane, culinary memoirs document the thrice-daily encounter with food, the intricacies of preparations, the exigences of ingredients and the communion of a common table. As our study has showed, the 'insignificant' of daily life harbours the core of each individual's identity, and the itinerant displacement of these rituals throws the essential of these rituals into relief and heightens awareness of the vital truths. Simple food rituals have the potential to become portable memories that can be displaced, transposed and remodelled. Ketu H. Katrak writes of her Indian childhood:

> As a young girl, I helped my mother – chopping onions, observing, and soaking the flavours almost through the pores of my skin where those memories were held intact. Years later, I tapped into those early remembrances that seem to be held as lovingly in my body as in my mind. […] My own memory banks about food overflowed only after I left India to come to the United States as a graduate student. […] Food, home and travel […] Now, having homes in so many locations, different foods also provide a kind of anchor for my wandering spirit […] (Katrak, 269, 270, 272).

Itinerance does not exclude the other, but is able to embrace at least the notions of their tradition. In the previous section, Sasha Martin refers to the hospitality inherent in nomadism of food, which, by nature of its intrinsic generosity, tied to a fundamental need for survival, associates reception and exchange, dynamics at the core of the culinary memoir narrative. Gauvin et al. write:

> L'hospitalité se trouve au croisement de plusieurs questionnements postmodernes sur l'identité, l'appartenance, l'interaction culturelle et la pratique de l'écriture. Elle donne lieu à un discours d'ailleurs, sur l'étranger, la mémoire et ses fictions, la poétique du déracinement, les passages, la migration et l'écriture migrante, la ville, la langue et la traduction, l'hybridité et le métissage. (Gauvin et al., 9).

Food, or the debates and spaces that foodways occupy, take narrator and reader to distant places in emotional and imaginative landscape, using multiple channels of mental access. E. Barrie Kavash writes in "My Grandmother's Hands" that "[t]he foods that we eat and the fasts without food and water that we journey on, compel us back to these dimensions." (Kavash, 104). Elizabeth David used writing as a sacred and powerful tool in her eyes: "Well at least I could put my memories of it on to paper, so that I would

not forget about the bright vegetables, the basil, the lemons, the apricots [...] the evening ices eaten on an Athenian café terrace in sight of the Parthenon [...]" the evocation is long, rich and dreamlike in its condensed quality. (*Mediterranean Food*, 5-6). The food eaten becomes part of the perception of landscape, and represents it, as monuments or exotic sites on a postcard, momentarily, at least, disconnected from self. As such, food incarnates the dynamic of displacement and movement at the heart of the search for origins and identity.

The itinerant dimension of culinary memoirs instils a sense of distance, the gap between the homeland and the host land, between the original identity and the hoped-for sense of connection and assimilation. Abu-Jaber wrote: "I sense the distances between places, the country house and the suburbs, even between America and Jordan, start to disintegrate. Geography turns liquid. There is something in us connecting every person to every other person" (*Language of Baklava*, 229). We experience the distance through the imaginative eye of writers like David, and Durrell, Fisher and Gray, Jaffrey and Narayan, so many place and dishes. For Gaston Bachelard the role of imagination is primordial: “Toujours imaginer sera plus grand que vivre.” (Bachelard, 1957, 90). “Nous vivons tour à tour dans la sécurité et dans l’aventure. Elle est cellule et elle est monde.” (1957, 61). The kitchen offers a space that is insular and global, a space of security and of adventure, of immobility around the stove, and the birth of a journey, but perhaps the narrative itself and the recipe as a microcosm of that narrative too.

B. Places of origin and destination

> Nous sommes des animaux migratoires, et pour cela, même condamnés à explorer quelque chose de l'autre côté du jardin, de la rue, de la rivière, de la montagne, comme si notre ici n'était autre que la cause (ou la conséquence) de là ou du là-bas.
>
> — Alberto Manguel, "De l'autre côté du fleuve", 2012.[260]

By the nature of our itinerant lives, often forced, or willed into migration, we are compelled to confront otherness, to compare ourselves with a presence of alterity in our lives, and ultimately to find an attraction in that comparison. While section A was focused on travel as a dimension of cooking and eating from a personal and intimate perspective, section B focuses on the possibility that the travel dimension—be that journeying or displacement—may extrapolate traditions from the intimate environment of the home and the stove, into macrocosmic spaces with distinct cultural identities. Narrators are preoccupied with origins and destination that are separated on a continuum, along which they travel, and which may take precedence over the notion of dwelling and being. Culinary memoirs offer multiple perspective points: exile as a mode of occupation, distanced from the place of origin; diasporic journeys that disperse the location of dwelling into an interstitial habitus;[261] tourism as travel between points of origin and destination. (Kaplan, 1996, 143). Lawrence Durrell's perspective on travel, for example, blurs the question of origins and destination, with a focus on allowing the spirit of place to develop one's sense of self effortlessly by responding to the beckoning call of one's "personal landscape of the heart" (*Spirit of Place*, 237). Indeed, Durrell argues the case against travel if "the education of the sensibility" had been possible instead of the "cramming of the skull with facts and pragmatic data which positively stifle the growth of the soul" (237). A "world religion" which made allowance "for the different dialects of

[260] "We are migratory animals and, because of that, condemned to explore something on the other side of the garden, the street, the river, the mountain, as if our here was the cause (or the consequence) of what is over there." (Alberto Manguel. "De l'autre côté du fleuve : carte blanche à Alberto Manguel". *Explorateurs : œuvres du Centre National des Arts Plastiques*. Catalogue of the exhibit "Explorateurs" at the Musée de l'Abbaye Sainte-Croix, 8 Jul. – 10 Nov. 2012. Sable d'Olonne: Musée de l'Abbaye Sainte-Croix, 2012. 26.). My translation.

[261] Pierre Bourdieu's term 'habitus' extends to the idea that our taste for cultural objects like food is developed and determined by our socio-cultural environment and education.

the different races" would have removed the necessity created by the postmodern fracturing of society and self to seek out an identity. Therefore, travel idioms abound in culinary memoirs as both the cause and effect of the pursuit of origins and destination.

With the focus on the narrator, chapter 1 explores the aesthetics of food-focused travel, while chapter 2 delves into the spirit of place, evoked by Durrell, and a central concept in culinary memoirs, a force of attraction that draws those searching for origins and identity. Chapter 3 focuses on the idea that specific places with marked mythical and cultural identities shape literary imaginations and culinary traditions.

1. Aesthetics of culinary travel writing

> Even the landscapes that we suppose to be the most free of our culture may turn out, on closer inspection, to be its product. And it is the argument of Landscape and Memory that this is a cause not for guilt and sorrow but for celebration [...] [A]t the very least it seems right to acknowledge that it is our shaping perception that makes the difference between raw matter and landscape. (Schama, 9, 10).

Simon Schama argues for the influence of landscape on our lives and memories, shaping individual and collective identity. In our "closer inspection" and "shaping perception" lies the process of focusing on self and the environment and circumstances that shape us. Infusing the landscape with connotations of food in memoirs, and a concern to represent the exotic as part of one's search for identity is guided by a sense of aesthetics. We have previously explored the aesthetics of culinary traditions in part I B, evoking vivid descriptions delivered in exquisite prose, the interplay of culinary wisdom with creative memoirs able to create narratives that adjust—sometimes entrenched—perspectives, generating an often optimistic, 'feel-good' narrative that embraces heroic idealism and a combined aesthetics of place and food. In this chapter, we will look at the aesthetics of travel as it relates to food, firstly from the perspective of travel writing as a pursuit of identity in symbiosis with foodways, looking specifically at landscape and the local colour of unfamiliar places, the process of writing about such places, and finally the narrator's fascination with alterity, despite the pull of home.

Finding focus: aesthetics of travel in search for identity

> [A] trip is never just a trip and a place is never just a place. (*Crescent*, 146).

A principle paradox of culinary memoirs that we have touched upon earlier in this study is that food, as it is represented in culinary memoirs, embodies the notion of travel, while at the same time inherently representing the hearth and the moral message that food, as constructive and healing, should rather be tied to the home. Dishes journey: from the Polish *shtetl* to the New York home of Elizabeth Ehrlich's parents-in-law, or from Japan to Linda Furiya's parent's enclave in Indiana. Sasha Martin travels the world without leaving her kitchen, approximating authentic ingredients, and taking her family on an emotional as well as gastronomic journey with the challenge of conquering their culinary reticence. She confronts new foodways without cultural context or commentary, sometimes with almost fatal consequences when she poisoned herself and her baby with cassava root (*Life from Scratch*, 266-270).

Narratives resonate with past and present, as well as past and future, whether the journey is inner or outer, whether it involves returning to a distant homeland in the case of Abu-Jaber or exploring the journey in her kitchen with Wizenberg, creating a complex tension between space and time. They pursue change as well as a deep desire for stability, reflecting the contention between progress and tradition, between moving forward and staying put. What does the author do with this splintered condition and what aesthetics emerge from their vision?

Contending with diverse challenges casts the narrator in the role of heroine. The traveller is represented as a hero figure, flawed, one might suggest, by a past or present trauma, undertaking a heroic journey in the pursuit of self and a place to call home. Evocations of diaspora reveal personal qualities of intrinsic value that arm the traveller, including courage, stoicism, resilience, humility, and self-searching, the latter of which, can, in itself, be perceived as a heroic act. Despite the fact that Sasha Martin's was abandoned by her mother, her adoptive parents and even her brother, through death, she retains her curiosity learned from her adoptive parents, yearning for travel: "I'd seen, lived, tasted the world, I was curious and hungry—because of what they'd given me". (139). The narrators' odysseys to and from homelands reflects the desire for an

authenticity within themselves and in their encounters, pursuing what Sylvain Venayre calls a "[r]encontre avec une nourriture simple, authentique qui est glorifiée" (2002, 79). Claudia Roden manifests loss and regret, but also bravery and determination to preserve the essential aspects of her community's culture in a personal and anthropological gesture. She goes to vast lengths to collect authentic recipes, reaching out even to unknown people, ironically sometimes workers from the immigrant population in London, like hers.

Hemingway's and Durrell's experiences embody the idea of an adventure into the heart of the soul. Venayre describes their drive: "L'aventure est pour eux d'abord, le moyen de parvenir à une certaine vérité sur la nature humaine [...] l'aventure comme vérité de l'homme moderne" (2002, 110), which is independent of external conditions (177). The traveller becomes a sort of mythical character, a transcendental figure of displacement in a modern fragmented world, mystified in the modern imagination, as emblem of an evolution from victim to hero-adventurer. Venayre quotes Joseph Conrad as saying that we are all unique craftsmen of all that is fabulous and romantic in the world (177). Mayes' husband, working in the garden of the house, whose rebuilding symbolises her own reconstruction, is described as a paragon of strength, a "powerful angel [...] the newest in an endless line of mortals who've worked to keep this farm from sliding back into the steep slope it once was" (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 84-85). He is immortalized by his symbiosis with the land and its ancient history.

Narrators are cast in the role of heroic truth seekers transcending their own personal quest. This began with the universal truths that M.F.K. Fisher draws from her culinary and itinerant experiences when observing cooking and marketing habits: "there can be no more shameful carelessness than with the food we eat for life itself. When we exist without thought or thanksgiving we are not men or beasts" (*Art of Eating*, 188), a comparison that George Orwell had himself made.[262] The roles evolve with contemporary heroes, such as Diana Abu-Jaber, who speaks with the transparency and self-doubt of the modern age, expressing less of the assurance of Fisher, and rather the struggle to find oneself: "What's supposed to keep you safe is what makes you afraid.

[262] M.F.K. Fisher: *How to Cook a Woolf*, 1942 and George Orwell: *Down and Out in Paris and London*, 1962.

The thing you can't have is the thing you want the most. It takes forever just to get to the beginning." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 264).

Places, as well as narratorial roles, are reinvented as spaces of discovery, mythic, metaphysical locations in which narrators project a sense of home. Authors mythologize places to imbue them with qualities that can be cherished as homes "dans la logique romantique de la valorisation du mystère des lieux, les amoureux de l'aventure doivent renoncer aux guides et aux itinéraires [...]" (Venayre, 2002, 178). Those reinvented spaces of self-discovery and adventure must be personal, accessed by a self-sought itinerary, even as the truths about self, turn out to be universal. While culinary memoirs can serve as generalized moral guides, the journey to the core of one's identity is personal. Frances Mayes' memoir describes a culturally motivated migration, that was neither permanent nor necessary, but which weaves together an aesthetic of movement, in displacement and restoration. Travel, in the example of Elizabeth Gilbert's itinerant tale, is described as a spiritual exercise, in which she leaves the relative comfort of her home country, amidst the pain of a difficult divorce, to find epicurean pleasure, spiritual fulfilment and a culture that associates both.

The frequent examples of Paris as a source of personal inspiration, reflect the influence a place can hold in the literary imagination. Ernest Hemingway realized this when he stated that Paris belonged to him. His attention is captured by a waitress in a café, when he writes: "I've seen you, beauty, and you belong to be now [...] You belong to me and all Paris belongs to me and I belong to this notebook and this pencil." (*Moveable Feast*, 6). Molly Wizenberg too, when she understood that food writing was her future, feels a sense of literary clarity and vision: "Paris has a way of getting your priorities straight." (*Homemade Life*, 163). Sasha Martin finds a new hope in Paris in the aftermath of her brother's suicide: "The city was both alive and ancient in a way I'd never seen, never touched, never felt before. I was small in her embrace—safe." (*Life from Scratch*, 104). Lawrence Durrell also uses the example of Paris, as a mythical destination where one can get in touch with oneself, the myth of personal as well as public creation: "He may not be able to formulate it very clearly to himself in literary terms, but he will taste the unmistakable keen knife-edge of happiness in the air of Paris: the pristine brilliance of a national psyche which knows that art is as important as love or food." (*Spirit of Place*, 233). Durrell describes how Paris sharpens the senses as an example of

the way mythologized places create a distance which offers a clearer perspective and the focus achieved through symbolism necessary to achieve a better understanding of one's origins and identity. It provides both closeness and distance, a constant refocusing, zooming in from displacement to recipe: the detailed focus on the recipe which then enables a broad perspective on the foodways of an entire people, a shift from the kitchen to the homeland.

We have previously discussed the movement between an individual and a community focus; from the perspective of travel, this is perceptible in the fluctuating focus that allows the narrator the possibility to understand her origins. Abu-Jaber's trip to the Jordan desert and the time spent there with her Bedouin family, distanced both geographically and culturally from her home in America, broadens her focus from her half-assimilated American perspective to a wider vision, stimulated by her senses, that allows existential questions to emerge. She observes her mother, wary, disoriented on the edge of the women's circle at a distance from her father: "I sense a deep weirdness about my own existence in the world. How could these two people have ever found each other? How could I have ever come to be?" (*Language of Baklava*, 64). She participates in the extraordinary meal of *mensaf*, crowded around the serving platter, her vision blurred in the food and eating, as she plunges her fingers into the hot, sparkling thick liquid mixture: "The goat melts into the rice melts into the sauce, and I cannot separate the eating from the food itself" (65), just as she can no longer separate her two identities:

> I think of the blowing tent and the hot *mensaf* and how purely good everything tasted after a day in the open air. [...] I wonder if we will ever spend time with the Bedouins again. Deeper down, from beneath that speculation, emerges a larger, more formless question, something about whether people have to decide who they are and where their home is. Do we have to know who we are once and for all? How many lives are we allowed? (*Language of Baklava*, 68-69).

She slips into pretend sleep, the easier option to facing questions as vast as the desert sky, then brings the lens up close with the recipe for Bedouin *Mensaf Leben*. In the next chapter, on her return to America, the cold breeze snaps her awake, and her perspective changes once more: "I'm dazed by the blankness around me: the sleekly painted walls [...] There is something mothlike about the houses in the neighborhood—in the morning they look half dissolved." (71). Just as she found a new perspective on her own identity in the desert, so Abu-Jaber when cooking with her daughter in the close-

up opening scene patiently teaches her daughter to break eggs, and comes to understand that, in the microcosmic realm of cooking: "A bowl is a place to find meaning." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 16). She learns at close quarters from her father, ("I lean against the swath of his back as he combs the bulgur wheat"), that life is like food, minutely focused on the grains, to remove the rough sand, a metaphor for the search for meaning: "'You have to search the bulgur so carefully,' Bud says, pointing here and there. The tiniest, hardest stones hide inside the grains. Bits of sand that look just like bulgur. 'That's how life is!' he says with a swoop of his hand, mysterious.'" (*Life Without a Recipe*, 32).

The wanderlust that Sasha Martin experiences honing her focus on her spice jars, reveals to her a new future, as well as her deepest, darkest past; she moves from spice jar to the wide world, from the minutely observed textures of herbs and honey, to a fathomless and infinite future, from her tiny spice jars to the vast world. In them, she sees the determining influences that shaped her, the attitudes of her caregivers and the countries that "fed" her. Her future will be determined by how she fills them:

> I pulled open the spice drawer and held one of the empty spice jars to the dim light. In it, I saw my childhood—Mom's improvisation, Patricia's determination, and the 12 countries that fed me: France, world famous for pastries, tarragon sauce and lacy lavender; Greece known for thick yogurt topped with golden pools of honey; Tunisia where the baskets burst with spices so heady the scent lingered on my clothes for days. [...] If I put the right ingredients into my spice jars, I realized, they'd be portals to that bygone era. [...] 'I'm going to cook the world!' I exclaimed. [...] 'Recipes from every single country!' [...] Little did I know that it would be nearly impossible to separate my history from the future I wanted to create. (*Life from Scratch*, 247-248).

Luisa Weiss' life is punctuated by journeys to and from parents, homes, jobs. By focusing on food, she is able to diminish the sense of distance: "Cooking was crucial: It couldn't shrink the Atlantic Ocean or lessen the six-hour time difference. But it made my world seem a little bit smaller." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 6). She could make her father's tomato sauce to revisit her Brooklyn home, her mother's grated chocolate in yogurt to remind her of Berlin, her grandmother's stewed peppers and chicken to transport her to Italy, yet she realized the limitations of her powers: "I couldn't will my beloved Berlin streets across the world or make the people I loved appear when I needed them, but by summoning the flavors of Berlin and the foods of my loved ones, my kitchen became my sanctuary [...]" (6). Culinary memoirs are an example of the way that an aesthetic model,

as Roland Barthes describes it, in this case that of travel as assimilated by the subject, determines the narrator's understanding of the world. The narrator adjusts the focus to find the right distance, from narrow focused recipe details—reminding us of Barthes' *punctum*, the touching detail, sometimes captured in a poignant single ingredient—to broad sweeps of personal history, blurred half-forgotten memories to sharp insights on life; the presence of landscape sets the lens wide to a panoramic view that embraces personal needs within an expansive horizon that allows the narrator to find herself.

Finding focus enables the narrator to discover a vision of the world which emerges as an intimate dimension of the travel aesthetic. Francis Affergan explains that instantaneous sensorial appreciation together with a travel narrative, creates a double vision, bringing into focus the present moment and the trace of an original lost space. (Affergan, 123).[263] Friedman writes that Durrell had multiple visions: "the narrator may reflect all things and persons so prismically that his vision is not single but multiple" (19). David's food is described both *in situ*, in all its immediacy and freshness, so that the reader has a visual image of Mediterranean foodways, and in carefully explained recipes listing authentic ingredients, while other scenes and landscapes are presented through intertextual vignettes to provide an intellectual perspective, or descriptions of the Athenian cafes, captured for her British-American audience.

Focuses are altered in relation to the intended aesthetic effect. Let us broaden our focus momentarily to consider the theories of modern travel writing. Paul Fussell criticises modernity with its elegiac notion of travel as a lost art, that nonetheless participates in the critical construction of current conditions of displacement through its evaluation of cultural distance and difference. He demonstrates the critical conflation of exile, expatriation and tourism, with the leisure pursuits of the Grand Tour, practiced by Euro-Americans of means (including sketching, diary-keeping, souvenir-collecting, and observing customs), combined with the material displacement of professional populations. By the turn of the century, travel had become a crucial part of the imaginative scope of the middle and upper classes of Europe and America. Exile had also

[263] "Le récit de voyage et de découverte permet une double lecture du même monde ; il ouvre accès à un monde dédoublé ; celui de la vue, intranscriptible puisqu'il nous projette hors de nous dans une instantanéité insaisissable ; et celui de la narration, dont la constitution spatiale est le calque d'un espace originaire perdu et dont la fonction consiste à reproduire le moment inchoatif." (Affergan, 123).

become a universal condition, which implied putting distance between one's past and an unimaginable future. It is the trope that best signifies all modes of displacement in modernity, along with an accompanying ambivalence towards redemption and return as well as a celebration of distance and alienation (Kaplan, 1996, 35). In the early to mid-twentieth century, Hemingway and Durrell celebrated their forced alienation and exile, finding that the necessity of bringing their attention to the intimacies of a foreign culture helped them to gain focus on their own lives, much like Adam Gopnik at the birth of the twenty-first century.

Mary Louise Pratt talks of the aestheticizing project of travel writing (221). She questions its influence: "With what codes has travel and exploration writing produced the 'rest of the world'?" Contemporary travel writing may be reduced to a desire to 'manage' the difficult and the unknown. (Pratt, 221). The aesthetics of the travel dimension in culinary memoirs are aligned with an emerging genre of 'global' or 'world' writing, such as the global novel, that employs ways of imagining a world that sees diverse places and peoples as intimately connected, and of examining what it means to be human. James Clifford, in his work on routes and travel, promotes an approach in which cultural interpretations emphasize and advocate the importance of hybridity and border crossings, as seen previously in section A, as ways to understand an increasingly globalised and interconnected world.[264] Finding critical judgment that distances oneself from one's origins is one consequence achieved through the act of writing, recording, conserving. The global themes are not about the human condition, such as the mistreatment of women by dystopian writers like Margaret Atwood, but the universal questions about origins and how to negotiate a meaningful future. Diana Abu-Jaber's novel *Crescent* is a global novel in which she explores many of the themes of her memoir which it precedes, about food and belonging. Sirine, the protagonist, feeds lonely immigrants confronting universal problems as a cook in a multi-ethnic Middle Eastern café. The global scope is contained within the walls of the café, for she is never tempted to leave her Los Angeles neighbourhood where she was orphaned as a child.

[264] We will return to question of globalization and culinary traditions in our discussion of *terroir* later in this section.

Travels are not always about constant movement but also moments of stillness. Culinary memoirs are narratives that put into play the aesthetics of movement and of dwelling. The metaphor of one's life study as an identity quest is a form of odyssey, a significantly charged metaphor of travel and an emblem of universal world literature. (Jelinek, 1986, 179). The odyssey allegory speaks of long, arduous, multi-phased and non-linear journeys along whose route one finds self-understanding. Avtar Brah writes: "All diasporic journeys are composite in another sense too. They are embarked upon, lived and re-lived through multiple modalities, for example of gender, 'race', class, religion, language and generation." (184). Culinary memoirs as travel narratives celebrate the movement and transient phases of individual lives and the constant mobility of society. As society becomes increasingly fluid, voluntarily or not, so the need and desire to read narratives that embrace journeys, whether exotic or endotic, or of displacement, increases. From the publishers' perspective, travel writing as genre gains a vaster and more eclectic readership and a diversity of aesthetics. Adrien Pasquali writes: "cette effervescence éditoriale peut aussi apparaitre comme le signe paradoxal d'une valorisation du récit de voyage et de sa lecture par rapport à une mobilité de masse toujours plus accentuée." (Pasquali, 10).

This dichotomy brings us to the paradoxical, even ambiguous position broaching the aesthetics of travel, where aesthetics embraces a consideration of beauty and widely-recognized values, in relation to narratives of diasporic journeys. Our point of departure is the definition of aesthetics as a set of principles concerned with the nature and appreciation of beauty, especially as related to art. Putting aside the concentration camp recipe books, diasporic memoirs are governed by a set of principles, focusing on the aesthetics of the personal journey narrative, and which reserve the telling of the original journey for moments of memory flashback during meals or food preparation as in the examples of Miriam's cake baking or Furiya's meal with her father. Multiple minor journeys, as we discussed previously, ultimately merge into one journey via a convergence of narratives—symbolically represented by the recipes and food anecdotes—as it is lived and re-lived, produced, reproduced and transformed through individual as well as collective memory and re-memory. Roden's memoir cookbook represents the journeys as well as the diverse diasporic situations of many individuals and multiple communities. Durrell's multiple journeys converge also into a single

symbolic narrative of travel and residence which speaks of his own personal journey and residence.

It is within this confluence of narrativity that the diasporic travel narrative finds its aesthetic in the stories that emerge over the stove top or the dinner table. Avtar Brah writes: "'diasporic community' is differently imagined under different historical circumstances. [...] the identity of the diasporic imagined community is far from fixed or pre-given. It is constituted within the materiality of everyday life, in the everyday stories we tell ourselves individually and collectively" (Brah, 183). In Miriam's kitchen, Ehrlich makes *danishkes* with her daughter, who, at the same time, is playing with a Barbie doll, a preciously preserved relic of Miriam's daughter's childhood. As they prepare the filling, shape the pastries and bake the desert, Ehrlich returns to the past reliving the memory of Tamar, Miriam's deceased daughter, the hopes and ambitions her parents had shared for her, and their dreams now transferred to Ehrlich's own daughter. The scene is made poignant by Ehrlich's humility before the unspeakable tragedy, before her self-questioning about how she should raise her own daughter, and before the journey back in time to her parents-in-law's youth, their dashed life plans and the pain on which their life was built. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 264-268).

As we saw in the section on food as a translation, Clifford proposes that a location may also be "an itinerary rather than a bounded site" (1997, 11), as a place may also embody the spirit of a journey. One is always arriving somewhere, and that somewhere, becomes part of the journey in the imagination of the narrator. The sum of the elements of a locus is the origin and destination of the narrator's hopes and dreams. Embodied in this idea is a certain degree of naïvety. Paris, for Hemingway, is part of his journey, a place of residence for the marginalised group of Lost Generation artists, and from which Hemingway and others radiate, from the illusion of a solid base that remains a border territory, a place of uncertain identity. Durrell's travel books were books of foreign residence, yet together narrate an itinerary, like that of Hemingway's own corpus, a series of places, where the narrator pauses to find himself.

This fluctuation of movement and residence in culinary travel writings is symptomatic of a rhizomatic structure that is closely associated with the instability of journeying. The literal and emotional 'wandering' of traveling memoirists can be equated with horizontal, rhizomatic movements, that extend in unforeseen and

unpredictable directions, and have multiple entry points. Two key components of what Deleuze and Guattari describe as rhizomatic cartography[265] include maps and tracings, which Deleuze and Guattari liken to the surface tubers of rhizomes and to the deep root structures of trees. A tracing serves as structure akin to a rooted, grounded, vertical, hierarchical arboreal history. A map operates rather like a rhizome, having no inherent deep structure. Memoirists use rhizomatic strategies as a system for survival and integration, while at the same time pursuing their need and quest for deep-rootedness in their pursuit of origins. The metaphors that Deleuze and Guattari use to describe sites of displacement correspond to the aesthetic resonance of travel in culinary memoirs. Caren Kaplan explains that the rhizome enacts or replicates the subjectivities of deterritorialization, burrowing through substance, fragmenting into simultaneous sprouts.

The tree is filiation but the rhizome is alliance, constituting an archaic relationship to space and subjectivity (Kaplan, 87). Alliance becomes the *modus operandi* for diaspora when filiation is severed or lost. For narrators, who are looking to the past to understand the filiation of roots in places and communities, the rhizomatic mode of connecting operates a forward-looking approach to self-understanding. While rhizomatic structures appear to be diffused rather than focused, for Felix Guattari,[266] aesthetics highlights a creative process, an ethic of experimentation that can free us from the 'fogs and miasmas' which obscure the creative possibilities of the future. Guattari is not referring to institutionalized art but to an 'artistry' or 'power of emergence' which traverses all domains (Guattari, 1995: 102).

This approach is an example of what Margaret Hagood has described as connections in "often unforeseen ways" (39). Joyce Zonana, for example, learns the language of cooking, and also its value, when she is assigned to write an ethnic restaurant cookbook, despite her protestations of ignorance, and her innate reticence. This unexpected 'horizontal' move towards the margins of New York society would turn out to be a stepping stone that takes her back to her culinary roots and her origins. The

[265] Rhizomatic cartography (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987), uses rhizoanalysis to map the workings of the rhizome. Rhizoanalysis functions as an analytic tool for examining multiplicities of ideas and concepts that move as emulations of rhizomes via subterranean flows of horizontal shoots.

[266] See Félix Guattari. *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (1995).

notion of connectedness is central to the aesthetics of travel as a pursuit of identity. The identity of individuals as well as communities are forged in the rituals of everyday life.

The writer can be considered a member of a "wandering, culturally inquisitive group", seeking new forms of connection, metamorphosis on a "distinctive aesthetic voyage" (Kaplan, 30). Caren Kaplan also talks about a "fruitful chaos of displacement" (29). Many such displacements are not, however, always considered fruitful: "When detachment is the precondition for creativity, then dissatisfaction or alienation as states of mind becomes a rite of passage for the 'serious' modern artist/writer" (36), an effect of 'statelessness', such as that which Hemingway or Durrell experience. Writers hold on to the sanctity of localities, such as Hemingway and the Michigan Woods, which he perceived at a critical distance from his expatriate vantage point, that he hoped he would one day acquire for Paris (*Moveable Feast*, 7). It is in the memoir narrative that a positive outcome can emerge or be scripted. Writers are also seeking traditions as the soil in which to anchor their identity and creativity, like Sasha Martin whose quest takes her around the world in search of meaning to her life.

Perceiving and writing the landscape

> And you think: if given once
> Authority over the word,
> Then how to capture, praise or measure
> The full round of this simple garden,
> All its nonchalance at being,
> How to adopt and raise its pleasure?
>
> Press as on a palate this observed
> And simple shape, like wine?
> And from the many undeserved
> Tastes of the mouth select the crude
> Flavour of fruit in pottery
> Coloured among this lovely neighbourhood?
>
> — Lawrence Durrell, "In the Garden: Villa Cleobolus", 1947.[267]

The timeless, mythical and sometimes borderless landscapes of culinary-inspired travel narratives that we discussed in the previous section, are central to the aesthetics of travel in terms of origins and destinations. As Simon Schama indicates such

[267] (Durrell, 1985, 175).

landscapes are honed by traditions and made residence or home by necessity or desire. Joyce Zonana's example of her accidental culinary legacy, from research and writing to recipe recording, leads us to consider the concept and analogy of 'deep maps' in relation to memoirs, landscape and travel. Deep maps, as subtle, detailed, multi-layered and multimedia depictions of places, embrace myriad aspects of everyday life (Bodenhamer, 3), including eating and foodways, often created by indigenous people, those for whom the elements are lived experience.[268] The visual and integrative aspect of maps enables them to reflect a complexity that words cannot mimic, (17, 23), such as Zonana's personal itinerary, that describes temporal as well as spatial evolutions. Representations of the past in culinary memoirs, are "a kind of mapping where the past is a landscape and history is the way we fashion it" (17). The deep map analogy helps to understand the landscape of culinary memoirs with their multiple layers of meaning embedded in narrative and artifice. At different levels, Elizabeth Ehrlich's work is a personal memoir of an individual quest, as well as a testimony to the life of Miriam, an observance record of the Jewish year, a holocaust memorial, and a privileged set of recipes from the holocaust generation of Eastern Europe.

On a primary level—one might say superficial in all senses of the term—, landscape is central to the aesthetics of travel with an abundance of sensually-charged food-related descriptions of landscapes. Within these descriptions, there is a travel dimension that is similarly exploited with emphasis on focus, perspective, visual details, and observation. Durrell's works accumulate these perspectives, with the sensual dimension of textures, colours, sounds and strong visual imagery; there is movement in nature with grass "fattening", flowers "unwrapping" and water "noisy", and a road winding through the landscape. The inner landscape is immanent in the outer landscape:

> One could feel the luxuriant grass fattening under the olives, and the spring flowers unwrapping their delicate petals on the anemone-starred slopes below Clepini [...] the road begins to wind through a landscape dense with orange and lemon trees, and noisy with running water. Almond and peach blossom graze the road, as improbably precise as the décor to a Japanese play. (*Bitter Lemons*, 46, 47).

[268] A literary example of a deep map narrative is William Least Heat-Moon's *PrairyErth: A Deep Map* (1991). Boston: Mariner Books, 1999. It is an account of the history and people of Chase County, Kansas, and the second in his *The Travel Trilogy*.

Sometimes descriptions span space and time. Roden's landscapes are dense with exotic ingredients that travel down from the thirteenth century: "The luscious ingredients in the recipes [from the thirteenth century *Kitab al Wusla il al Habib*] are echoed in the dishes of today—in the fruit stews of Morocco, the walnut and hazelnut sauces of Turkey and Syria, and the chickpeas, onions and lemons of Egypt." (*Middle Eastern Food*, 203). The landscapes of Abu-Jaber's childhood are rather local, intimate mealscapes at relatives' homes, each identified by a different dish that personifies them. On Saturdays: "The old houses along our elm-lined streets seem to sigh, screen doors ease open, the air sweetens and the sky leans back on one elbow. First, my father will make breakfast. After that, any one of a number of miraculous things can happen." (*Language of Baklava*, 5). Homemade breakfast, for all its mundanity, is the prelude to something potentially vaster and more exciting. It is followed by a long poetic list of the uncles' houses with their speciality food. Patience Gray's nomadic existence offers us examples of spatial shifts of focus. She lives in an array of remote, virtually inaccessible houses, some that are barely worthy of the name, such as the 'room' "roofed over but open to the south and west" used for drying wild herbs, a kitchen that seems to blend and become one with the landscape. Food is reduced to the essentials of what can be grown there and there is often a view. (*Honey from a Weed*, 72-73). At the same time that she performs the basic task of drawing water from the well, she also raises her eyes to embrace the landscape and her place within it: "lowering [the bucket] into the outdoor cistern had a marvellous view of the glittering Monte Sagra and the Apuanian Alps on the one side and on the other a view to the Tyrrhenian through the little hills, echoes of our own [...]" (27).

Displacement is essential to the formation of landscape perception, as it allows a shift of understanding about one's self and one's place in the world. Christine Montalbetti proposes three forms of travel literature which achieve a harmony or homogeneity between the writing and the experience described: the fable of writing and reading as a journey, the fable of the world as a book and, the fable of writing as painting wherein the world is considered a work of art (Montalbetti, 99); it is the latter of these

approaches that interests us at this juncture.[269] The real world is resumed in a work of art, that orders and adjusts the world: "La métaphore rétablit une homogénéité fictionnelle ou fantas(ma)tique, entre l'écriture et l'espace qui se donne à voir" (145). "Activité mimétique de l'écriture est comme celle de la peinture, intégrant fragments sublimes du réel, pour que le réel se déploie comme l'objet d'art supérieur." (39). Montalbetti likens travel to comparative reading, with a connection between the iconic and the textual dimension (193), to which one can draw the comparison between the recipe as an icon of tradition and the accompanying narrative. For her, the metaphorical fable (the book of the world) and its literal version (the text as part of space and the space as text delineated with fragments of narrative), are found in private writings, such as diaries and private memoirs (203), giving credence to the role of culinary memoirs as fables, and to the text, in this case memoirs, writing the landscape into being. Anissa Bouayed and Thierry Fabre explain, within the context of Mediterranean studies, that the personal narrative confronts the complete knowledge of the object observed, the world as a work of art, offering an understanding of life's mysteries through a form of absolute truth, which the island landscapes offer to Durrell, the desert offers to Abu-Jaber, the Mediterranean market, orchard and table to David and Gray.

While maps offer a detailed focus, landscapes offer a broad perspective of observation. An expanse of natural scenery called 'landscape' is typically appraised by sight. Dictionary definitions emphasize the visual features of an area of land, perceptible from a single viewpoint and their capacity to integrate with other natural or man-made features. Vistas provide both a point on which the view stops to appraise and also a horizon, the promise of a world beyond. The point at which the narrative is interrupted by the recipe offers a vista of the personal landscape at that moment in the story. The writings of Hemingway, Durrell, David and Mayes, for example, are, above all, a sensual appreciation of mythical landscapes and the relative position of man's place within them. Landscapes serve an imaginary role for the altruistic end of self-understanding. Writing about landscape is an attempt to summarize a place, but also expressing a desire to penetrate further, to understand it and oneself. As the subject of a narrative appraisal,

[269] The other two fables will be addressed in subsequent sections; the fable of the journey in the section on alternative forms of travel writing, and the fable of the book in part IV B on the tropes of eating and writing.

landscape descriptions are both a view of the land and an exploration of the mind. They have a rhizomatic function, allowing the narrator to make connections and gain glimpses of truth. Gilles Clément, in his 2011 inaugural lecture at the Collège de France, said: "Nous savons le paysage intimement lié à notre lecture subjective et culturelle" (Clément, paragraph 73). 'Landscape' encapsulates 'land' with its notion of 'terroir' that we will explore in the next section on a sense of visceral belonging, while its French equivalent 'paysage' encapsulates 'pays' signifying country or locality, to which one's association is often defined according to involuntary national ties.

Claire Omhovère writes: "The recognition and appreciation of a given composition owe so much to the beholder's cultural patrimony that, indeed there is no landscape without the imprint left on our retina and sensitivity by previous representations of the natural world." (Omhovère, 271). The landscape for memoirists represents symbolically-charged homelands and host lands, the birthplace of foodways, the locus of alterity, cultural bedrock. In *Landscape and Memory*, Simon Schama explains that "landscapes are culture before they are nature" (61), receiving the contours of language through the writer's perception and a cultural imprint from the beholder. "The recognition and appreciation of a given composition owe much to the beholder's cultural patrimony. There is no landscape without the imprint left on it by the viewer's perception of previous representations of the natural world […]" (61). Gilles Clément explains that the landscape is what remains after we have left our mental and sensorial imprint:

> À la question : 'qu'est-ce que le paysage ?', nous pouvons répondre : ce que nous gardons en mémoire après avoir cessé de regarder ; ce que nous gardons en mémoire après avoir cessé d'exercer nos sens au sein d'un espace investi par le corps […] [L]e paysage apparaît comme essentiellement subjectif. Il est lu à travers un filtre puissant composé d'un vécu personnel et d'une armure Culturelle. (Clément, paragraphs 6, 7).

Narrators interpret landscapes according to their past, their needs in terms of belonging and their future in terms of identity. Landscape activates memory and imagination, transmitting the quintessence of a culture that embraces the subject and other, their past experiences and their present understanding. The landscape in culinary memoirs is appropriated and understood both intellectually in a search for absolute truths that help in one's search for an identity, and sensorially in relation to the food

that the land brings forth that is in itself culturally organized. Nature, flavours and man's creation are mixed together in one perspective in Henry Miller's all-embracing landscape. Food and sensual landscape become one in a common "food and beast language" (*Colossus of Maroussi*, 33), as in the vibrant still life that we have evoked previously, an archetypal Mediterranean vista: "he spiced and flavoured [his talk] with his Attic ingredients, with thyme, with sage, with tufa, asphodel, honey, red clay, blue roofs, acanthus trimmings, violet light, hot rocks, dry winds, dust […]" (33).

For a genre that moves taste to centre stage, culinary memoirs are remarkably ocularcentric, the narrative graphically focusing on an inner landscape, punctuated with recipes that submit the oral culinary tradition to narrative strictures, opening it up for comment and adaptation. The personal narrative, punctuated occasionally with photographs, is intertwined with recipes, but also independent. In our observation of the other, Francis Affergan stresses the importance of sight: "La vue est à la racine constitutive de la pratique exotique car elle dévoile le secret du désir." (73). Culinary memoirs also function on an imaginative level through rich and detailed descriptions. The reader constructs her own image of dishes, in the absence of photographs and in the abundance of anecdotes, their visual, taste and flavour. Scenes are often received as delicious with food-related adjectives, which invite one to taste the landscape. Discovery by taste, through a cuisine and a terroir, or visually, in the 'eye land' books of Durrell (Keller, 2002, 201), the view is troubled by the narrator's journey. Christine Montalbetti explains that the journey which the narrator undertakes, shifts the question from how to describe what the narrator perceives to how to show it, moving the focus of subjective perception. (Montalbetti, 36).[270] Isabelle Keller-Privat captures the notion of show in the word "spectacle" in describing Durrell's poetic and spiritual relation to Corfu's landscape: "Corfou devient la terre fertile et mystérieuse, offrant […] un univers atemporel en pénétrant le cycle des danses et des récits mythologiques de l'ile […] un monde onirique où veille et rêve se confondent." (Keller, 2002, 200-201). There is poetry in what Montalbetti describes as a concurrence between nature and art (39). Durrell recounts many *al fresco* meals that have pictorial scenic qualities, in which Durrell enters into the mystery of the landscape: at the Count's where, '[t]hroughout lunch, we

[270] « Le Voyage—déplace la question de comment dire à comment faire voir. » (Montalbetti, 36).

eat in the shade of the grape-arbour." (*Prospero's Cell*, 99), or on the idyllic Myrtiotissa beach with Matthew, the silent fisherman, "[o]n the fire of twigs in the evening we have often watched him grilling his fish with the absorbed air of a specialist, while Zarian stood by with the salt, and the Count with his little bottle of lemon-juice." (100). These combined moments of simplicity give humble man the semblance of a sense of purpose within the daunting landscape: "We picnic for supper on these warm nights by the Myrtiotissa monastery. Spiro lights a fire of pine branches and twigs, and the three wicker hampers of the Count are brimmed with food and drink." (128).

The landscape, pictorial element of culinary memoirs, solicits a comparison with picture postcards, whose images are clichés of a moment in time, the witness of a journey that can stimulate desire. The postcard, like culinary memoirs is both a print of an image, a form of landscape, and a communications medium used for conveying a message. They are the quintessence of chosen or willed displacement. Their two-sidedness represents the duality that we find in culinary memoirs. On the one side is a fixed public image and on the other a personal text that together imitate the recipe made public, often graphically evoked, and the essential, and the accompanying annotation and personal anecdote. Sometimes the anecdote flows into the recipe, as in the narrative of Shoba Narayan where it is placed under the recipe title, as though an integral part of the recipe, in the same way that the image space was sometimes appropriated for text, suggesting that the recipe was not sacrosanct but could be annotated, decorticated, taken apart or discussed without inhibitions. Like recipe cards, often used for recording special family recipes, as a sort of informal archive, they give space to a succinct text and are easy to archive. Descriptions of foodscapes and food-landscapes often embrace the synthetic quality of postcards in that they capture the essential, in terms of culinary and cultural context, the tradition and the landscape, the iconic images that illustrate like the postcards containing an emblematic recipe from a particular town or region.[271] Landscapes on postcards are also sometimes represented in map form, reminding us of the pictorial aspect of the travel map. Landscapes, viewed from afar offer a perspective

[271] These ideas are inspired by the presentation by Gilles Teulié on postcards and European empires at the workshop on "Critical Geographies", organized by ILCEA4/CEMRA, Université Grenoble Alpes, 16 November 2018.

that serves as a map, inspiring and guiding the narrator. Yet landscape images may also be indistinct, difficult to identify, and as such, ineffective or deterritorialised.

There is a dislocation between the narrative and the description in travel literature, which Montalbetti locates in the impossibility of describing precisely and satisfactorily what one perceives, like the inadequacy of a postcard to summarize an entire voyage, the description and the experience are often offset. "Même si la chose décrite a été vue, elle doit être narrée comme une fiction." (Affergan, 127), because the narrator inevitably selects the highlights. We have reviewed this artifice in several instances in which authors weave a journey into a storied narrative often in discreet, understated and surprising ways. We recall the kitchen confessions of Ehrlich and Furiya, the fabled discourses of Li and Narayan, and the poised historically-informed and literary prose of David and Roden. Detached food descriptions, contrarily, are part of a referential discourse, between subjectivity and objectivity, part of a discourse of desire that surrounds food and consumption.

This inner journey reveals the formative power of traditions. An uninterrupted historical continuum draws D. H. Lawrence to the Sardinia landscape – "a sense of space [...] nothing finished, nothing final" (*Sea and Sardinia*, 79), associated with a sense of freedom which one doesn't feel in Italy or Sicily. "Harder, barer, starker, more dreary." (Lawrence, 1923, 91), an insistent barenness that leaves the writer a primitive blank page on which to write. Sardinia, through its ancestral memory, holds up the 'esprit des lieux' that the mechanical age failed to override. "L'esprit des lieux est dans l'univers lawrencien une poétique de l'espace et du temps." (Christine Zaratsian in Viviès, 2002, 95). It serves as a source for healing his spirit broken by the industrial society of England. Lawrence explains: "Italy has given me back I know not what of myself, but a very, very great deal." (*Sea and Sardinia*, 131). Christine Zaratsian's analysis of Lawrence's travel writing, provides useful insights into the way that memoirists evolve their travel narratives, which like Lawrence's texts blend autobiography and intertextuality in a constant evolution from factual travel text to literary work on an exotic and endotic journey, land to discover, and landscape of the soul, "[p]ays à découvrir et paysage de l'âme":

> [...] à travers ses récits d'Italie on comprend mieux ce pèlerin passionné, avide de ressourcement et de plénitude [...] Récit de

> pérégrinations sur un mode diachronique où se mêlent autobiographie et intertextualité. Pays à découvrir et paysage de l'âme. Ce fond binaire fait l'enjeu littéraires des textes [...] La littéralité cède le pas à la littérarité dans un discours qui se recrée sans cesse et dont le narrateur construit pas à pas, tout le révélant, le parcours de tout individu à la recherche de sa propre identité. (Christine Zaratsian in Viviès, 2002, 103).

For observational writer Kate Christensen, the Maine landscape offers her a similar awareness of place as sitting on a continuum of origins and destination. She finds in Maine, and its hostile climate, a respect for the traditions of past generations that have enabled its inhabitants to survive and thrive, forging an abstract identity rooted in the land and its values, a sense of purpose, making a life from "nature's bounty", in "an environment that is more often than not stingy, bitterly cold and stubborn" (*How to Cook a Moose*, x). Morgan finds the landscape's literary match in Christensen: "There's a sense of relief one gets [...] when one finally finds those people who got lost through the ages amid the shuffle of mortal coils." (xii). Christensen says: "Portland's culinary reputation is 'down-to-earth and authentic' [...] people here are serious about food in a traditional rather than a trendy or overt way. This seriousness takes the form of a respect for the old ways" (4). The foodways offer her an anchor to which she can attach herself in a landscape where she has no origins.

The landscape is written by the narrator, and in Christensen's example, the narrator is written by the landscape. Pierre Nora explains that in certain regions, the landscape is 'explicit', visible and palpable : "La terre a une présence visible, palpable, avec ses fruits et ses œuvres paysans [...]" (Nora, 23). However, landscapes, as points of perspective, are at times discreet or even remarkable due to their absence in some food- and home-centric memoirs. The vistas and horizons that landscapes offer can be limited, reflecting the narrator's possible lack of vision for the future or clarity about the way forward. In Jaffrey's *Climbing the Mango Trees*, much of the book's events occur in the compound of the family homes in which she was raised. She does indeed climb the mango trees but to eat the mangos rather than to see the view, armed with seasonings in her pocket, symbolic of the own personal seasoning of her stories with memories and anecdotes. When she travels to the cooler hills with her family to escape the heat in the summer, we read about the house and the elaborately prepared and transported picnics, a displacement on the dining room into the open-air, rather than the views that their

new vantage point afforded. Elizabeth Gilbert climbs onto a roof top, but from where we have a view not of the countryside but of the night sky and her inner mindscape, a comment on her particular state of mind. Cooking on her father's shoulder is an early childhood memory of Abu-Jaber's (*Language of Baklava*, 4), offers her a close-up view of each preparation. Furiya often refers to the flat mid-west landscape, but without describing it, not in contrast to Japan, although it no doubt does differ sharply, but as a metaphor for the strangeness and incongruity of her family's home in this alien culture. Martin travels to one hundred and ninety-two countries yet only for the duration of a meal, seemingly not extending her knowledge of the geography of each country beyond the tack covered map on the wall. The focus in this example is on the next meal, the next small step on a longer journey.

The absence of landscapes is, as we discussed at the beginning of this section, a question of focus, the perspective of the narrator, which is closely linked also to the antithetical qualities of both ephemerality and timelessness embodied in landscape, fleetingly perceived, dependent on perception. The travel memoir itself records the ephemerality of the individual's experience of a moment in time, each memory, by nature of the memoir form, a fragment of time. Françoise Besson writes of "une écriture qui parle de la terre éternelle dans la vision éphémère d'un temps précis [...] Comme l'archéologue qui trouve un fragment de poterie antique dans son temps individuel et, à partir de là, reconstitue d'abord l'amphore et ensuite l'histoire d'une civilisation. (Besson, 2002, 69). The moment, the fragment, is both suspended in time and ephemeral in its fragility like Proust's taste of madeleine, like the preparation of a dish that is consumed in the space of a meal. After the first taste of the crumbs of madeleine in the tea, the taste fades. The more Proust tastes the more he loses the sensation that overwhelmed him at first. (Proust, 100-103). That moment in time is captured and sublimated in Proust's prose, like the moments of understanding in the memoir narrative on the continuum between origins and destination.

As the landscape writes the narrator, offering ephemeral sustenance and glimpses of eternity, how does the author write the landscape? By the creation of a symbolic space in which he travels, Durrell's writing resists the idea of ephemerality. He defines the boundaries of travel literature in the evocation of landscape in relation to food and the way it can sustain him both physically and spiritually. Beyond the aesthetic appreciation

of the natural beauty of the Mediterranean islands in his travel trilogy, his landscape painting offers both the décor and the stimulus for spiritual exploration and contemplation needed to acquire self-knowledge, an ultimate personal and universal goal of travel. His landscapes are intrinsically sacred, by nature of the symbolic significance with which he vests them. *Prospero's Cell*, although sub-titled a guide book, is rather a prose-poem, a lyrical rather than literal rendering of Corfu. The diary form gives the work a sense of immediacy and spontaneity which is deceptive for it was written in Alexandria several years after his period of residence, and because he saw Greece as a spiritual revelation "Other countries may offer you discoveries in manners or lore or landscape; Greece offers you something harder—the discovery of yourself." (*Prospero's Cell*, 11). *Prospero's Cell* begins with a poetic evocation of his island paradise and ends with his forced exile from this idyllic land with the onset of World War II. Set in 1935 but written in 1945. *Reflections on a Marine Venus* details Durrell's impressions of post-war Rhodes and the surrounding islands but more fully explores the relationship between the individual and the landscape. The intention of the book is an 'anatomy of islomania". In *Caesar's Vast Ghost* Durrell describes a place of creation, recounting the evolution of the European historic consciousness of the Garden of Eden. "La Provence se construit comme une espace idyllique. Mythologie de lieu rassemblant personnages historiques, poètes, philosophes et instaurant un continuum historique et culturel qui fonde l'identité de la Provence." (Keller-Privat, 2003, 151).

Yet travel writing is more than a mere litany of observations, it is also an act, as we have seen, of bringing a place into being, by nature of its nomadic and rhizomatic cultural network (Affergan, 35). Just as Henry Miller claims that the poets had "staked out" France (*Colossus of Maroussi*, xx), so the 2013 Mucem exhibition *Le Noir et le Bleu: Un Rêve Méditerranéen* asserted that the twentieth century battle-torn and shattered Mediterranean[272] was reinvented through art: "une méditerranée fracassée et réinventée après-guerre par poètes et artistes" (Bouayed and Fabre, 110). "La Méditerranée est avant tout un territoire d'écriture(s), un lieu où se tisse, incertaine, une idée narrative. Elle n'existe pas en dehors des idées qu'elle fait naître, miroir constellé de mots, de lieux, de

[272] We will make a study of the Mediterranean as landscape of memory and origins in chapter 3 of this section.

cités, qui chacun racontent une ou plutôt des histoires […] Des mots qui forment un monde, qui lui donnent sa consistance, son existence même et ainsi forment une réalité, née d'un imaginaire." (13). According to Durrell, the riches of the mythical landscape "whet the appetite of our imaginations" (*Prospero's Cell*, 54); it is therefore coherent that food writers should contribute to writing the Mediterranean. Durrell's landscape is mythical by virtue of its primitive, unspoiled nature, by the presence of vegetation that is redolent of the Garden of Eden, and above all by the presence of ruins, the vestiges of legends, and around which stories continue to be woven. Despite its nomadic construction, Isabelle Keller-Privat writes of travel literature: "Le récit de voyage s'attache alors aux lieux décrits mais des liens sous-jacents se tissent aussi entre les textes, laissant apparaître en filigrane l'instant scriptural, la littérarité du récit." (2002, 187). The mystification of the book is both complete and fragmented, as we have identified in the memoir form, and is a reflection of an inner landscape within travel writing. The narrator composes a landscape between prose and poetry, biography and historical report. Isabelle Keller Privat explains: "On est convié à une lecture paradigmatique du texte qui fait entrer en résonnance fiction, récits et poèmes […] la présence du scripteur caché qui, entre autobiographie, fiction et poésie, attend patiemment que le lecteur tisse à son tour les motifs pour reconstruire le paysage intérieur." (2002, 204).

The written trace of the landscape's sustenance is a central thread in the writing of the land. David confesses: "It was during those icy, hungry weeks that I took refuge from reality in writing down memories of the food I had cooked and eaten during my Mediterranean years. As I did so, my remote and at the time rather austere Greek island life began to take on the life of a lost Paradise of plenty and glamour." (*Mediterranean Food*, 5). She intones the ingredients which are like a refrain running throughout the book, a litany that brings her comfort, at which moment writing becomes nurturing: "ingredients of Mediterranean cooking, the oranges, lemons, apricots and almonds, the honey and cream cheese, the eggs, wine and honey, and, most especially, the fresh fruits of those lands." (161). Christensen writes of Maine as a landscape of survival and sustenance: "Potatoes, blueberries, moose and maple, foraged mushrooms, lobsters and clams […] there was an innate quality to all of them […]" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 286). Like the abundance of nature, the Mediterranean is recreated in narrative through the

repetition of lists, of ruins, of landscapes and their abundant crops. Durrell provides an example, empowered by myth and sensuality:

> The whole Mediterranean—the sculptures, the palms, the gold beads, the bearded heroes, the wine, the ideas, the ships, the moonlight, the winged gorgons, the bronze men, the philosophers—all of it seems to rise in the sour, pungent taste of these black olives between the teeth. A taste older than meat, older than wine. A taste as old as cold water. (*Prospero's Cell*, 96).

Mediterranean-inspired memoirs become palimpsests, with the descriptions of landscape and foodways overlaid with personal stories (Humble, 3), the metaphor for a cultural patchwork that gives, in each case, an important place to local culture and its foodways. Just as the recipe book is described by Janet Theophano as a "palimpsest and an encyclopedic array of domestic advice" (125), so culinary memoirs superimpose a detailed layer of foodways and recipes on descriptions of places and travels. The initial journey is never truly effaced, that of Ehrlich's grandparents and parents-in-law from Poland to America, of Bud from Jordan, with all his hopes and doubts, of Furiya's parents maintaining a consumable tie to Japan, of Christensen's trek across states and countries. Discussing *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*, Françoise Dupeyron-Lafay writes : "Le patchwork du livre est un autre palimpseste en profondeur—comme la mer—l'histoire apparaît dans le récit comme un long processus de sédimentation "moins factuelle que légendaire et mythique » incarnée et pérennisée par ces conteurs pour laquelle elle est encore vivante." (Dupeyron-Lafay, 2006, 55). In Durrell's words, the landscape, as captured in memoir writing is, itself, a palimpsest: "'Watching that magnificent sunset I thought how touching were these incongruities which overlapped each other so swiftly in the common life of the island." (*Bitter Lemons*, 257).

The travel genre: uncharted territories

> The mystique of landscape traditions with topographies mapped, elaborated and enriched as homelands. (Schama, 15).

In our previous discussion of autobiography, we have noted that self-writing helps to create order within chaos. Travel too, despite the unpredictable nature, is also paradoxically motivated by a desire for order, generating an aesthetics of rationalization. This is achieved by discriminating and taking note of everything, thus creating a secure,

definable place, for Lévi-Strauss explained that the mind requires order (Said, 1979, 53). 'Guidebooks', be they travel books or culinary memoirs, provide literal and metaphorical routes in the form of foodways and recipes. Just as the narrative must find its correct vision or depth of field and focus, so it threads together a series of places, or origin and destination to create a map of an individual identity. While each story, each journey, is unique and personal—even the diasporic ones—we have identified commonalities of form and a sort of generic model within recipe books and culinary memoirs which offer a confluence of narratives and what are paradoxically narrative reiterations. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari insist on the imitative nature of classic narratives, and the nomadic and rhizomatic quality of deterritorialized literature : "Le livre est forcément un calque : calque de lui-même déjà, calque du livre précèdent [...]". The anticultural book, to which they refer, and which we might suggest, embraces hybrid genres, makes active use of ever-present culture for forgetting rather than remembering, "de nomadisme et pas de sédentarisme, de carte et non pas de calque." (Deleuze and Guattari, 35). In developing a hybrid nature, culinary memoirs draw on existing genres and at the same time break away. They copy elements and plunge into memories in terms of genre and narrative, while, as we explored in the section on memory, using forgetting to move into new unexplored spaces.

As we have seen, travel is nomadic for some authors in terms of itineraries and destinations, notably Durrell, Hemingway, Fisher, David and Martin. For others, travel represents a form of repetitive oscillation between home- and host land, such as those tales of Abu-Jaber, Furiya and Zonana, whose travel experiences largely mimic those of their parents. With the writing of memoir sequels however, some authors reveal that their identity searching becomes nomadic with time, as in the examples of Abu-Jaber and Furiya,[273] who only come to understand their identities when they leave their adopted homeland. Condemned by her Asian appearance to be mistaken for Chinese, Furiya recognizes the influence of her assimilated American childhood, once she is far from 'home'. These second memoirs describe periods of intense uncertainty and self-

[273] Diana Abu-Jaber, *Life Without a Recipe* (2016). Linda Furiya, *How to Cook a Dragon. Living, Loving and Eating in China* (2008).

seeking displacement and vacillation as a new variation in experiences of journeying, different, and at the same time, linked to that of their parents.

They are often marked by the emergence of another ocularcentric notion of seeing with the mind's eye, using instinct and trusting the senses, which offers new and unique perceptions on their personal journeys. As Furiya moves back to America, as a newly-divorced, first-time mother, the only certainty in her life becomes her maternal instinct, as she equates her life with a series of journeys, one that had just finished and one about to begin: "And so my next journey began with my comforting both of us and repeating, 'We're going to be just fine on our own.'" (*How to Cook a Dragon*, 310). Uncertainty about identity and direction, or origins and destinations, is often the prelude for the emergence of clarity that arises out of a sense of instinct, trusting sensations and inner feelings, a journey in themselves: "As I moved forward into uncertainty, I learned my first and hardest lesson: I had to know and give myself what I needed emotionally." (310). Furiya's journey to socially and linguistically impeding China, after a life of independence, represents a voyage into new and uncharted territories of self-searching. She travels to China to learn that she feels American over and above her Japanese origins. Heeding emotional reactions reminds us of the conflict between women's lore and culinary wisdom that historically opposed domestic science, as we discussed in part I.

Elizabeth Gilbert's travel tale describes the unique yet interrelated pull of three different countries, representing two dimensions of her personality, the sensual and the spiritual that she explores in Italy and India, and finally hopes to bring them together in Thailand. She describes her travel memoir as "spiritual memoirs" (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 198). "I believe that all the world's religions share, at their core, a desire to find a transporting metaphor. It has to be a big one this metaphor—really big and magic and powerful, because it needs to carry you across a mighty distance." (205). She devotes a year to herself and her personal journey of healing and self-discovery.

While Gilbert's memoir illustrates the individualism of the postmodern condition, early works struggled to find that individuality, for the world wars left little place for the individual. The presence of the other and the other place is omnipresent[274]

[274] This topic will be the subject of an extended discussion in the next section.

and even oppressive. During the interwar years, narratives described individuals within social contexts, such as those of Hemingway. Others, like Durrell, shied away from collective adventures. Sylvain Venayre notes the development of a mystic of adventure which emerged in the 1920s: "La mystique moderne de l'aventure repose ainsi sur l'expérience fondamentale de la solitude" (Venayre, 2002, 113, 244). The solitude of the traveller, has evolved into an individualism, embodied in the search for identity. Caren Kaplan confirms that American dislocation was singular rather than collective, essential for psychological or aesthetic reasons rather than historical (1996, 4).

Durrell's *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus* has been described as an impressionistic study of the moods and atmospheres of Cyprus during the troubled years of 1953-1956, using a captivating, metaphorical language, song and incantation, poetry and painting that is transartistic and transverbal, both discursive and purely referential, a synchronous two-fold movement towards the interior and the exterior, for, as Durrell says: "journeys, like artists, are born and not made [...] and the best of them lead us not only outwards in space, but inwards as well" (*Bitter Lemons*, 1). The journey is not always conclusive, even when the destination is reached. Isabelle Keller-Privat describes Durrell's works as an incomplete quest: "Une quête inachevée, un récit de voyage en forme de fouille archéologique – une terre ouverte, ouvrée/œuvrée. Un voyage à la conquête de nouvelles formes" (2003, 150). It is this openness which allows us to associate Durrell's work with so diverse a genre as the culinary memoir, whose identity-seeking authors are also excavating their past, as well as their current landscape, considering new forms, exposing the evolution of a possible new genre.

Reinforcing our argument for the hybrid construction of culinary travel memoirs, Adrien Pasquali claims that travel literature can no more comply to a single definition than the novel: "La double nature—narrative et descriptive—du récit de voyage [...] révèle surtout l'ambiguïté d'un genre partagé entre les exigences souvent contradictoires de la documentation et du récit." (Pasquali in Chupeau, 544). The travel memoir writer assembles fragments to create a work of art. They are both narrative, telling life stories, and descriptive, defining recipes that are metaphors of journeys back in time and charged with possibilities for the future. The narration is a patchwork that corresponds to a unique journey, one that forms and transforms as the traveller advances. Pasquali uses the example of Nicolas Bouvier's travel work, *L'Usage du monde* (1963), to show that

one can identify diverse narrative forms in such a work: diary fragments, poems, pieces of chronological histories, annotations as well as narrative passages, (Pasquali, 107). "Le narrateur du récit de voyage 'doit également jouer de la discontinuité de la fragmentation des temps, des lieux et des matières, disparité de matière et de genre" (131-2). Bouvier, himself, describes the book as "une mosaïque de savoir sur le monde", and writing itself as a form of delicate and transparent journey: "L'écriture, lorsqu'elle approche du 'vrai texte' auquel elle devrait accéder, ressemble intimement au voyage parce que, comme lui, elle est une disparition." (Bouvier, 1997, n.pag.). Nicolas Bouvier's ethic of travel writing, which informs our reading of culinary memoirs, is one of pliancy and resilience in which one is incited to become "plus léger que cendres" (Bouvier quoted in Pasquali, 58).

Montalbetti defines three categories of travel narrator: the home-bound narrator, who creates the spaces that the texts describe, enhancing the paradox of the static journey, that we discover in Wizenberg's work. There exists the narrator who goes out in search of objects that complete the text, such as Weiss, who creates a world that is coherent with her reading experiences, and the adventurous narrator who goes out to communicate the travel narrative in the world, putting into practice a perception of the world, as does the travel guide and cook, such as Fisher, living a life in accordance with her perception of what is important.[275] Culinary memoirs are invitations for homebound reading and reflection, but also propositions to the reader to put the cooking suggestions into practice, thus extending one's knowledge and experience. Joyce Zonana offers an example of the internalizing of travel in which food is as much, if not more, an intellectual companion that a vital force.

Montalbetti talks of the library of travel writing that hones contemporary texts by its presence as precedence and model. "Elle constitue un filtre entre ma plume et le monde" (54), an evidence laid bare in E. M. Forster's *Alexandria*, a unique and original guide that draws on elements from previous works, Durrell's books which are completed with bibliographies, or David's world, presented through an anthology of intertextual references. We recall that Montalbetti proposed three forms of travel literature which

[275] "Cette visée, qui transforme les adresses en manières d'injonctions invite à distinguer entre narrataire et destinaire, inviter à produire ou transformer une pratique." (Montalbetti, 255).

achieve a harmony or homogeneity between the writing and the experience described, the first of which being the fable of writing and reading as a journey (Montalbetti, 99), in which the author formulates an imaginative narrative which is then adapted to a journey using metaphors of mobility, creating a relation between 'fiction' and reality, "ce qui sous-tend la lecture de la métaphore c'est bien cette 'suspension of disbelief' (Montalbetti, 114). Frédéric Regard's comments remind us of Montalbetti's position concerning the stability of cultural perception in which he explains that in colonial situations knowledge systems are challenged, frames of meaning disrupted, and 'representations' shattered (Regard, 4). The inherited discourse and the cultural filtre to which he refers, find their echo in unfamiliar foodways that nonetheless mimic their own and shape the diasporic experience. British writer-explorers: "strove to reconcile the shock of the unknown and the recognition of the familiar, the new gaze and the inherited discourse, the naked surprise and the cultural filter" (8).

Linda Furiya gives us insights into the conception and writing of her first memoir, *Bento Box in the Heartland*, in her second memoir, *How to Cook a Dragon*: "it wasn't a big leap for me [from column journalism] to think about how I might thread the scenes of life through book chapters complemented by recipes" (217). The writing of the book structures her time, much as the narrative itself shapes a linear story out of her life, a journey that comes to completion just as a new one starts with the birth of her child: "My finished manuscript was on the desk in a nice neat pile. I felt light and free—finishing my book had been like a birth in itself" (*How to Cook a Dragon*, 302). Furiya's manuscript pages are piled neatly like the piles of folded baby clothes, leaving her time to cook a child-friendly-sized meat-ball dish for her mother-in-law.

Kate Christensen is inspired by her journey into the heart of Maine's pioneering community, for her an uncharted territory: "I love the vicarious sense of adventure I get, reading about their unforgettable experiences in the thrilling scenery, the sense of peace and self-sufficiency, the deep satisfaction of hard work [...] the cutting of wood and planting of gardens. These are some of the most purely joyful books I have every read." (*How to Cook a Moose*, 222). As well as items on endemic food stuffs, markets, restaurants and recipes, a number of the articles in Elizabeth David's collection *An Omelette and a Glass of Wine* are dedicated to books, cookbooks primarily, but also guides to places and *terroirs*. She emphasises quality and gain: "the majority of them are

about benefits and pleasures, about good food, good wine, good cookery books." (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 8).

Alongside memoirs, we have also broached in part I the place of travel and culinary guides, which led the user along her literal and imaginative journey. The reedition of travel works in the late nineteenth century gravitated towards the emergence of travel guides, which provided the traveller, often motorized, with indications for eating well *en route* to their destination (Pasquali, 6). Culinary memoirs offer allegorical stories as guidelines for finding oneself and a certain harmony through the morals of foodways and recipes for life and good living, they follow the prescriptive rhetoric of travel guides in which travel and restaurant guides converge and evolve together, offering the reader the possibility of discovering the hidden corners of the world, much as culinary memoirs search the hidden corners of one's self. Roland Barthes writing of the *Guide Bleu* in *Mythologies* describes the myth of travel as an excuse to escape, but, above all, as a personal guide to self-understanding: "Le voyage est devenu (ou redevenu) une voie d'approche humaine et non pas culturel." (Barthes, 1957, 135). In the introduction to *An Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, John Thorne writes that David concerns herself with imparting culinary knowledge with elegance and erudition, while also advocating the intrinsic pleasure in eating that transcends culture: "Delicately, nicely, with exact niceness, she works each food, each flavor, into simple dishes, leaving each of us not only wiser but with a gently shared sense of release. It is this that gives each page its vital tension, and her books their sense of purely private quest." (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 8).

As guides that offer ground rules, culinary memoirs also paradoxically ask the existential, if not philosophical questions about origins and hybrid futures, addressing issues of confused, ambivalent or lost identities discussed in part II. Deleuze et Guattari's theory of travel offers us an aesthetics of culinary travel writing associated with origins:

> [On questionne les origines] 'ou allez-vous ? D'où partez-vous ? Ou voulez-vous en venir ?' sont des questions bien inutiles [...] chercher un commencement, ou un fondement, impliquant une fausse conception de voyage et du mouvement [...] C'est que le milieu n'est pas du tout une moyenne, c'est au contraire l'endroit où les choses prennent de la vitesse. [... un mouvement transversal qui les emporte l'une et l'autre, ruisseau sans début ni fin [...] (Deleuze et Guattari, 36, 37).

This notion converges with the idea of itinerance, and that of Pasquali, that we should no longer be looking for the centre, but the periphery: "Échapper à l'attrait du centre, c'est consentir à la diversité d'un monde décentré, à la richesse miraculeuse des sensations: si le centre n'est pas unique, tout lieu peut prendre valeur du centre." (Pasquali, 5). In this sense, culinary memoirs propose a form of deconstruction of the journey as narrators explore fundamental ideas of alienation, acculturation and transculturalism, as well as more complex issues that Elizabeth Mavroudi has identified as "postmodern conceptualisations of diaspora that are based on ideas of fluidity, movement, routes and the destabilisation of (potentially) homogenising boundaries (of identity, community and the nation-state)" (Mavroudi, 2). In synergy with culinary memoirs, Alain de Botton claims that travel literature cannot be mimetic because it employs strategies of selection, compression and simplification of information, much like a painter who selects and highlights in a unique work of art. (Guignery, 37). De Botton, like many memoirists, focuses on means of travel, points of departure and arrival, rather than destinations. This peripheral perspective reflects what can be considered the marginal nature of culinary memoirs, a hybrid genre by little-known authors, who undertake personal questions in a public forum with nonetheless serious literary intentions, and negotiate their memoirs into the unfamiliar territory of travel narratives. Diana Abu-Jaber writes of her physical and metaphysical oscillations of her childhood:

> [Bud] tried to move us back to Jordan, but whenever we got there, it seemed to hurt him as much as America did—not being the place he remembered and longed for. Oh, it was lovely, but the night no longer shone with lilac streaks, the air was no longer spangled with the stars of bitter almond. No more beautiful parents or family cosmos. Some of those things were there, just not the way he remembered them—which was even worse. (*Language of Baklava*, 232).

Memories do not correspond to the reality, and dreams do not attain the stars as they were destined too. Journeys are fraught with hopes and disappointments, a desire to find the past, to appease the pain of the displacement of the *here* and the dislocation with the *there*.

2. The spirit of place

> If modernism was about abstraction and functionalism, then postmodernism is about the renaissance of tradition and the re-enchantment of place. (Robins, 306).

> Exploring places to directly experience 'a sense of place', using the archive of the feet. (Schama, 24).

Autobiographical writings create order to distance the unknown, yet the 'foreign', as well as fostering fear, also exerts a complex attraction. The presence of the other place is not merely omnipresent; many culinary memoirs are imbued with what Lawrence Durrell called the 'Spirit of Place' in his eponymous work. It has little to do with the attachment of diasporic people to their homeland and more to do with the traveller's perception, for the spirit of place exists in the eye, or the soul, of the beholder and is related to spirituality rather than religion: Durrell writes that "travel becomes a sort of science of intuition which is of the greatest importance to everyone—but most of all to the artist who is always looking for nourishing soils to put down roots and create." (*Spirit of Place*, 237). The artist seeks out places that emanate a numinous quality and respect the diversity of spiritual paths, the series of still lifes that Durrell paints, made vibrant by the spirit of place, the "hidden magnetic fields which the landscape is trying to communicate to the personality" (238). It can embrace foodways as representations of mythical landscapes, spirituality, culture, interpersonal relations in the form of hospitality, social communion, and self-development. Human nature can be understood through immersion in the landscape, which is, in turn, experienced through its produce, discovered through the senses. Durrell considered his task was "to isolate the germ in the people which is expressed by their landscape" (232). For Durrell, noted for his contradictory sensual-spiritual nature, each level of understanding implies a metaphysical abstraction by which he constructs his myth of the Mediterranean. There is ostensibly a contradiction inherent in the profane yet sensual appreciation of the hallowed scene that the landscape offers.

Spirit of place, evoking unspoiled or regenerated places, embraces vernacular culture, which in itself embraces foodways. It recalls the romanticism or neo-romanticism that we have previously referred to in terms of the aesthetics of culinary

memoirs, which is concerned with the re-enchanting of the land and reestablishing or reevoking the spirit of place inherent in the landscape. At the core of Leslie Li's memoir, for example, lies the fable of the stone, present in the dish, in the story of the poor men who alternate their meagre mouthfuls of rice and cabbage with sucking on a hot, oily stone, as condiment, in its preparation: "[…] in all shapes and sizes. Massive like the soaring limestone cliffs above my grandmother's outdoor kitchen in Guilin, China. Infinitesimal, like the grains of sand in the backyard sandbox of our suburban home that Nai-nai usurped from its rightful owners to plant her first Chinese vegetable garden in America." (*Daughter of Heaven*, xiii). They are also a lifeforce of truth in the stones that she 'feeds' to Old Man Hill, Lao Shi, as she herself enters the 'mouth' of his cave with her story wrapped around a stone: "nourishment for the numinous" (273-274). Landscapes are frequently magical, offering answers to existential questions of identity as well as light and life, as for Mayes: "The sun through the flowering trees bathes us in gold sifted light. 'This isn't real […]'" (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 120).

In the last section of part II, we discussed the notion of desire in displacement, of being in movement, an ostensibly antithetical idea when associated with the concepts of diaspora and trauma. This section will elaborate on the pull of unfamiliar places that paradoxically appeases the sense of dislocation that we identified in part II. We will also look at the specific desire for alterity, which represents not just a fascination with otherness in terms of foreign places, but with the state of otherness, that speaks of the narrator's own condition as well as that of the stranger. Otherness acquires an identity through terroir, to which the narrator is drawn for its qualities of authenticity and rootedness.

The pull of foreign places

The notion of 're-enchantment', that we have touched upon in the previous section, is key to our understanding of the phenomenon that we can describe as the attraction of foreign places, akin to notions of romanticism, suggesting that an enchanted place may be invested with a special mythical significance, that touches a sense of identity and belonging, focused on the individual and emotions. By 'foreign', we embrace the idea of that which is unfamiliar to us, often alien to our own culture in a

number of fundamental ways, not least foodways. According to Edward Said the 'new travel' is the negotiation not of familiar spaces but of strange places. (Carter et al., xiv).

The pull towards the unfamiliar and the exotic, is a desire to experience something new. For the narrator, it generates excitement, enchantment, satisfaction and above all passion, expressed in terms such as 'magnetic' and 'irresistible'. The reader, seeking travel narratives, also experiences the pull of foreign places, not from the perspective of the narrator but as a vicarious witness. In titles spanning the chronology of the corpus from the earliest food fantasies of Elizabeth Pennell, the food-rich mid-century travel literature, to recent memoirs, we find a prominent mythical register, with *The Tenth Muse*, *The Colossus of Maroussi*, and *The Feasts of Autolycus*; personified food with *The Language of Baklava*, celestial spheres with *Daughter of Heaven: A Memoir with Earthly Recipes*, and *From Paris to the Moon;* fantastic beasts with *How to Cook a Dragon;* reveries with *Dream Homes*, and the elements with *Jasmine and Fire*.

Certain memoirs enact the myth of the exotic, including that of the Orient—exotic certainly, but above all remote and strange—as defined by Edward Said, an object of fascination for westerners, like the pull of the American dream is for other nations. Durrell, David and Fisher write with passion about the Mediterranean, Hemingway, Toklas and Child about France, Christensen about Maine, Roden and Rossant about the Middle East. Said claims that the Orient was a British and French cultural enterprise embracing India, the Levant, the Biblical lands, the spice trade, colonial armies, oriental splendour, sensuality in disparate realms of the imagination (4), insisting that Orientalism was concerned with how the Orient was constructed by western literature and travel writing. The Orientalist attitude shares with magic and mythology the self-containing, self-reinforcing character of a closed system. (Said, 1979, 70). Characteristics of Orientalism include strangeness, exotic sensuousness, and a timelessly eternal quality that conveys the impression of repetition and strength, aspects of which are synonymous with food, the exotic, sensuous, timeless and ephemeral qualities that sustenance imparts. Within our corpus, the two memoirs evoking Indian food cultures, those of Madhur Jaffrey's and Shoba Narayan's childhoods, describe a closed exotic world with little outside influence, enforcing the imaginative dimension of orientalism. At the end of these memoirs, the narrators find themselves on the threshold of a new world.

In *Reflections on a Marine Venus*, Durrell records that he is advised to write "[n]ot history or myth–but landscape and atmosphere" (26). Making landscape the essence and core of his work, Durrell found "cities, plains and people" around his homes on the shores of the Mediterranean which encouraged him to turn his back on the landscape and "to enjoy the sensation of sharing a common life" (*Bitter Lemons,* 45). Nevertheless, he responds to the siren call of its hinterlands, for ultimately he was "more interested in culture than in the individual" (Nichols, 1995, 105): "The landscape puts her arms about human habits, beliefs, styles of mind so that imperceptibly they are overgrown by the fine net of her caresses" (*Reflections on a Marine Venus,* 153). Frances Mayes, in her memoir of Mediterranean residence, *Under the Tuscan Sun,* evokes the same enticement of the landscape, its harmony of architecture, ruins and food: "Italy always has had a magnetic north pull on my psyche" (7). "I was drawn to the surface of Italy for its perched towns, the food, language and art. I was pulled also to its sense of lived life, the coexistence of times that somehow gives an aura of timelessness" (260). She was drawn to its history, but also its immediacy. Like Durrell, she discovers that the landscape invites itself into daily food rituals. Mayes seeks to bond with the landscape, and "the rhythms around it" (16), cultivating, harvesting, gathering and sharing its produce.

It is not necessarily the place that invites the traveller but rather the traveller that must seek out the place, because it is more than a physical locus, implying, paradoxically, that the idea of the traveller and her personal introspection are imposed on the place. There is a sense of local coincidence that eliminates the notions of trace or trajectory, corresponding to Durrell's own image of himself as a "residence writer" (Herbrechter, 156), rather than a travel writer: "I am not really a 'travel writer' so much as a 'residence writer'. My books are always about living in places, not just rushing through them" (231), an attitude that implies slowness,[276] observation, reflection and sensitivity to the instinctive and the invisible. Durrell refers to Freya Stark's[277] "delicate

[276] This approach reminds us of the Slow Food Movement, described earlier, to which culinary memoirs are akin in approach and spirit.

[277] Freya Stark was a British travel writer whose highly personal books describe local history and culture as well as everyday life during her journeys to remote areas of Turkey and the Middle East. Writer-traveller, Sara Wheeler, captures the intimacy and force of Stark's narratives: "Her journeys and her books (there were more than 30) were a heady mix of hardship and luxury, scholarship and mischief, loneliness and intimacy: all perfect combinations, and the oppositions give her prose its tensile strength." (Wheeler, 2011, 120).

eye and insinuating slow-moving orchestration of place and evocations of history", as though the traveller orchestrates or wills the place into being, much as Abu-Jaber says that Jordan would not exist without her father's willing Jordan into existence (*Language of Baklava*, 218). The slow-moving orchestration reminds us of the rhizomatic quality of food travel writing, in which places emerge unexpectedly in an imaginary landscape. Landscape was as much, if not more, important to Durrell than its people, for divulging the nature of a place and providing access to its spirit. Narrative and place merge interchangeably, both bound in the consumption of the place; in the words of Hemingway: "[t]he story was writing itself and I was having a hard time keeping up with it. I ordered another rum St. James [...] (*Moveable Feast*, 6).

Places can represent spiritual reclusion, a tangible, lost homeland, but also a real place into which one projects oneself. For Durrell, food was rooted literally, emotionally and spiritually in land. Such places in culinary memoirs become both origin and destination as narrators seek to find their pasts and their futures. They are both universal and personal, global and intimate. After her Italian wedding, as her family and friends disperse to different countries and continents, Luisa Weiss reminds herself of her home: "Home to the city I was born in and where my husband awaited me, where I could feel my heart swell every time I arrived in its funny gray streets, where I knew I belonged. I went home again." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 293). Cohen described the homeland as being imbued with an expressive charge and sentimental, if universal pathos (2008, 103). The descriptions resist clichés and therefore the narrator can find something of herself. She is not seeking multiculturalism, but a clarity of identity, making sense of threads, and strands. Durrell explains that a writer searches "not merely of a place or the 'spirit of place' [...] but also, and more importantly, *the quiddity of himself*." (Pine, 2008, 2-3). Richard Pine describes it as "Travel without Moving", an aphorism often associated with cooking and eating, as in the example of Weiss. Her food is often rich with the identity of another culture and rarely where she is at a given time.

An air of self-determination is felt in certain ostensibly escapist narratives, in which narrators, who appear to be fleeing themselves and their origins in their travels, appear also to be seeking another self than their inherited or imposed identity. David and Fisher express the desire to shed the shackles of the past, seeking new origins in a unique destination, pursuing something missing, however as further analysis will reveal,

there is more nostalgia in their ofttimes imperious attitude than they would admit. Both authors are, indeed, pulled to foreign places by a desire to discard an imposed identity, that of the stifling upper-class English society for David, and the equally suffocating life of an academic wife for Fisher. However, none of the authors discards their past definitively. Durrell also talks about "a personal landscape of the heart that beckons them" (*Spirit of Place*, 237). He describes a multitude of post and interwar writers who were drawn by the spirit of place, precursors of culinary memoirists, as well as early memoirists themselves, who felt a compulsion towards a place or series of places in search of something within themselves, that transcends the notion of home. Durrell is ecstatic over D. H. Lawrence's "gems", *Sea in Sardinia,* and *Twilight in Italy,* cited in *Spirit of Place* (232). He calls Henry Miller's *The Colossus of Maroussi* "an incomparable nature-study" (233), and the powerful influence of the French landscape that emerges in their food and wine culture to which Hemingway was sensitive: "the invisible constant in a place with which the ordinary tourist can get in touch just by sitting quietly over a glass of wine in a Paris *bistrot*." (233).

E. M. Forster's travel guide, *Alexandria* (1915) was a rich source of information including history for Durrell during World War II, when he wrote *The Alexandria Quartet*. Forster was moved by the *genius loci*, or the spirit of place, to explore the nature of travel in his novels. A classical education instilled knowledge of Italy and Greece, of which A *Room with a View* is studded with references, though he nonetheless consulted the *Baedeker Guide*, like his characters.[278] His landscape (even if inspired by the guide) is ambiguous, compelling, and at times disappointing, exposing the shallowness of the British traveller, with mean hearts, lacking passion, spontaneity and imagination. Foreign places force the visitors into a crisis (*A Passage to India*) of their inability to temporarily transplant themselves, inhibited above all by its demands on their senses.

Durrell's works constitute a set of memoirs in which he writes the Mediterranean landscape according to the sensorial response dictated by his inner landscape, his Heraldic Universe, which is explained by Keith Brown as "a total and immediate, non-

[278] Forster may have been familiar with Liet.-Col. Nathaniel Newnham-Davis' *The Gourmet's Guide to Europe* published in 1903, which includes dining advice for "travelling Anglo-Saxons" (vii), "not content to dine and breakfast every day at the hotel in which they happen to stay" like his characters, making the challenging association between travel with the pleasures of eating.

discursive, non-analytic, apprehension of the world" (Pine, 1994, 109). Durrell further explains that the traveller's sensorial response becomes part of the enigmatic landscape: "the traveler in this land could not record. It was rather as if he himself were recorded" (*Spirit of Place*, 131). G. S. Fraser describes the landscape as "not there for its own sake but for its complex expressiveness as something onto which [Durrell] can project, and by means of which he can define moods, elusive and obsessive recurrences of human feeling" (Fraser, 1973, 44) as perceived by the observer. 'Landscape and character' sheds light on his view of environmental determinism in which places shape characters (Speake, 2003, n.pag.).

Though Hemingway's writing is not explicitly travel literature, the journey is central to his work. He reconceptualizes the relationship between writer and place that embraces regret, longing, anomie and a mistrust of sentimentalized locales. *A Moveable Feast*, published first in *Life* in 1964 is a grand culmination and amalgamation of Hemingway's voices. Trying to recapture Paris of the 1920s, he achieves an atmospheric evocation of what it is to be 'undiscovered' as a place,[279] a person and an artistic movement. It explores the doomed effects of memory on place and yet retrieves, without judgment, memory's redemptive power. (Speake, 2003, n.pag.).

In recent memoirs, we confront a more modern phenomenon of wanting to belong, to make a home in a foreign place. Kevin Robins explains that "[i]f there is now a revival of interest in community and sense of place, this can only be seen in the context of what is in fact the increasing fragmentation and segmentation of urban life." (Robins, 312). Kate Christensen's two memoirs articulate this transition from fragmented identity to the adoption of a new 'homeland' in the context of the revival of a community. Growing up in a frequently recomposed and often dysfunctional family that had a nomadic existence with many moves to disparate and distant locations, Christensen discovers Maine in mid-life, a community reforming around natives and immigrants with similar ethics, ideals and existential needs. Christensen's first memoir *Blue Plate Special*, describes her frequent change of home, state, father-figure, job and even diet, fluctuating between indulgence and asceticism in a detailed saga of her childhood and

[279] Not so much Paris, but rather small places that Hemingway visited such as Schruns, a mountain village in Austria where he found peace and authenticity.

early adulthood. Christensen adopts the state of Maine as a spiritual and physical home, and allows Maine to adopt her, expressing a sense of being "of this place". She explained that some people 'got' Maine and settled, others did not. In her first memoir, wild life on Tuckernuck island in the summer presages the attraction for Maine, a mythical fantasy: "like a fairy tale for me [...] it was heaven for me" (*Blue Plate Special*, 201). Her exuberant but tormented tale ends at the point at which she finds a new home in Maine, in the quiet reassuring house she eats "soft-boiled eggs with buttered toast" (348) replaying the devastating opening scene of *Blue Plate Special* where her father batters her mother as she, a two-year-old with her baby sister, eat their delicious soft-boiled eggs and buttered toast. Maine was a 'foreign' place for her, yet, "even though I'm 'from away,' and this is a place of long-standing generational continuity and ingrained, and wholly understandable suspicion of outsiders, Mainers are my kind of people" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 4).

The desire to start anew to let oneself be drawn by foreign places, does not necessarily imply renouncing core values. Mayes is pulled to the culture of Italy, not, however, for its foreignness, but because she found in its culture and foodways something of her own values concerning authenticity, respect for the past and the poetry of the landscape and the culinary traditions: "I had the urge to examine my life in another culture and move beyond what I knew. I wanted something of a *physical* dimension that would occupy the mental volume the years of my former life had." (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 15). The physical dimension is fulfilled both by the house they restore and the foodways that restore them. Despite the fact that her trips to Italy are far from timeless and indeed determined by the university teaching calendar, the pace slows and life for Mayes has an enduring ageless quality that paradoxically, does not correspond to an established home, but rather to a set of key values.

The desire for alterity

> To desire is to become that which one essentially is. (*Colossus of Maroussi*, 240).

> L'homme est un être dont l'essence est de s'approprier ce qui n'est pas lui. Le désir de l'altérité enracine dans un sol quasi épistémologique,

> la fuite, le voyage, la découverte est la conquête. Au verso, la terre est ontologiquement faite pour être vue et parcourue. (Affergan, 41).

Henry Miller claims that it is through the expression of desire that one finds oneself. The articulation of desire in culinary memoirs is the expression of an aesthetic of travel, of hunger for unknown places and dishes as much as for familiar places and tastes; the motivations are necessity and curiosity. Desire transports us far from ourselves, and also into our hidden depths. Francis Affergan writes: "Le désir induit la pratique de l'observation, de la découverte par l'œil, de l'attente et d'un regret qui s'articulent tous deux sur une durée improductive, désintéressée [...] C'est que le désir lui-même est voyage, dépaysement et arrachement à mon lieu." (58). Desire is rarely the source or the driver of travel in memoirs; the initial journeys are often initiated by circumstance or necessity, even in the case of earlier writers such as Fisher and David. Frances Mayes' passion for Italy was circumscribed at the beginning by the need to extricate herself, like Elizabeth Gilbert, from a painful separation. Stimulated by the need for newness, their observation awakens them to the discovery of authentic foodways that enable them to secure a rhizomatic attachment to a new locus of memory and self-reconstruction, all the while hoping to find themselves in that foreign place, which as Affergan explains is born of a nostalgia for what is lost, the need to fill a space: "Il n'y a de découverte de l'altérité qu'à travers une prescience nostalgique et un profond désir d'être soi-même trouble et de retrouver ainsi ses propres origines." (105). In describing Hemingway's writing, Craig Boreth, in *The Hemingway Cookbook*, highlights the attraction of the newness in the foreign, that generates a stimulating imbalance:

> He had an insatiable appetite for new and novel geographies, experiences and people, attending to each detail with the acumen of a natural historian. It is no surprise then, that so many have followed him in search of that same newness, that same disconcerting, energizing imbalance that must be overcome in a new place. (Boreth, xiii).

Mingled with these shifts in identitary position, is a nostalgia for freedom, adventure and mystery, and a regret for the past: "la nostalgie, longtemps maladie de séparation du lieu natal, devient douleur des origines, désarroi de l'éloignement du passé, sentiment de la fin d'un monde" writes Sylvain Venayre (2002, 147). One cannot help but read between the lines of Elizabeth David's multiple diatribes against British

cooking,[280] that there is some regret for her homeland's culinary inadequacies, and nostalgia even in her own state of uprootedness. An imploring description of the vine-ripened Spanish tomato, sounds disturbingly like a poignant description of herself and some lonely, unrequited desire: "Ah, that difficult, aristocratic, fastidious tomato, what's the betting that quite a few mouths would go for it were it on offer." (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 209).[281] Lawrence Durrell was more overtly articulate about the possibilities of finding keys to self-understanding in penetrating the unknown: "It is not a 'state of mind' but a continuous self-subsisting place of reality towards which the spiritual self of man is trying to reach out through various media: artists like antennae boring into the unknown through music or paint or words, suddenly strike this Universe where for every object in the known world there exists an ideogram." (Gifford and Durrell, 104).

Culinary tourism finds fascination in the other, and seeks to appropriate their power and charisma, especially through the adoption of their foodway. There is a hunger for alterity that Nancy K. Miller expresses in terms of the popularity of the memoir form itself: "the memoir craze feeds the hunger for a different, or at least more interesting life through literature" (2002, 12). The manifestations of desire for otherness are complex, as we have seen in the literary responses that range from insular diasporic memoirs such as that of Elisabeth Ehrlich, through the vacillating movement of Diana Abu-Jaber's text, to the memoirs of painful, itinerant reconstruction from Sasha Martin and Kate Christensen. M.F.K. Fisher, for whom desire is an undercurrent in her autobiographical work, finds treasures of food during travel, like the art works discovered on a Grand Tour. Lush, rich, romantic, exotic, descriptions are exhibitions of curiosity in as much as they help the narrator to perceive herself in relation to others, often with empathy. Julie Rak writes that "memoir's popularity finally collapses consumer 'hunger,', narcissism, and capitalism together" (2013, loc. 361), the hunger and desire of the

[280] The articles in *An Omelette and a Glass of Wine* are punctuated with criticism and negative comparison of France and other Mediterranean foodways with those of England.
[281] Virulent letters in response to some of her articles, were often a response as much to David's uncompromising and haughty literary manner as the content of her journalism, for example, page 36. David acknowledged the effect of her arrogance: "I do not forget to thank also my readers, especially the many who over the years have troubled to write to me, even when occasionally their letters were furious, rude or sarcastic." (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 17).

narrator also finding reciprocity in a readership eager to consume the journeys and desires of the other.

Despite examples of hostility against others in the form of discrimination, described in culinary memoirs, be it amongst children in playgrounds or in neighbourhoods amongst adults, the works bear witness to the fascination with the other in our midst, with individual and community identity, as well as ontological examples of treatises on the way we confront otherness, and not merely to places with potential exoticism. Culinary memoirs are foremostly marked by an interculturalism with the blurring in diasporic encounters between peoples and cultures. They also evolve a step further towards transculturalism, an infusion of cross-cultural blending that allows narrators to see themselves in others, but also in places and objects that have a marked otherness, such as ethnic traditions and foodways, offering access to another way of looking at oneself. Christensen's editor defends the author's legitimacy to write about Maine, having observed the desire she had developed around Maine culture, noticing that she had begun "her own love affair with our history, its people, its funky wildness, and its food" (*How to Cook a Moose*, xi).

Francis Affergan also talks of the role of the imagination in the pursuit of alterity: "A la place de l'altérité se substitue celle de l'imagination sous la triple figure du merveilleux/prodigieux, du monstrueux et de l'animalité." (Affergan, 11). He describes it as a form of inverse nostalgia for something inaccessible, a utopia for something we are not or cannot achieve or acquire. Diana Abu-Jaber describes how Jordan became inaccessible to Bud: "He tried to move us back to Jordan, but whenever we got there, it seemed to hurt him as much as America did—not being the place he remembered and longed for. (*Life Without a Recipe*, 232). For exiled Claudia Roden, the tangibility of the Middle East became uniquely accessible to her through its food. For Weiss, the perfect combination was impossible to create (combining her diverse cultural elements). One can oppose the real journey with the journey accomplished through the imaginative act of reading, the real traveller and the tourist. Homelands are held in the diasporic imagination as foreign lands, while local places have the potential to become the new exotic**;** Christensen presents Maine as though it were a newly discovered country, rich in tradition and idiosyncrasies, varied, yet coherent, and understood. Despite the distance between Madeleine Kamman and the France of her distant childhood, she

presents recipes as familiar and meaningful food that, conveying relevant values. The produce of her new home is a gift from the earth, of inherent value and goodness for Mayes, not alien, but accessible. Embracing difference allows one to reach beyond oneself but also into one's self. The foodways of another can be thus become one's own, at least in a compromised respect. The nostalgia that we discover in culinary memoirs is gourmand, seeking anchors in the past, and new places to be called home in the present.

The diasporic condition captures the popular imagination as an often-romanticized concept of the exotic living amongst us, holding a secret home in their hearts. Edward Said wrote of the fascination with exile: "Much of the contemporary interest in exile can be traced to the somewhat pallid notion that non-exiles can share in the benefits of exile as a redemptive motif" (2000, 145). For outsiders, be they narrators or readers, traditional definitions of diaspora invariably revolve around a need to define and categorise groups and their cultures. Elizabeth Mavroudi suggests that in this respect their "conceptual shortcomings [...] derive in many aspects from unspoken and rather cosy connotations of 'community'" (Sökefeld quoted in Mavroudi, 4).[282] As much as Frances Mayes is 'drawn' to Italy and seeks not simply to discover it as a traveller, but as a resident, setting up home, planting its soil and eating its produce, so the reader is captivated by her Tuscany romance, inciting Mayes to capitalize on the success of *Under the Tuscan Sun* with four further memoirs and cookbooks on the region.

Culinary memoirs are a witness to a certain cultural promiscuity that preserves one's own traditions, but takes also from others. Americans are as interested in idiosyncratic and individualistic affiliations to the foodways of their neighbours as to their own ethnic and regional roots. (Gabaccia, 9). We also willingly 'eat the other', showing tolerance, curiosity and willingness to digest a part of their identity, the ethnicity of another. Mary Louise Pratt considers that as a genre, travel writing translates the other into 'bodyscapes'[283] for consumption (64). For Lawrence Durrell the other is part of the landscape, as much a source of communion—the one with whom he shares wine—as the fruits of the land: "I willingly admit to seeing 'characters' almost as

[282] Mavroudi cites p.280 of M. Sökefeld. "Mobilizing in transnational space: a social movement approach to the formation of diaspora". *Global Networks* 6.3 (2006): 265-284.
[283] Bodyscapes are an artistic style in which closeup photographs of the human form convey the impression of landscape.

functions of a landscape" (*Spirit of Place*, 231). Durrell also writes: "The landscape is scribbled with the signature of men and epochs. The changes are simply superficial." (Gifford and Durrell, 357). The recipe section in Judith Jones' memoir is exemplary of culinary eclecticism. She includes sections on traditional recipes from her past, from foreign places where she resided: 'French—and other—Influences', from her adopted New England (with Welsh inspirations from her husband's origins), and finally a section on cooking for one, drawn from a cookbook she wrote after her husband died. Jones adds comments and tips from other writer-cooks she consulted, each recipe thoroughly explored.

Culinary tourism reaches beyond oneself but not into oneself, generally lacking a depth of introspection, or pursuit of identity, inspired by the imagination and stereotypical expectations. The tourist undertakes a journey without adventure, relegating this modern form of travel literature to a secondary status (Venayre, 2002, 151). Tourism renders societies fragile, elaborates David Abulafia, and by extension the identity of communities and their visitors. It even leads to the destruction of real travel and the end of 'good' writing according to Kaplan (1996, 53). These types of memoirs rarely involve self-questioning, and typically describe brief and recent moments in time, around 'inauthentic' travel, the objectives of which are often what appears to be a commercial literary venture. Writers and journalists such as Tracey Lawson, Salma Abdelnour, or Kathleen Flinn, extend the reach of food writing trends with travel-memoirs that draw focused portraits of communities or regions, without a significant personal investment. They use sensationally verbose titles to compensate: *A Year in the Village of Eternity: The Lifestyle of Longevity in Campodimele* (2011), *Jasmine and Fire: A Bittersweet Year in Beirut* (2012), or *The Sharper Your Knife, the Less You Cry: Love, Laughter, and Tears in Paris at the World's Most Famous Cooking School* (2007).[284]

Social articulation of difference is a complex, ongoing negotiation which seeks to authorize cultural hybridity that emerges in moments of historical transition. It is surely no coincidence that the emergence of the contemporary food memoir occurred around the cusp of the millennium as humankind faced an existential unknown, amidst fin de

[284] Matthew Fort, British food writer and critic, in *Eating Up Italy: voyages on a Vespa* (2010), is one of the few non-chef male authors, to use this form of memoir.

siècle and apocalyptic declarations, seeking to tame anxiety while concocting reassurance in gastronomic comforts. Adam Gopnik, whose Paris residence ended with the new millennium wrote: "Paris won the century against all odds. At least we won the party, which is the next best thing to dominating the period." (*Paris to the Moon*, 331). New hybrid travel and food genres with their explorations of alterity offer a way of diminishing difference and boundaries, on a collective as well as an individual level. Tourism heralds postmodernism, the rise of consumer culture, leisure and technological innovation (Kaplan, 1997, 27), which started with the democratization of the Grand Tour, and reaches a cultural and aesthetic apogee at its best with the new culinary memoir genre. Expatriates became permanently displaced tourists seeking entertainment and pleasure manifesting a form of voluntary homelessness. A lack of commitment limits them to the role of witness of other people's revolutions, tragedies and exiles. They may have wished to feel like exiles themselves (estranged, melancholic, or nostalgic). According to Paul Fussell, an Edenic period preceded vulgar tourism, as reductionist as his ethnocentric view of Renaissance travel (stemming back to the golden age of exploration) (53). Nostalgia infuses Fussell's sense of the world as shrinking, with no 'far-flung' place for literary interpretations (55), making a distinction between high and low culture, between popular and elite (Kaplan, 1997, 57), which does not hold true for the essentially egalitarian pursuit of authentic foodways in culinary memoirs: they insist that in meeting others we meet ourselves, proposing a response to the existential questions of identity, dislocation and searching for roots in the travel dimension of culinary self-writing.

Terroir - the taste of place

> [...] for more and more of us, home has really less to do with a piece of soil than, you could say, with a piece of soul. (Iyer, Video).

In a world of ever more frenetic movement, and trans- and multiculturalism, Pico Iyer claims that movement was only of any sense if you could bring to it an impression of stillness. Journeying finds that moment of stillness in *terroir*, where we encounter the other. For all the questions and doubts that these double-track memoirs of fragmented shards seem to pose about the nature and place of home, the question of the uniqueness

of place, highlighted in otherness, its culture and gustatory taste are central to the journeys of each author. The desire for otherness contends with, while also being in synergy with, the omnipresent notion of terroir in memoirs. An instinctive sensibility puts authors in accordance with the spirit of place, just as the writers' moral stance about the importance of authenticity and respect for traditions lead them to promote *terroir*, most typically associated with the taste of a place, but which can be more generally related to the character, or the spirit of place, a set of characteristics that define its identity. Terroir is technically defined as the set of environmental factors (natural context, farming practices and the growth habits) that affect the traits or characteristics of the crops that grow in a specific place. Amy Trubek, who translated terroir as 'taste of place', unconsciously concorded with Durrell's volume in her work entitled *Taste of Place* (2008). The taste of place is the essence of foodways in culinary memoirs. Tastes and scents, englobing the spirit of place intersect with definitions of authenticity that we have examined previously: "The use of authenticity when related to food and drink rest on the assumption about the superiority of traditional practices; historical persistence somehow guarantees higher quality food and drink." (Trubek, 16). Origins are valued whether they be one's own or those of another people. Terroir, as we have seen, is also associated with gastronomy, as a sometimes-mythological collection of practices of belonging that are to some extent ritualized.

In contrast to Iyer's statement, Pascal Ory tells us that culinary heritage or patrimony is defined in movement rather than a static state: "Il n'y a pas d'identité sans confrontation à l'altérité, il n'y a pas de patrimoine sans sa transmission." (Ory, 36). In Patience Gray's descriptions of the inspiration of peasant Catalan cooking, one reads that the inverse was true. The perfection of terroir produce inspires the recipe transmission: "It was the simplicity, the frugality of these meals, combined with the perfection of the raw materials and the loving care with which Anita prepared them that inspired Irving Davis to begin his collection of Catalan recipes." (*Honey from a Weed*, 83). Gray even offers explanations for authentic taste: "thriving on limestone, these herbs alter their nature in richer damper soils [...] they grow out of the rock and produce a higher concentration of their essential oil [...] This has a bearing on pounding [...]" (34). The word 'tradition', omnipresent in our study, comes from the Old French *tradicion* 'transmission, presentation, handing over', and directly from Latin *traditionem* 'delivery,

surrender, a handing down'. Ory explains: "Rien n'est donc plus labile, mobile, dynamique qu'une tradition." (36). The sociological phenomenon that Ory describes with regard to traditions is readable in the narrative constructions of memoirs. "[…] le Français désormais détaché de la société rurale et la transmission familiale, rêve nostalgiquement son origine […]" (75). The confusion between nostalgia, the imagination, and the representation of roots (76), leads memoirists to talk about terroir in a spirit of evangelism as a form of response to the necessity to transmit a culinary heritage. They recognise that traditions bestow a form of identification.

It is however hard to transplant food which is, above all, associated with recipes for home cooking, associated with the 'soil' of a particular place. Kate Christensen, describing terroir as "the essential taste of a place" writes: "[in Maine] the terroir is so rich and consistently excellent, it's practical common sense to cook ingredients that are local and in season, the fresher and closer to home the better. Eating in a good Maine restaurant is—in its most sublime sense—like being in someone's house, at their table" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 102). Fisher connects with the primal goodness and innocence of produce: "the cauliflowers were small and very succulent grown in that ancient soil. The dish prepared is simple and delicious and she is unable to reproduce it in California "it was never so innocent, so simple […] And where were our young uncomplicated hungers, too?" (*Gastronomical Me*, 103). They do battle with 'violently fertile' soil—strong images of this Old-World soil that has to be tamed. Chexbres exclaims: "'By God, I'll not be dictated to! I'll show you who's boss!' He was talking to the earth […]" (153). She speaks of the age of the soil, containing an archaic truth that anchors those who work it: "It was the oldest soil either of us had ever touched and it seemed almost bursting with life […] We ran a kind of race with it, exciting and exhausting." (152).

Barbara Kingsolver writes a eulogy to the land in her memoir *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*. On a trip to Italy, flying over a farmer tilling his field next to the Rome airport, she makes the equation between land with home "For reasons I didn't really understand yet, I thought: I've come home." (*Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, 243). She can be criticized for over-idealizing the taste of terroir: "The simple pastas still taste of sunshine and grain; the tomatoes dressed with fruity olive oil capture the sugars and heat of late summer; the leaf lettuce and red chicory have the specific mineral tang of their soil; the black kale soil tastes of a humus-rich garden." (257). However, the emphatically tangible

"mineral tang", the "black kale soil" and the hummus-rich garden" are a celebration of the terroir that she returned home to farm.

The planted garden reinvents a corner of the Mediterranean, in taking possession of a place with plants that are symbols of an unforgettable land, explains Bénédicte Deschamps (Carmignani et al., 406). It is a way of appropriating the land, the soil itself, like those of Angelo Pellegrini (*Unprejudiced Palate*) and Li's grandmother, Nai-nai (*Daughter of Heaven*), replanting one's uprooted identity. The taste of the homeland is transmitted in a cultivated garden and enables Italian immigrants to America to resist the pressure of assimilation of American foodways as Pellegrini demonstrates. The metaphor of the cultivated garden draws together notions of ingredients and culinary preparation with establishing roots and settling into a new homeland, requiring competence and determination, but also circumstantial chance. Yet, as Fisher and others show, the centrality of terroir in culinary memoirs is as much about culinary travel, the journey of taste that discovers a cuisine and a terroir, as it is an inherited culinary identity, to which the reader is introduced. The journey metaphor together with the diasporic garden planted in the urban soil of America, even the children's sandbox, are a reminder that: "[d]ire que [culinary identity] est folklorisée', c'est croire qu'il y avait des identités culinaires à la fois stables et innovantes (Ory, 127).

Culinary identities are, in effect, at risk of being dissipated by the blending and adopting of other cultures. Displacing homes as well as gardens, associated with "feelings of home and belonging[,] are increasingly being seen [in contemporary memoirs] as affected by the processes of migration and globalisation and can no longer be simplistically theorised and analysed" (Mavroudi, 7).[285] One might be led to consider, as Amy Trubek explains, that globalization has changed the face of the food landscape. The anxious space it has created, has allowed the seeds of culinary memoirs to grow. Globalization is "a universal phenomenon with very localized stories, practices framed by particular cultural memories, meaning and myths […] Terroir is there, but it is not there […] or the taste of place exists as long as it matters" (Trubek, 250). It has come to matter because challenges to individual and community identity have caused a revival

[285] Mavroudi refers to N. Al-Ali and K. Koser. *New approaches to migration? Transnational communities and the transformation of home*. London: Routledge, 2002.

in the importance of taste of place and the necessity to find one's origins. Several memoirs are part of the global movement, notably those of Sasha Martin, the duo memoirs of Linda Furiya, whose expatriation to China with her American Japanese identity displaces her existential questions to another country, the trilogy of Colette Rossant, who localizes three countries and phases of her identity crisis in three overlapping memoirs,[286] and Luisa Weiss and Elizabeth Gilbert who each hop between three counties in a single story.

The values of authenticity and purity (of ingredients) have superseded other equally valid culinary values of artistic expression and technical complexity. (Trubek, 136). Indeed, global practices need to be moderated by home cultures, claims McLean (241). Culinary memoirs have assumed the role of telling the overarching food narrative, writing the corpus of recipes that embody a symbolic and universal truth.

> Le retour à la cuisine de grand-mère, et donc du terroir et du soi-disant authentique [...] serait un réflexe qui aiderait à tenir dans un monde globalisant [...] la culture alimentaire locale redécouverte ou réinventée et, en tous cas, imprégnée dans un passé formerait donc une résistance identitaire. (Campanini et al., 14).

This dynamic is perceptible at an individual and collective level in culinary memoirs. In the spirit of Slow Food, their consideration of terroir or taste of place offers a form of resistance to globalization. The fertile landscape of Durrell's islands, rich with fruit trees and vines is a symbol for nature's garden, and universal riches from which all can profit, the fruits of the land and the dish at the table, the ancient soil of Maine, Fisher's violently fertile soil in Vevey.

M.F.K. Fisher's and Elizabeth David's memoir-cookbooks were influential in the early stages of culinary globalization, by introducing 'foreign' foodways to their native cultures, while at the same time, ushering in the idea of respecting terroir. They express a deeply embedded sense of place, one that evokes nostalgia for an era that predates modernity. David is simultaneously drawn to and anxious about modernity while acknowledging the impact of modernity upon the authenticity of food in time and space. (McLean, 153).

> The food Elizabeth David wrote of in her early books was essentially peasant food, simple and unrefined, but imbued with centuries

[286] *Apricots on the Nile* (1999), *Return to Paris* (2003) and *Madeleines in Manhattan* (2008), each subtitled *A Memoir with Recipes*.

> of tradition and the hearty pungent flavours of garlic and anchovies, of olive oil and goose fat and wine [...] Her recipes are sparse, suggestive rather than exhaustive, paying close attention to regionality, or terroir. (Humble, 135).

David's description of the tian dish (*Mediterranean Food*, 153) is mythical in its list of ingredients, its identity as 'one of the national dishes of Provence', the vessel itself,[287] and the stories that accompany it. Culinary memoirs are the symbolic vessels of the new hybrid nomadism of eating. We touch the mythic realms of rural plenty and innate culinary talent in the chapter on 'Hare and Rabbit'. The description by Alan Houghton-Brodick is poetic, the food unsurpassed in quality as we enter a world of terroir, quality, quantity, authenticity, generosity (*Mediterranean Food*, 116-7), and recipes of mythical proportions such as *Lievre a la Royale* (*Mediterranean Food*, 118). In the chapter on vegetables, we see the regional genius better than anywhere. The list of basic ingredients does not vary greatly but each region's recipes show resourcefulness, imagination, attention to detail (which makes the difference) and quality.

Under the Tuscan Sun is ostensibly a hymn to aesthetic and sensorial pleasure, a heightened awareness of the spirit of place, of time and history imbued in the stones and the earth. It is an example of the universality of culinary narratives, that, as we have seen in other examples, both succumb to and resist 'globalisation'. It is also about attempting to connect with another culture. The reader learns that after her divorce "[...] this house quest felt tied to whatever new identity I would manage to forge [...] I had the urge to examine my life in another culture and move beyond what I knew. I wanted something of a physical dimension that would occupy the mental volume the years of my former life had." (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 15) Her adopted home allows her to occupy a new physical and mental sphere, once again reminding us of the way that culinary memoirs associate the spiritual quest and sensorial responses. "The new life must shape itself to the contours of the house, which already is at home in the landscape, and to the rhythms around it." (16). Mayes studies the region's ancient past, omnipresent in the Etruscan remains, in order to make a connection, through knowledge and respect – both leitmotifs of Ehrlich's own cultural pursuit. Unearthing the house's original sink, she takes pains to install it in a prominent place on the terrace in sight of the dinner table.

[287] 'Tian' designates the earthenware terrine traditionally made in Vallauris, Provence, as well as the dish cooked in it.

"[A]n honoured place to fill a glass, a place for the pitcher of roses on the stone. It will be returning to good use after many years buried in dirt." (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 47-48). Mayes invites her reader to open themselves to the possibility of finding roots in other lands, as does Christensen, proposing to contribute to the emerging overarching food narrative.

3. The Mediterranean: terroir of infinite resources

> L'identité Méditerranéenne est universelle (Mahmoud Darwich quoted in Fabre and Portevin, 243).

Paul Fussell no doubt had the Mediterranean in mind when he evoked an Edenic golden age of literature. This particular geographical space, the Mediterranean, is emblematic of roots, origins and identity, even if oftentimes, adopted, having, as Darwich described it, a universal resonance. The influence of French and Mediterranean culture and culinary traditions on culinary literature is linked to the origins and identity of the diaspora and the traveller. The culture is articulate, inspirational, and sensorially appealing and accessible, inciting a form of tropism in travel writers. It is both universal and public, and experienced in the intimacy of one's senses. In her preface to the 1965 edition of *The Book of Mediterranean Food*, David aspired one day to write a second instalment, as "in those regions there will always be new discoveries to be made, new doors opening, new impressions to communicate" (3). The region, that is mythically and anthropologically often considered the birthplace of humanity, with infinite resources, both alimentary and spiritually, is presented as a place of abundance of ingredients, fruits, foods, as well as recipes. David considers these infinite resources to provide a form of response to questions of identity with adjectives that comfort" 'warm', 'rich', 'stimulating':

> [...] but the ingredients which make this cookery so essentially different from our own are available to all; they are olive oil, wine, lemon, garlic, onions, tomatoes and the aromatic herbs and spices which go to make up what is so often lacking in English cooking: variety of flavor and colour, and the warm, rich stimulating smells of genuine food. (*Mediterranean Food*, 3).

The Mediterranean has a marked identity that embraces numerous countries and peoples that transcends national borders. Fernand Braudel writes of "Une Méditerranée", "elle évoquera un champ de forces, ou magnétique ou électrique, ou plus simplement un foyer lumineux [...] la vie de la mer se diffuse loin de ses rives [...] (Braudel, 203). Writing of Middle Eastern food, Roden explains that "[o]ne of the reasons for the popularity of this food is that the area has come to be recognized as 'Mediterranean' (part of it is), and the healthy Mediterranean diet rich with grains, vegetables, legumes, fruits and nuts, yogurt, and olive oil has been much touted." (*Middle Eastern Food*, 9). What we denote here, and in many other descriptions of essential Mediterranean ingredients in these memoirs, is that they are often represented in lists or long litanies, as though, like its many nations and peoples, the Mediterranean is made up of many multiple parts that create a whole. The whole is refracted and fragmented. Baudel describes "ses vastes espaces, compliqués, morcelés, car la Méditerranée, plus qu'une masse maritime unique, est un 'complexe de mers'" (Braudel, 28). Likewise, narratives of the Mediterranean evoke many journeys, from Durrell's *Bitter Lemons of Cyprus*, or Fisher's *The Gastronomical Me*.

The flavours and scents of Durrell's Mediterranean are identified as the spirit of place and the trace of an archetypal past, which blends imagination, history and mythology, the captivating presence of archetypal personalities, drawn by what Catherine Delmas has called the "empreintes géantes de la mémoire historique qui se situe au-delà des souvenirs de la personnalité individuelle" (1998, 156). For Durrell, the link between the body and the spirit that the Mediterranean offers, is a deep source of original knowledge. The opposition that Paul Carmignani defines between two sides of the Mediterranean, the 'good' western side, with its colours, light, scents and flavours, and the 'bad' eastern side, which he defines as oppressive, labyrinthine, miasmatic and prison-like (Carmignani, 425), is present in Durrell's *The Alexandria Quartet*, but less perceptible in culinary memoirs, except to distinguish between places that seem culturally accessible, such as Mayes' Tuscany, and those that seem impenetrable, even to its natives, such as Abu-Jaber's Jordan. Durrell's association is with food, terroir and nostalgia for another place, another moral space and remembered sensual experience:

> In a grocer's window I saw a small tin of olives with the name Orvieto on it, and overcome by a sudden longing to be on the right side of

> the Mediterranean, entered the shop: Bought it: had it opened there and then: and sitting down at a marble table in the gruesome light I began to eat Italy, its dark scorched flesh, hand-modelled spring soil, dedicated vines. (*Alexandria Quartet*, *Justine*, 31).

Exotic and luscious food, associated with pleasure and even decadence, is one of the characteristics of the dark side of the Mediterranean imagination: "De nombreux doubles viennent souligner cette 'dichotomie'—dans les personnages et aussi les lieux—la ville moderne aseptise et le quartier arabe avec ses saveurs et ses senteurs et qui créent un univers exotique 'digne des Mille et Une Nuits" (Carmignani et al., 425).

A number of culinary memoirs explore aspects of Mediterranean culture, both its Western and the Eastern borders, from France and Italy through Greece to Egypt and Jordan: it is represented as both origin and destination. The Mediterranean narratives comprise several earlier works in the corpus, representing a period of opening up to a type of libertarian individualistic hedonism, a form of exploration and discovery, corresponding to one of the directions of the new genre, and of individual and feminist self-pursuit. Durrell carried the banner of the Mediterranean into twentieth century travel literature with his rich evocations of foodways and landscapes; he was designated the colourist of its landscape. Alan G. Thomas, the editor of *Spirit of Place*, writes that Durrell was "[n]ever really content when living away from "the wine-drinking countries which surround the Mediterranean." (*Spirit of Place*, 188), the emphasis being on wine-*drinking*, rather than wine-*making*, for it was the people's partaking of the fruit of their land which encapsulated and held the spirit and values of place for Durrell.

The Mediterranean is revealed through a multitude of literary facets, including allegories, myths, and fables, a territory of dreams according to Thierry Fabre and Catherine Portevin: "Le rêve, lui, est source de liberté et d'un équilibre plus profond face à toutes les contraintes [de la réalité]. Puissance de l'illusion qui ouvre sur l'inconnu et favorise parfois, le pire [...] La Méditerranée peut devenir un rêve. Durrell (et les autres) sont des bâtisseurs des ponts et passeurs" (Fabre and Portevin, 7, 10). In contemporary memoirs, recipes and foodways build those bridges between generations and diasporic imaginative spaces, in a Mediterranean that is built on narratives. This narrative identity cannot be reduced to an essence or a one-dimensional fixed image: "La Méditerranée n'existe que pour autant qu'elle se raconte, elle est un devenir qui se parle et qui s'écrit, dans ce chiasme entre histoire et fiction." (Bouayed and Fabre, 13).

Writers of the Mediterranean are drawn by the culture and the lifestyle of which foodways are an integral part. Many works in our corpus are crisscrossed with journeys to and from, or within the Mediterranean as though its multinational, multiculturalism incites an agitation around origins and destination, pulling towards itself, but also engendering a restlessness, symbolic of the sea, that encloses and separates the countries. Images of the Mediterranean are often reconstructed from a multitude of disparate experiences of the kind that Durrell and David knew. This could imply that the region and its culture is comprised of a number of truisms, a preconceived mental construct, into which the unversed reader must be initiated, however, above all, in culinary memoirs as well as other narratives, the senses are engaged, together with memory, in the discovery of places and cultures: Durrell's Greece is a memorial vestige to be remembered, felt, experienced, like France or Italy for David, Jordan is for Abu-Jaber or Egypt for Roden and Zonana.

Hedonism

> You see, nothing matters except pleasure—which is the opposite of happiness, its tragic part, I expect. (*Alexandria Quartet, Justine*, 222).

Hedonism is an intimate aspect of the aesthetics of Mediterranean culture, described by Régis Debray as: "Manières de voir, manières de croire, manière de table, c'est tout un. […] Le baroque s'engendre dans la vigne et le blé, soit dans le périmètre Méditerranéen." (Carmignani et al., 376). Hedonism, myth and dream states are part of the aesthetics of culinary travel literature, with an emphasis on the sensual, artistic and aesthetic value of food. Elizabeth Gilbert's defence of the hedonistic aesthetics of her memoir summarizes the discourse of numerous culinary memoirs, particularly trauma related narratives: "Only artistic excellence is incorruptible. Pleasure cannot be bargained down. And sometimes the meal is the only currency that is real […]" (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 115). In food and eating lies the purest source of aesthetic perfection accessible to man.

Writers sought in myth-imbued Franco-Mediterranean gastronomic traditions, an anchor, as well as an experience of hedonism that offer sensorial comfort to exorcise trauma (past and present). Their contribution to the preservation of this culture builds

a wall against post-war despair, in the spirit of Nietzsche who wrote that he loved the south (le midi) "comme une grande école de guérison de l'esprit et des sens".[288] David's recipe book-memoir, a unique eulogy to the senses, opens windows onto Mediterranean landscapes through literary extracts, capturing the memories of her sensory experiences. Mediterranean food for David was a 'blend of tradition and brilliant improvisation'. She describes sweets of mythical properties, with fantasy flavours and "Arabian Night ingredients" (*Mediterranean Food*, 160). She intones ingredients like a sacred chant running throughout the book, a litany that brings her comfort: "oranges, lemons, apricots and almonds, the honey and cream cheese, the eggs, wine and honey, and, most especially, the fresh fruits of those lands." (161) The Mediterranean is portrayed as the land of plenty. In David's paragraph on hors d'oeuvres, we seem to be coming close to David's own experience particularly in her long, luscious and detailed description of Greece "you sit at a table on the sand with your feet in the Aegean as you drink your ouzo [...]" (148).

Hedonism can be seen as a form of regression to a more sensual, primitive state where the pleasure of eating, soliciting archaic instincts and sense-triggered memories, is central: "la redécouverte du mare nostrum est placée sous le signe du retour et de la régression, sinon de la transgression" (Carmignani et al., 378). It is often a return to the past that can represent repression and confinement as a reactionary form of resistance, according to Pascal Ory (100), both geographically and culturally, where man, according to Affergan is ultimately looking for space, and opening into infinity. (Affergan, 43). Bud senses this when he takes his regressive journey back to Jordan, his birthplace, the Bedouin tent in the desert where he goes to seek wisdom from his ancestors, symbolizing a return to the womb. Dreaming of the Mediterranean is an unconscious criticism of American puritanism, because the fundamental values are contradictory, as Fisher demonstrates in the literal and moral distance she puts between her and America and, above all, its food culture. In the chapter entitled "Noble and Enough", Fisher describes the delights of the eateries in Dijon to which she moves with her husband, exhibiting an enthusiastic reverence for food in a provincial corner of France, employing humour and caricature, with sensual, hedonistic descriptions, nostalgia even for the

[288] Friedrich Nietzsche. (1886). *Par-delà le bien et le mal*. Le livre de Poche, 2012, 255.

"laughing awareness that is France made all of us alive." (*Gastronomical Me*, 89, 95). In *An Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, Elizabeth David offers a page-long description of a February market in Uzès, that is an ecstatic litany, imperative in tone and rapturous in insistence on the pleasure of this unexpected abundance, that she came upon as she travelled around France (77).[289] It conveys a breathless and passionate urgency to transmit every detail with a rich array of adjectives and metaphors, colours and forms, local and esoteric knowledge, so that nothing is lost.

Through literature, the Mediterranean has come to represent a corporal desire while puritanical WASP[290] America represents 'prohibition': "la Méditerranée incarne une relation au corps, à la sensualité et à la sexualité et 'aussi une certaine forme d'hédonisme sinon parfois de licence et 'exubérance'" (Carmignani et al., 376). In terms of the senses, the region represents taste and smell while America represents sight and hearing, which holds one's neighbour at a distance, explicitly represented in Bud's shocking front yard barbecue, or the variation on the situation during the dinner of Bud's food from the 'Holy Land', that sends Abu-Jaber's nun teacher into sensual raptures, that obliges her mother to end the standing invitation to dinner:

> This is the most openly sensual display I have seen from an adult, and my mother taps at my fingers to make me look away [...] She spoons up great mounds of Bud's special rice for company—steamed then drizzled with cinnamon and pepper and pine nuts toasted in butter. (*The Language of Baklava*, 27).

The culture schematically opposes puritanical, intellectual and northern with natural, sensual and southern, associated with the image of hedonism, in what Paul Carmignani describes as the American perception of the Mediterranean as "goût/dégoût

[289] "Among the greatest pleasures, as always in France, were the good creamy-fleshed firm potatoes [...] Then, even in February, there were little, round, crisp, bronze-flecked, frilly lettuces, baskets of *mesclun* or mixed salad greens, great floppy bunches of chard, leaf artichokes, trombone-shaped pumpkins which make admirable soup, fat fleshy red peppers, new-laid eggs, eight or nine varieties of olives in basins and barrels, thick honey and clear honey, in a variety of colours, in jars and in the comb, and honey soap in golden chunks, bouquets of mixed fresh flowers, tulips, dark purple anemones, marigolds. And then cheeses, cheeses. There are the locally made goats' milk cheeses called pélardon, small round and flatish and to be bought in various stges of maturity [...] Try the *magnane à la sarriette*, another goat cheese, strewn with the savory leaves they call poivre d'âne across the Rhône in Provence. Or how about the St Marcellin? Or the fresh ewes milk cheeses?" (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 77).

[290] WASP is the acronym for 'White Anglo-Saxon Protestants', a social group of wealthy and well-connected people who represent the American ruling establishment; it is often used in a critical way.

de la Méditerranée dans la culture et la littérature américaine" representing 'third-world' rural traditions born of need, hardship and poverty (375). As Edward Said explains, the exploration of the Mediterranean is more about us than them. American protestant and puritanical culture are associated with physical and moral safety (81) opposing the sensuality of the Mediterranean (Ory, 93-4) that is redolent of the decadence associated with hedonism. The 'us and them' dichotomy brings to the forefront the ambivalence in our memoir corpus between the narcissistic search for self and the fascination, also both egotistical and instinctive with the other.

In the first part of her memoir, Elizabeth Gilbert focused on the association of travel and pleasure, traveling for the pleasure of eating: "Just for a few months of one's life, is it so awful to travel through time with no greater ambition that to find the next lovely meal?" (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 113). She calls the section "Italy or 'Say It Like You Eat It' or 36 Tales about the Pursuit of Pleasure". She offers instructions for freedom that lie in letting go (184-185) in order to achieve a state of constant bliss (196). Her time in Italy is marked by hedonism: "one should only trust what one can experience with one's own senses, and this makes the senses stronger in Italy than anywhere in Europe" (114). She offers a response to a sense of disconnection and lost identity: "the appreciation of pleasure can be an anchor of one's humanity" (115), echoing Fisher who claims she protects herself with "gastronomic liberty", intent on eating "quietly, calmly and with a special dignity. It has often saved me and my reason too [...]" (*Gastronomical Me*, 183).

Gilbert seeks a marriage between hedonism and spirituality, living the present moment in a state of spiritual awareness, expounding the philosophy of yoga as spiritual food: "Only from that point of even-mindedness will the true nature of the world (and yourself) be revealed to you." (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 122). Her time in Italy was the opposite, rather, exclusively, about self-indulgence. This position carries a moral message. Durrell and other writers set primitive foods and foodways and cultures against the industrial West. In an interview in 1987, three years before his death, Durrell evokes the importance of epicureanism, with its obvious emphasis on pleasure, but also "sincerity, honesty, engagement [...] related to social involvement and responsibility" (Brelet, 375). Angelo Pellegrini highlights the antithetical worlds of the starving Mediterranean immigrant arriving in plentiful post-war America. He claims to have been more impressed by the food stalls than the skyscrapers. He pronounces on the morality to be

drawn from the tale about good living and making sense of the world through food, in which simplicity confronts sophistication, in his relation to simple homegrown foods that bring spiritual sustenance. At the beginning of the twentieth century British writers tended to reject middle class protestant moralism,[291] and sought a more relaxed, hedonistic and less ethical approach to life. Life and love were to be practiced as arts, with the Mediterranean as the natural setting for its climate and classical cultures, and also for its remoteness from industrialism and progress of England. The pilgrimage south was made by D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster, H. G. Wells and writer friend of Elizabeth David and Lawrence Durrell, Norman Douglas, who shared in common the expression of a pagan sensibility. (Friedman, 129).

Initiatory rites of passage

> [France] is the country of enchantment which the poets have staked out and which they alone may lay claim to. It is the nearest thing to paradise this side of Greece. (*Colossus of Maroussi*, 6).

Authors suggest that one can make sense of one's identity and destiny in cultures where one makes a spiritual connection with a place that embraces the same values. This is illustrated in initiatory or epiphanic experiences often during liminal journeys. Jean Viviès reminds us that, indeed, "[u]n voyage est aussi un passage" (Viviès, 2002, 193). These revelatory journeys are intimately associated with taste, and the sense of discovering absolute truths. Taste becomes a form of mediation between self and place, identity and belonging. Trubek writes of the connection between the physical experience and the journey the food has made:

> [...] taste in France mediates between the body and culture: the gustatory moment incorporates people's belief that the very soil, plants, climatic conditions, and animals make France a unique piece of the earth rather than a nation among many others. And for the French, the moment when the earth travels to the mouth is a time of reckoning with local memory and identity. (Trubek, 51).

[291] For example, George Eliot and John Stuart Mill.

The cultivated land in France[292] is idealized, marking history and containing memory. It became the locus for Old World values that Hemingway and other writers of his generation sought. Pierre Nora wrote: "Elle rassemble toutes les valeurs d'une civilisation paysanne dont les racines plongent dans les millénaires et qui paraît encore vivante sous les paysages contemporains. Cette mémoire, la plus ancienne, est aussi la plus fraîche car les derniers des paysans vivent encore." (Nora, 54). Cultivated land reflects a nostalgic image, of an idealized past accompanied by a sense of lost stability. (54).

Beyond the manifest influence of France in contemporary memoirs, which had assumed European culinary hegemony since the nineteenth century, lies the importance of its cultural presence as an imaginative reference point, in which food as an art is consumed, as Trubek explains, both literally and symbolically (128). Writers refer to seminal and initiatory experiences in their youth, often associated with a European, or specifically French sojourn credited with revealing an alternative sensibility that turned them away from the dominant American foodview. These experiences hold a special place in the literary imaginations of food memoirists and document a rite of passage in the increasingly dominant traveling food narrative. An unexpected number of culinary memoirists have experienced such a fundamental and life-changing culinary experience, which enabled them to connect with and develop a coherent identity.

Despite the diversity of their origins or destination, a remarkable three-quarters of the authors in the corpus describe, often in great length, an epiphanic experience, in which the true essence of food, eating and a certain quality of life are revealed to them in an initiatory journey on an trip to France, that translates into a form of rite of passage. This is not an argument defending the hegemony of French cuisine, but rather the confirmation of an imaginative space occupied by values that cohere with those expounded in culinary based autobiographical quests of origins and identity, notably those of authenticity, honesty, home and its nurturing traditions. As well as authors for

[292] Although only a small part of France is Mediterranean, we explore it in this analysis of literature and imagination, for the characteristics of its foodways of terroir, authenticity and epicureanism are aligned with the spirit of Mediterranean food cultures. In doing so, we are perhaps guilty of the criticism that Wright made of David's *A Book of Mediterranean Food* that it was almost exclusively about French food. See note 200.

whom France and French food was a long-term romance, such as Fisher, Toklas, Child, and Gopnik, many express life-changing emotions relating to their discovery.

Like the origins of the word itself, the concept of terroir comes from France and its Mediterranean neighbours. *Terroir* is associated with roots, a history, a place, and a primal sense of belonging, finding resonance in culinary memoirs. It represents, according to Amy Trubek, sensibility, discernment, a philosophy of practice and an analytic category (21), associating taste, place and quality. (22). In Proustian terms, the ingredients and dishes become iconographic, the places of memory, their smells and tastes representing a diverse but coherent geography that are elements in rites of passage.

There are those for whom the encounter with gastronomy alters their relationship to food and with this evolves their self-understanding. As early as 1943, Samuel Chamberlain, wrote of his family' experience in France: "These French people know how to LIVE! [...] we became utter sybarites, frank worshippers of the splendors of French cuisine." (*Clementine in the Kitchen*, 3). M.F.K. Fisher imitates him: for "gradually over the measured progress of the courses and the impressive changing beauty of the wines [...] the wit and the laughing awareness that is France made all of us alive." (*Gastronomical Me*, 95). Kate Christensen in *Blue Plate Special* in 2014, revers French food and eating, altering thereafter her way of eating: "They interacted with their food, looked at it, chewed it thoughtfully. [...] That zucchini woke me up to the idea that food had possibilities and qualities I had not suspected. After that supper, I began to pay closer attention to what I ate." (*Blue Plate Special*, 158). Judith Jones, one of the many Americans who flocked to post-World War II France, was even more effusive: "a fine sole meuniere [...] I was in heaven" (*Tenth Muse*, 21), "This idyllic wakening to the delights of French life [...] the famous puffy omelette made by Mère Poularde", food prepared with "simple, good ingredients: a homemade pate or maybe *rillettes*; a thick, meaty soup; a sautéed freshly caught trout, a flavorful, slightly chewy *entrecote*; beautifully made French fries; and always good local cheese." (23). She goes on to describe the "succession of glorious dishes" (32) prepared for them by Fernand Point of La Pyramide in Vienne: "I just knew unconsciously that it was an experience that would help to shape my life." (33).

For others it is a personal awakening. Gabrielle Hamilton in her memoir, focuses also on the sensual awakening experience in France: "Every piece of food in every store—no matter how artful, precise, and often jewel-like—begged to be touched, smelled and heartily eaten." (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 124). She wanted to absorb, not just the food, but their innate knowledge and appreciation of it:

> [E]everyone had an opinion about the baguette at breakfast, and everyone knew how to prepare a simple roast chicken and a few potatoes cooked in the local heavily salted butter. Everyone casually tipped the last sip of the red wine from their glass into their dish of soup and mopped it all up with the crusty heel left in the bread basket. I was sucking something in. Something unmitigated. (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 126).

She observes the details, the simple gestures, imitated from ancestors and wants to be initiated, touched by the absolute pureness of the gesture. Leslie Li also writes:

> Dinner ingredients, fresh and inexpensive, came prêt à manger from the market stalls—street theatre in disguise—[…] a slice of *terrine de canard* or *pate du porc*, a wedge of Brie or Gruyere, a *baguette pas trop cuite*, a handful of grapes, a half bottle of serviceable red Bordeaux, and thou, O *Ville Lumiere*. What could be Better? (*Daughter of Heaven*, 41).

For some, the initiatory experience unleashes their sensuality. Ruth Reichl's first taste of a succulent French home cooking was memorable: "With the first sip I knew I had never really eaten before. The initial taste was pure carrot, followed by cream, butter, a bit of nutmeg […] I ate as if in a dream." (*Tender at the Bone*, 65). Or the first taste of foie gras: "my mouth was flooded with so many sensations I could hardly take them all in at the same time." (67). Colette Rossant's first taste of truffle in Paris was "an epiphany of the senses, a thrill caressing my adolescent tongue" (*Return to Paris*, 89). She reveals her "profound love of food" in her taste of the *tarte aux fraises des bois* with her step-father (94). Sasha Martin wrote of her discovery of Paris through its bread: "The baguettes were the amuse-bouche to Paris's living banquet. I consumed every morsel of that city […] The city was both alive and ancient in a way I'd never seen, never touched, never felt before. I was small in her embrace—safe." (*Life from Scratch*, 103, 104). Diana Abu-Jaber describes her discovery of French pastries in a chapter tellingly named "Desire": "When Parisians bowed before the oven, I felt they were doing something more than merely baking, something important and secret." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 44). Pastries were works of art: "clouds and bridges and fine art in gold frames and old books in leather bindings and weightless days to come." (46). Breakfast is a fantasy: "a basket

with a feathery croissant, a bowl of blackberry preserves, a sweet orange, a square of something halfway between an excellent cheese and butter, a cup of strong black coffee, half a pitcher of yellow cream." (64). Abu-Jaber's French experience is as a newly-wed "I ate a few bites, absorbed by how delicious everything was. A croissant and a thin tablet of black chocolate loosened my senses." (63).

For many, of whom Weiss and Wizenberg are examples, the rite of passage is a moment of self-discovery at a key moment in their lives. For Luisa Weiss, the new tastes and textures are associated with exploring Paris and herself:

> I bought a fresh baguette every morning (and sometimes in the evening too), breaking off the crisp end, with a shower of crumbs, to chew as I walked. I spent hours at outdoor markets, ogling mounds of craggy oysters and bright pink langoustines piled on juicy-looking seaweed, deep, glowing heads of green lettuce stacked high, and the staggering circumference of a true Brie de Meaux, pockmarked and fragrant. (*Berlin Kitchen*, 48).

In a chapter entitled "Summer of Change", Molly Wizenberg explores herself and her relationship with food, describing Paris as her second home; she spends her time writing emails that minutely detailing her meals, and reading cookbooks in the Luxembourg Gardens until dark. Her first experience of Paris was one of hedonism and self-indulgence: "I gave one entire shelf of my refrigerator to cheese, each wrapped in wax paper and ripe with promise, and I was so greedy about them that I took to licking the knife to get every last nub and smear." (*Homemade Life*, 120).

For none are the consequences of the revolution more dramatic than for Alice Waters, who encountered French food in the midst of the Free Speech Movement taking place in Berkeley, California. Seeking romance, Waters fell in love with French food, seduced by its culinary culture: "She was enchanted by the rhythms, the old and inflexible customs, the sheer charm of Paris dining." (McNamee, 15). She said: "I got the whole French aesthetic from beginning to end [...] Everything in Paris was magical to me." (16). She spoke in simplistic superlatives of her experience: "'I loved the crepes *Grand Marnier* in Brittany [...] In Paris I loved the steak Bercy [...] I loved standing at the bar at Au Pied du Cochon. I loved the idea of that restaurant [...]'" (17). Finally, it was a particular meal in Brittany that confirmed her culinary destiny, it "crystallized her conception of what good food ought to be. 'I've remembered this dinner a thousand times [...]'" (18). Waters returned to America, fired with a romantically-inspired passion

to open a restaurant that would imitate "[t]he cultural experience, that aesthetic, that paying attention to every detail—I wanted to live my life like that." (19). In the aesthetic of simple French gastronomy, she finds a path that would lead her to become one of the most influential restaurant owners and food activists in America today.

Not all experiences are life-changing however. Elizabeth Ehrlich's time in Paris was marked by a sense of disappointment as she fails to live up to her inherited Jewish identity as she tries to reproduce the traditional chicken soup, failing to find the equivalent ingredients and the experience to create a "really *forte forte* broth" for her sick landlord, she produces a broth that was "weak and pale, tasting slightly of parsley root" that reflected the state of her own commitment (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 121). She does not comment on French cooking. Her destiny was to follow a path of devotion to the memory of her foremothers. Some food experiences lead the narrator forward to a new phase in their lives, others enable a more discreet and slower personal journey.

The cradle of humanity

Taken together, these multiple experiences are marked by a sense of having discovered something that is not just inspiring, but also provides coherence in the narrators' lives, that touches something elemental and fundamental to their existence. Within the regressive tendency of hedonism to seek out the unmitigated sensorial pleasures of infancy, is the idea of returning to something archaically familiar that represents a birthplace. The epiphanic contact with a foreign terroir, however, reveals that an encounter with otherness can provide the élan for the development of a new future, often in connection with food.

In the works of many writers, Mediterranean food symbolizes roots and refinement, associated with travel and locating originary culinary roots, but also as endotic travel for personal betterment and for discovering authenticity, at the heart of Mediterranean cooking, and the key to existential serenity. (Inness, 2006). Food traditions in culinary memoirs are conditioned as often atavistic, seeking known tastes and experiences, and occasionally new. Traveling to the Mediterranean represented a sort of spiritual, emotional, even cultural homecoming, as the birthplace of, language, religions and literature. It represents a primal return to one's roots, one's origins, to the

body, to the birth experience associated with the iconic mother of mankind, to the sea, reminding us of the importance of the mother and maternal figure in culinary memoirs. In the memoir narratives, the Mediterranean Sea is a vast expanse of water, symbolising liberty, a crossing place that each of the Mediterranean countries share, along with elements of a common history and culture that embrace the lands and the people, as well as the expanse of water in between like a borderland encircling nurturing qualities on a human scale.[293] E. M. Forster's most autobiographical of characters, Cyril Fielding in *A Passage to India*, is overwhelmed by the beauty and harmony in the Mediterranean in comparison with India, articulating a sincere and lucid response to the region, in the tone of memoirists:

> […] at Alexandria – bright blue sky, constant wind, clean low coastline, as against the intricacies of Bombay. Crete welcomed him next with the long snowy ridge of its mountains and then came Venice. As he landed on the piazzetta a cup of beauty was lifted to his lips, and he drank with a sense of disloyalty. The buildings of Venice, like the mountains of Crete and the fields of Egypt, stood in the right place, whereas in poor India everything was placed wrong. He had forgotten the beauty of form among idol temples and lumpy hills; indeed, without form, how can there be beauty? [… Venice was] part of the Mediterranean harmony. The Mediterranean is the human norm. when men leave that exquisite lake, whether through the Bosphorus or the Pillars of Hercules, they approach the monstrous and extraordinary; and the southern exit leads to the strangest experience of all. (*A Passage to India*, 275).

The Mediterranean is described in positive terms, including 'bright', 'clean', 'welcomed', 'beauty' and 'harmony'. It is described above all as 'the human norm', a hospitable terrain where the individual has a perfect place. Forster uses the image of drinking from a delicious, generous and nourishing cup of Mediterranean beauty and plenty that sustains him as he travels northward, opposing north and south, and envisions "tender romantic fancies that he thought were dead forever flowered when he saw the buttercups and daisies of June." (276). The image represents the Old World, a symbol of plenty, as a point of comparison with America,[294] if one is able to see it. Fielding fears that despite writing picture postcards to his Indian friends "he felt that all

[293] The scene of many migrant tragedies in recent years where crossings fail to deliver the voyagers or to provide them with the sanctuary the seek on arrival, questions the symbol of liberty that the sea represents.

[294] Material plenty, that America is often seen to represent, is contrasted with the generous cup of spiritual and sensual plenty of the Mediterranean.

of them would miss the joys he experienced now, the joys of form, and this constituted a serious barrier" (275), sensing that it is not their physical but their spiritual distance from this nurturing place that prohibits them from seeing and understanding. Similarly, in Mayes' Italy, there is both a celebration of history and the sense of timelessness that it evokes with an immediacy which incites her to celebrate the present moment (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 64).

Associated with the symbolism of lusciousness and plenty, the Mediterranean represents a spiritually pagan or Christian world, with strong connotations of paradise and the Garden of Eden. Echoing Forster, Affergan's definition of alterity could be used to describe the Mediterranean: "L'altérité lointaine liée à la géographie et la merveilleuse entre monstrueuse et beauté paradisiaque" (Affergan, 29), which associates happiness and inaccessibility: "C'est une sorte de nostalgie inverse puisque utopique." (31). Lawrence Durrell's portrayal of an enigmatic Garden of Eden is both a poetic and a metaphysical achievement, that interprets places and people through a nurturing landscape. His foreign residence books offer a refrain of culturally-charged food as meaningful as that found in the recent genre of culinary memoirs that record identity-shaping food traditions. Yet, does his iconographic representation of food express reverence for the Mediterranean, or nostalgia for a lost homeland?

Primitive idyllic scenes portray nature in harmony with itself: "Swallows and martins dipped and swerved in the warm spaces of the gardens. The tangerine laden trees of the foreground dappled the landscape with dancing points of fire" (*Reflections on a Marine Venus,* 17). The garden invites encounters, including with oneself, through the senses, a place to drink and gossip (96), as well as a journey that leads not just "outwards in space, but inwards as well" (*Bitter Lemons,* 1). In the first part of *Bitter Lemons,* Durrell describes his Eden as an archaic, sensual memory of nature's fruits. They hang from trees as often as they are consumed, a symbol of nature's generosity, but also of temptation, waiting to be picked and thus precipitate the fall, implicit in the references to nature's unbound energy and violence, and the themes of poverty in contrast with nature's abundance. Danger, for example, inhabits a sickened Rhodes: "the island is swollen with fruits and vegetables" (*Spirit of Place,* 112), while unattainable fruits are an intimate part of the garden's aesthetics. The story is mystified by the religious beliefs surrounding picked and fallen fruit. Fruit that falls to the ground is for the taking,

an allegory of the proximity of life to death. “From “ripe” to “rot” is a short distance in English”, Durrell explains. Fallen fruit is sacred to the Greeks whose gods preferred “the perfect maturity of the *fallen* fruit”. He emphasizes that “even today the oil of the *fallen* olive is reserved for the use of the Church” (412).

In the second part of *Bitter Lemons,* peace is shattered and sin enters the Garden. The landscape has lost its lushness and the descriptions are barren of fruit (178): the thatch is “damp and inert”, a “thin, severe”, “threatening” dawn, freezes “the sky to a bloodless white; all turning towards ugliness and death. Generosity and hospitality are compromised: his coffee is served with a taciturn coolness (181). In the final part, the illusion of peace is restored and goodwill resurges but with it a nostalgia that accompanies the presence of sin in the Garden. The communion offered by the landscape is ambivalent, but retains its sacred integrity through Durrell’s sensual response, captured in “the deceptive mask of a perfect spring, smothered in wild flowers” (*Bitter Lemons,* 197). The village is “deceptive in its complete smiling calm” (197), the dawn with “clusters of gold and citron, stretched taut as a violin string” (202). Despite the “old illusion of timeless peace” (203), he would leave with the swallows as “the new times with their harsher climates were not ours to endure” (228).

Mediterranean food is omnipresent in Hemingway’s novel *The Garden of Eden*, which anticipates the culinary memoir discourse of sensual and abundant descriptions of food. The Garden’s produce is described in an unpunctuated Hemingway abundance that presages the descriptions that appear later in memoirs, offered up to attenuate their voracious insatiable appetites: “there was brioche and red raspberry preserve and the eggs were boiled and there was a pat of butter that melted as they stirred them and salted them lightly and ground pepper over them in the cups.” (*Garden of Eden*, 4). Lunch follows breakfast, relentlessly, with dangerous truths captured in the precise details even as the food evolves on the plate and on their tongues in the immediate freshness of the Mediterranean context:

> [T]hey ate the celery remoulade and the small radishes and the home pickled mushrooms from the big glass jar and the grill marks showed on the silver skin and the butter melted on the hot plate. There was sliced lemon to press on the bass and the fresh bread from the bakery and the wine cooled their tongues of the heat from the fried potatoes.” (*Garden of Eden*, 11).

In each instance, butter melts, as though their moral resistance cedes to decadence and corruption, the perfect food seemingly untouched. Boreth describes the book as one of "love, obsession, loss, and hunger" (Boreth, 75), a garden after the Fall.

Before sin corrupts the garden, the tastes and ingredients are simple, fundamental staples without complicated seasonings, simple delicious fruits of the earth, close to the producer, farmer or land worker. The "enlightened peasant gourmet", the protagonist in the garden, about whom Angelo Pellegrini describes his father, and who Madeleine Kamman and Elizabeth David describe as the provider, a sort of culinary saint: "with a remarkable catholicity of taste and an instinctive appreciation of all that is food to eat and drink, seeking to love "a humane life", and whose preoccupation was the achievement of quality" (*Unprejudiced Palate*, 113-114). Pellegrini believed in the Italian peasant's innate simplicity, generosity and hospitality: "I have always lived in the presumptuous though comforting notion that any Italian, anywhere, has been waiting to welcome me with open arms." (172).

For the accessibility of its food in terms of taste and its extensive reach, Mediterranean cuisine has exerted a broad reach, shedding much of the guilt associated with eating in western food culture. Nicola Humble writes: "The most significant foreign influence on British food in the 1990s was the figure of the Mediterranean peasant [...]" (Humble, 250), practicing what she called "cucina povera", Mayes' first recipe is from an encounter with a local—the *torta della nonna*—for which she has a respect because of its long tradition (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 66), connecting Italy with cooking traditions and the past (73). Traditions are perennial, while food is immediate and seasonal (74), like the compelling presence of recipes, the crops of figs, olives, and fruits, that represent simple, peasant food, symbolic of the rich nurturing Mediterranean and their closeness to nature. Henry Miller writes: "He will sit in the dark at the table and stuff himself with bread and olives, with hard-boiled eggs, with herring and cheese of one sort or another" (*Colossus of Maroussi*, 78). Simple meals are laid ceremoniously in the open air: "a bottle of black wine, a heady molten wine that situated us immediately in the centre of the universe with a few olives, some ham and cheese." (166). Elizabeth David cites Sir Osbert Sitwell's description of his Italian meal that depicts a vision of paradise: "And these things to eat and drink would be placed on a table covered with the coarse white linen

used by the *contadini*, under a ceiling painted with clouds and flying cupids, holding up in roseate air a coat of arms, a crown and a Cardinal's hat." (*Mediterranean Food*, 141).

Thierry Fabre and Catherine Portevin wrote of the deracinated Durrell as uprooted "[…] ce poète vagabond et païen a aimé la Grèce comme un paradis perdu" (Fabre and Portevin, 191), at home in a Garden of Eden that is the epitome of luxuriant nature. The Mediterranean in general, and Greece in particular, offered Durrell "a spiritual accommodation as well as a comfortable place to settle" (Pine, 2008, 6): "la découverte de soi-même" (198) as Bouayed and Fabre describe it. Although his journey is solitary, as we have previously noted, he invited friends to accompany him for short periods. Just prior to the publication of Durrell's travel residence books, in 1941, Henry Miller published his Mediterranean memoir redolent of rich food, and generous landscapes *The Colossus of Maroussi*. Miller travelled across Athens, Crete, Corfu, Poros, Hydra and Delphi on the heels or by the side of Durrell, whom he loved and admired, and on whose invitation he fled Paris on the brink of war before returning to America some nine months later, bitter over his forced departure, where he wrote his memoir with passion and some resentment. Miller's passion makes him less objective and therefore less far-seeing in his vision than Durrell, which aligns him more with the hot-headed travel narratives of D. H. Lawrence, who also inspired him, he claims, along with Hemingway. The spiritual connotation of the sky in Greece, as the overarching protection (*Colossus of Maroussi*, 17), allows man to become one with himself and with nature: "Greece still remains under the protection of the creator." Greece as the "luminous carrefour of a changing humanity […] there is no old or new, only Greece, a world conceived and created in perpetuity." His friend, who evoked this country and its sensual riches, was a 'colossus' (24, 43).

Food is blended with nature and the landscape revealing a proximity with art, as in Durrell's works, sensual with colours and smells, described in terms of the primitivist influences that appeared in modern art of the period, such as that of Picasso.[295] On Poros, Miller describes painterly "cubistic planes", "stiff-blown trees", "wild lemon groves" (57). In Crete, "[t]here was a sun flooded with lemon and orange which hung ominously over the sultry land in that splashing, dripping radiance which intoxicated

[295] We think of Picasso's "Square du Vert-Galant" painted in 1943, itself inspired by Van Gogh.

Van Gogh." (160). The people are also in harmony with nature, the landscape of Greece, echoing Pellegrini, David and Mayes, with an accent on a naive perception, as a form of returning to the beginnings of history, with reference to "harmony", "communion" and "Biblical times":

> The landscape remains the most satisfactory, the most wondrous, that our earth has to offer. The inhabitants of this little world live in harmony with their natural surroundings, peopling them with gods who were real and with whom they lived in intimate communion [...] Left to his own resources man always begins again in the Greek way – a few goats or sheep, a rude hut, a patch of crops, a clump of olive trees, a running stream, a flute [...] I see the women gathered at the wells amidst the olive groves, their dress, their manners, their talk no different now than in Biblical times (*Colossus of Maroussi,* 88, 173, 244).

Greece's landscape, pure, lush crops and idyllic scenes puts Miller on a spiritual quest, to find his place in the world. When Miller stood in Agamemnon's tomb: "from that day forth my life was dedicated to the recovery of the divinity of man. Peace to all men, I say, and life more abundant." (245). Food and foodways offer a point of spiritual entry into a foreign culture. The leitmotif of Miller's work is its profound spirituality. There is communion between men, and symbolic foods are central to the scene: "The important thing was the warm handclasp, the light in the eyes, the grapes which we devoured in common, the glass we raised to our lips in sign of friendship." (*Colossus of Maroussi*, 44).

Durrell believed "that history itself, conditioned by place, repeats characteristics and familiar gestures." (*Reflections on a Marine Venus*, 157). That landscape affects, indeed shapes character was one of Durrell's major tenets and was not confined to Greece. Continuity—of national and gender characteristics, of behaviour, of culture—is assured by spirit of place, "the continuity of the world of the imagination—they are simply the proofs [...] that some spots on earth are the natural cradles of genius" (*Spirit of Place*, 533), where a truth resides that transcends all others.

Landscapes as spiritual sensescapes

The landscape internalises and is internalised, through observation and through consumption. It becomes an inner sensescape.[296] "Comme D. H. Lawrence qui s'est peint lui–même avec le plus de bonheur et de justesse dans ses poèmes et ses livres de voyages [...], Durrell a trouvé dans les 'paysages privés' [...] le meilleur moyen de réaliser sa propre introspection" write Thierry Fabre et Catherine Portevin (194). In *Prospero's Cell,* real and fictional landscapes merge, mixing historical and metaphysical speculations about customs and foodways. In *Reflections on a Marine Venus*, Durrell asks whether Rhodes "was still a reality based on the landscape and the people–or whether we had simply invented it for ourselves" (4). The myth is omnipresent, evoking Durrell's spiritual affinity with Dionysos, the Greek god of the vine and religious rapture, whose semi-divine parentage denied him a place on Mount Olympus and forced him to roam the Mediterranean like Durrell himself. The poetic coexistence of spirituality and sensuality finds its source in Durrell's Dionysian sensescape, in which he makes the mythical relation between art, creation, mystical religion and a sensual response to earth's abundance.

Approaching the islands, one leaves behind the certainties of the 'real' world: "You enter Greece as one might enter a dark crystal; the form of things becomes irregular, refracted [...] and wherever you look, the trembling curtain of the atmosphere deceives" (*Prospero's Cell,* 11). The 'dark crystal' evokes the Biblical verse: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known",[297] offering the weighty resonance of judgment and spirituality. The Count in *Prospero's Cell* explains that the best one can do is create "a portrait inexact in detail, containing bright splinters of landscape" (107). It is these "splinters of landscape", in which sacred and profane seem to be caught, that interest us. The landscape that he paints is often described with images of reflected light as though possessing a numinous quality. "Spring sunshine *glistened* on trees loaded with cold tangerines" (*Bitter Lemons,* 42), there were "*glittering* green leaves" (73), "*blazing* orange trees" (74), "*gleaming*

[296] See the article: "Landscape to Sensescape – Sacred Fruit as Sensorial Landscape in the Island Residence Works of Lawrence Durrell" (Allen-Terry Sherman, 2017, 253-268), by this author where some of the ideas in this section are elaborated.
[297] The Holy Bible, 1 Corinthians 13:12. King James Version.

tangerines and almonds" (82),[298] each emanating a divine force to which Durrell is sensitive. Durrell wants "to see Greece with the inner eyes [...] as something ever-present and ever-renewed", like seasonal fruit, whose promise of recurrence and renewal distances nostalgia. He constructs an image of a place where "sunlight and inner light meet" (Krummrich, 6), where landscape and imagination fuse, writing the landscape, as a painter would paint it. Durrell evokes this state of being in *Spirit of Place*: "if you transported non-Greeks to the Greek islands, in time the brilliant sunlight, blue seas, and olive trees would create in them "tireless curiosity, sensuality, and a passionate desire to conceptualize things metaphysically" (*Spirit of Place,* 159). Durrell further explains that the traveller's sensorial response becomes an inherent part of the landscape: "the traveler in this land could not record. It was rather as if he himself were recorded" (131); human beings are "reflections of their landscape" (238). G. S. Fraser describes the landscape as "not there for its own sake but for its complex expressiveness" (Fraser, 44), as perceived by the observer. The sensual spirituality of Durrell's relationship to the landscape is iterated in a register of instinct and dreams such as, "sixth sense", "whispered message", "tune in", "inward attention", and "essence of place":

> It is a pity indeed to travel and not get this essential sense of landscape values. You do not need a sixth sense for it. It is there if you just close your eyes and breathe softly through your nose; you will hear the whispered message, for all landscapes ask the same question in the same whisper. 'I am watching you—are you watching yourself in me?' Most travelers hurry too much [...] To tune in, without reverence, idly—but with real inward attention. It is to be had for the feeling [...] you can extract the essence of a place once you know how. If you just get as still as a needle, you'll be there. (*Spirit of Place,* 234, 240-241).

Recalling Forster's Alexandria, Durrell writes: "One recalls E. M. Forster's advice to the visitor to Alexandria. 'The best way to see the city is to walk about aimlessly.'" (Gifford and Durrell, 340). The connection is primarily made at a spiritual level.

Durrell experiences the Mediterranean as a sensescape, using it to create a bridge between his perception and the landscape, much as diasporic culinary memoirists build bridges with foodscapes between two worlds, a homeland and a host land. He appropriates the Dionysian landscape of wine and water, through his conviction in the immediacy of the present. Christopher Middleton describes him as "committed

[298] This author's emphasis.

irrevocably to the timeless and unconfinable" (Middleton, 21). Durrell indeed felt elation at being absorbed by Greece both physically and psychically, in "a landscape shorn of temporality", a Mediterranean "older than history and stronger than religion" (*Spirit of Place*, 554).

Elizabeth David writes extensively about the taste and texture of food, but she devotes numerous articles to the visual delights and promises of markets which arouse in her a quasi-spiritual fervour, suggesting that she is touched by the 'landscape' that engenders a spiritual sensescape before the food is transformed on her plate. Indeed, the recipe for Pot au Feu Provençal is an integral part of the article on Cavaillon market, with its abundance of fruit and vegetables a celestial "sea of soft colours and shadowy shapes in the dawn light" (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 255). Durrell connects with his spiritual birthplace through the landscape. He describes the ruins, symbolizing the past, and the fruits, symbols of the present, creating the sense of living in a "historic present", a narrative style that he told Henry Miller enabled him to destroy time (MacNiven, 55). In understanding place, "the factor of variation is inevitably the landscape and not the people", he writes (*Spirit of Place,* 238), to such an extent that "[there is] no sense of time except that the fruit upon our table changes" (*Prospero's Cell,* 125), time itself becoming a function of the landscape as "the days drop as softly as fruit from trees" (*Reflections on a Marine Venus*, 2).

Narratives give writers the possibility to create a metaphor around the Mediterranean myth notably that of food. The symbolism of food is both specific and universal. The perception of food as a mark of identity, is valid for the immigrant and for her host. (Bénédicte Deschamps quoted in Carmignani et al., 420). Olives, garlic, wine represent taste, health, the land and the landscape as well as conviviality. Wine represents friendship, generosity and hospitality, as we read in Pellegrini, Durrell and Miller, men who relate to the landscape through drink that brings them together with others as women gathered in the kitchen.

A response to the 'morality' of expounding on rich, unattainable, quality food in a time of hardship, lies in the religious perception of the abundance and the riches of the earth in a religious context. David quotes from *The Travel-Diaries of William Beckford of Fonthill* (1928*)*: "God's bounties are great, it is fit we should enjoy them". (*Mediterranean Food*, 109). In the chapter on 'Sauces', David takes a text from her mentor

Norman Douglas that uses religious symbolism to describe food. "All culinary tasks should be prepared with reverential love." (*Mediterranean Food*, 181) The true cook is a blend of artist and philosopher "who holds in his palm the happiness of mankind, the welfare of generations yet unborn [...]" (Norman Douglas, *South Wind*, quoted in *Mediterranean Food*, 181). Food is to be loved and respected, a gift from God. In *The Colossus of Maroussi*, Miller's poetic muse George Katsimbalis evokes the incomparable honey from the slopes of his beloved Hymettos (34), like manna from heaven, a spiritual food. Miller himself equates Katsimbalis' dilemma with his own in describing his muse's wisdom: "Nobody can explain anything which is unique. One can describe, worship and adore." (34). We also encounter again, the virtues of honey, rezina, lamb, succulent and healing, close to nature and good. (41). The aesthetics of the landscape and its 'fruit' providing the healing splendour of Epidaurus and Hydra, like a petrified bread. (58-9), Epidaurus offering the peace "which passeth all understanding" (81-85).

Durrell's evocation of fruit as a metaphor for nurturing represents a primitive religious symbolism that connects people to landscape. It implies a rejection of middle-class protestant moralism that he associated with England, coming closer to the mysticism that recalls his Indian birthplace. This pantheistic symbolism suggests a need to capture a primitive continuity that resists history. The Mediterranean landscape that he describes represents a space beyond religion, to which Jean Blot offers this interpretation: "Durrelland is pagan land. Not one God in the middle of the sky but a huge quantity of little gods present everywhere" (Blot, 132), encountered in the immediate apprehension of the landscape's elements, animal, vegetable and mineral.

The landscape is mythical, yet also tangible, embodying past and present, metaphysical and sensorial. Durrell elaborates every sensory facet—the shade of blue of the sea, the feel of the sand, the taste of bread dipped in olive oil—while never diminishing its mythical qualities, for he describes the landscape as uncompromising, holding absolute truths (*Spirit of Place,* 408). Like Mayes, he experiences places and people through traditions and foodways (*Bitter Lemons,* 45). However, the tastes and smells of Durrell's Mediterranean are ambivalent, both bearing a myth they sustain, and

embodying a source of knowledge for those in search of identity[299] (Delmas, 1998, 433). Durrell finds, in his private, poetically drawn landscapes, a source of personal introspection. The implicit consumption of the landscape through its fruit can be interpreted as part of a process of self-seeking; Mintz writes: "Consumption is both a form of self-identification and of communication" (1996, 13).

The landscape diffuses Durrell's "spirit of place" that Mintz explicitly connects with food. For Durrell the food and the people are synonymous: "tasting the wines, cheeses and characters of the different countries you begin to realize that the important determinant of any culture is after all—the spirit of place" (*Spirit of Place*, 231). Durrell is drawn to the landscape by its history, its vestiges, and also its abundance, the latter, a recurrent leitmotif that responds to "the vibrancy of here and now" (Friedman, 64), for "[t]hey were all garlic countries, underprivileged in everything but the bounteous sense of bareness and beauty" (Hungerford, 112). Durrell evokes this unified Mediterranean habitat, in which food and landscape are an inseparable force, and where nature is defined by its produce; the Etesian wind, the *meltemi*, for example, is described as a treasure of the Aegean, evocative of melon and honey (*Reflections on a Marine Venus,* 40). From this symbiosis, Durrell evolves the myth of Mediterranean abundance, each image a miraculous scene, with "heavily-loaded orange trees [...] the Mediterranean luxuriance of yellow fruit" (*Bitter Lemons,* 73), "a garden full of the scent of limes" (98), or "a landscape dense with orange and lemon trees" (47).

His primeval vision of the islands' fruit draws Durrell into an abstract, spiritual relationship with the land. Frances Mayes holds the myth pragmatically at a distance, enabling her to prepare and 'consume' her 'foodscape': "I can see hard green figs on two trees and pears on a tree just below me. A fine crop coming in", which she transforms into "[p]ear cobbler, pear chutney, pear ice [...] fig fritters, fig and nocciolo tart" (*Under the Tuscan Sun,* 74). Her equally miraculous landscape is, for her, an attainable harvest, a cornucopia:

> All the summer fruits of the great Mediterranean sun have ripened. Beginning with cherries when I arrive, the summer progresses to yellow peaches [...] we pick handfuls of the most divine fruit of all, the minute wild strawberries [...] Then come the white peaches with pale and fragrant

[299] "[A] la fois porteuse d'un mythe qu'elles entretiennent, et source de connaissance pour les personnages en quête d'identité" (Delmas: 1998, 433). My translation.

> flesh…Then the plums, […] the small round gold, the dusky purple-blue, and the pale green ones […] Grapes start to arrive from farther south. A few ruddy apples then the first pears ripen […] then the globular speckled yellows. In August, the figs just start to plump up […] But finally, the blackberries, that heart-of-summer fruit, are ripe (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 278).

Durrell's food is also painted shiny, colourful, generous, scented, luscious, and sublime. He creates still life tableaux of light, colour and scent, encounters and traditions, icons of sacred Mediterranean landscape, not immobile, but rooted, borrowing from forms of art (*Reflections on a Marine Venus,* 156): "The Aegean is waiting for its painter […] Looking down upon it […] you begin to paint it for yourself in words" (30). Two central qualities of still lifes, aesthetics of course, but also mortality, are inherent in Durrell's landscape. In *Bitter Lemons*, the iconographic still lifes of the island's fruit, olives, bread and wine are painted against a backdrop of the dichotomy between peace and tension, harmony and disorder. Oil, bread and wine, the Mediterranean triad of sacred foods, symbolize friendship as well as religion (Reguant-Aleix, 41). Isabelle Keller-Privat identifies sensorial and metaphysical harmony, embodied in the olives of Corfu, and the lemons of Cyprus, representing oval forms that enclose the harmonious essence of the Mediterranean world (Keller-Privat, 2002: 193). Eternal bread, consumed at every meal and impromptu encounter, while described as "dry", "black", "dense and foul", is represented in the sacrosanct terms of "breaking", "dipping" and sharing. Dropped bread is picked up, kissed and pronounced "the staff of life" (*Reflections on a Marine Venus,* 39). Each meeting also involves wine, the Eucharistic that resonates with generosity, hospitality, and communion. Durrell is offered "a fellowship in the wine and landscape", synonymous with the islanders' welcome (*Bitter Lemons,* 96). We also find references to the sacrificial lamb shared at many feasts, flavoured with the landscape's emblematic Mediterranean garlic and sage (141).

Fruit trees rival the omnipresence of symbolic allusions to water. They form a ubiquitous profusion that shape the literal and figurative horizon. The chapter in *Prospero's Cell* which describes the olive harvest in rich, sensual imagery carries the painterly title "Landscape with Olive Trees". In Durrell's Cyprus garden alone stood "six tangerines, four bitter lemons, two pomegranates, two mulberry trees and a tall leaning

walnut" (*Bitter Lemons,* 50). The countryside is sculpted by oranges, almonds, apricots, pomegranates, quinces, and the all-pervasive lemon tree. A family's wealth includes its fruit trees, "fifty pear trees, seventy apple, ten plum, ten fig and two hundred rows of wine" (*Reflections on a Marine Venus,* 110).

Sacred as this symbolic nourishment is, it remains simple peasant fare, frugal and not always glorious or numinous: a daily meal constituted "unwrapping from a dirty piece of paper, a dozen sour olives" (*Reflections on a Marine Venus,* 109-110). It is sanctified, however, by its earth origins, as the fruit of the land (111). Food is consumed with minimal preparation, appearing like manna. The landscape, in effect, usurps the traditional place of the woman as cook, assuming the roles of divine provider and host, where at nature's table even the simplest fare is a celebration: "Sitting in the shade of the olive-trees [...] Zarian and Theodore feast upon green olives and white cheese" (*Prospero's Cell,* 85).

Food may be frugal but hospitality is practiced with religious zeal. Repeatedly, Durrell received "the most royal of hospitalities—fresh mountain walnuts and pure water from the highest spring, water that has been carried upon the backs of women in stone jars for several hundred feet", as though a reverential act (*Prospero's Cell,* 97). After one week in Cyprus, Durrell "began to understand the true meaning of Cypriot hospitality which is embraced in a single word— 'Kopiaste'—which roughly means 'sit down with us and share'" (*Bitter Lemons,* 17), a tacit gesture of communion. Clito's wine, a symbol of hospitality and an icon of the landscape, is symbolic of frequent communion, the ultimate glass drunken with tears (*Bitter Lemons,* 35, 36, 228, 264). These moments of spiritual union, such as his 'last supper' with Panos, do not betray the sacred landscape, for the scenes remain idealised. He explains, "The shallow bickering of nations" was distasteful "in such scenery and over wine" (*Bitter Lemons,* 118). Harmony reigns at nature's table.

The post-war fascination with the Mediterranean and its lifestyle extended throughout the second half of the twentieth century, and gradually new centres of interest became the focus of literature. Geo-political shifts, also see the emergence of Asian-focused culinary memoirs as countries as well as culinary empires gain in economic and culinary influence. Tuscanopia of late 20th century, notably the works of Frances Mayes (including 1996, 1999, 2010), together with Provence-mania, initiated

with the publication of Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence* (1989) make space for authors such as Leslie Li (2005), Linda Furiya (2006, 2008) and Fuchsia Dunlop (2008). Dunlop's erudite, encyclopaedic work, a scholarly memoir abounds in cultural depth and the meticulous details of Chinese food descriptions. It dominates the narrative to the point that we do not recall the personal story but only Dunlop's neophyte ambition to understand, acquire knowledge and become initiated into the art of Chinese cuisine.

Other memoirs shine spotlights on non-Mediterranean ethnic groups in America, including the Indian authors, Jaffrey and Narayan, and Asian authors, Li and Furiya that offer nuances to our debate on places of origin and identity. In a fusion cooking form of literary venture, Japanese Linda Furiya who explored the difficulty of assimilating an American culture on the back of a homegrown Japanese identity, moves to China and struggles with a bastard identity, looking Asian, speaking American, ethnically Japanese. Alison Leitch talks about "Slow Food and the Politics of 'Virtuous Globalization'", concepts which aim to preserve regional cuisines and traditional systems of production. These socio-political debates contribute to the positive assertion of a program for everyday living associated with valuing 'pleasure, authenticity, connectedness, tranquillity and deliberation" (Leitch quoted in Counihan, 2013, 418). Yet all of these values that Leitch cites are captured with a force that transcends debate in these literary memoirs. Durrell writes of sensual, dreamlike, languorous, but aware, appreciation: "[…] a happiness as idle as this shadowy garden, with its heavy odours of flowers, coffee and tobacco-smoke, mingled with early sunlight." (*Reflections on a Marine Venus*, 103).

IV. Beyond Food: The Aesthetics of Nourishment

> To understand just one life, you have to swallow the world. I told you that. (Rushdie, 1981, 126).[300]

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Our analysis has focused on the need to understand origins and identity through one's link to traditions, not in an abstract sense, but springing from a personal need. The task of elucidating one's origins and journey—to use this metaphor for a life—is excessively challenging, according to Salman Rushdie, requiring one to digest all the knowledge that represents the world. Our present study of youthful memoirs has indicated that the pursuit of self-understanding is incomplete, but ingestion of foodways and recipes is indeed necessary in the process. Swallowing the world implies that the scale is as immense as that of embracing the culinary cultures of each memoir. The scope of the challenge also suggests notions of indigestion. A quest that parcels the 'meal' into scattered, 'bite-sized' recipes renders the whole symbolically more 'edible'. Both food and travel—as nourishment and a metaphysical need—are at the heart of this section's analysis, which, illustrated by this quote, can be defined as eating and understanding, nourishment and wisdom. We will explore our perception of memories from the perspective of understanding through sensorial perception, rather than intellectual recall, and expose anthropological dimensions that dig into the past to understand the present.

The recently reviewed narrative landscapes of the Mediterranean, are emblematic for their nourishing qualities, as visual, spiritual and nutritious sensescapes. As we have seen, this is reflected in the form of culinary memoirs, which manifest the deliberate and conscious intention of the authors to feed the reader and themselves by the inclusion of recipes in the works. In this final part, we will begin by considering the

[300] We made reference in part I C to a later iteration of the same idea of incorporation in *Midnight's Children* emphasizing embodiment and intimacy: "I repeat for the last time. To understand me, you'll have to swallow a world" (Rushdie, 1981, 458). In both instances, Rushdie uses an insistent tone: "I told you that", "I repeat for the last time" that emphasises an emphatic narrative message. One must hear and understand, and one must act to understand and acquire a knowledge otherwise inaccessible.

aesthetics of nourishment as presented in culinary memoirs, an aesthetics that takes us beyond the simple alimentary function of food.

In section A, we will explore nourishment in terms of sensorial and symbolic explorations. Simply defined, nourishment, is both the sustenance of growth, health and well-being, and the act of nourishing oneself or others. Other qualities associated with nourishment resonate with wisdom and understanding, and include fostering, comfort, instruction, growth and balance. Max Milner goes beyond this fundamental definition, explaining that nourishment signifies educating as well as feeding: 'alimenter' and 'éduquer'. Indeed, wisdom comes from the same root as taste: "La sagesse (*sapientia*) est de même racine que le verbe *sapere* (avoir du goût)" (Milner, 10), the idea of taste highlighting the importance of the embodied experience of preparing recipes. During the course of our study we have recognised that memoirists acquire self-understanding through the exploration of their origins and identity, finding a point of convergence that offers fulfilment, and portraying the sense of being on a journey that is progressing in a positive direction. Although life lessons are learned, the nourishment that the author serves is not the panacea for all existential crises around identity. We move beyond unquestioned learnings, but encounter the problem of simplifications surrounding the ideas of healthy, homely sustenance, detectable in the feel-good aspect that we will discuss in section B. Food can be unifying and divisive, healing and indigestible as we will discover in the same section.

We have understood in part III that food takes us on a journey and the journey takes us to food, that in journeying, food offers much more than access to alterity or diasporic spaces. In section B, our intention is to explore representations of food and its role in the encounter with self and others, venturing into the space beyond axiomatic interpretations of food. We probe the paradoxically intimate and universal qualities of food and eating, in order to enquire whether food, as described in culinary memoirs, by nature of its travel dimension, is perhaps pulling away from traditions by challenging them as a hamper to creativity rather than respect for their fundamental nature.

We will hone in on the reciprocal influences of the aesthetics, effects and experiences of journey and the spirit of place in relation to the narrator's needs in the literary text and the story of food and travel. Food within travel takes us to a new dimension. We will explore two aspects that have emerged in part III, that of sensations,

which define a new aesthetics of food and eating, and invites a study of the anthropological aspects as they are broached in the narrative, as well as the literary force that nourishment represents in this genre. In discussing nomadism, we were reminded that the ultimate search of all nomadic journeying was for food. The quest for food incites 'inner' and 'outer' displacement, which involves confronting oneself and others. In itinerance, which implies choice, the narrator is perhaps looking for more than food: a multi-faceted succour that does more than sustain body and mind. In the final section we will draw conclusions on the new realms and dimensions of travel to which food takes us, considering the specificities of culinary memoirs as food writing, constituting a coherent overarching culinary narrative, and the route it appears to be taking as a travel genre.

✣ ✣ ✣

A. Culinary testaments to memory and aesthesia

> [...] the cultural habits of humanity have always made room for the sacredness of nature. (Schama, 18).

As important as the autobiographical story that recounts journeys—diasporic, exploratory, self-pursuing—is the omnipresence of practices, or cultural habits as Simon Schama designates them, that connect with a sacred dimension in the pursuit of origins. The narratives, dominated by profound sensorial experiences, that are not limited to a geographical or cultural inspiration such as that of the Mediterranean, dissect the sensorial approach, notably that of taste and smell with regard to food, as we observed in the ocularcentrism of landscape perspectives in part III B. Narratives explore the instincts related to the senses, such as the dominant theme of hunger. What emerges is a unique aesthetic of food and eating that takes us to the heart of questions of identity, as one confronts oneself and the other. Julie Rak describes the attraction of the memoir in popular culture as a manifestation of a base appetite: "Like hunger, a desire to understand the lives of others is often explained as the desire to consume the other because there is some lack in the self." (Rak, 2013, loc. 673).

Travels, periods of residence and the discovery and observance of culinary traditions, as we have seen in part III, offer access to understanding one's past and, with that self-understanding, also a direction for the future. There is a dynamic of progressive movement focused around food to address specific hungers that need to be satisfied, from preparation, through consumption and enjoyment. In this section, we will explore the importance of sensorial travel and self-exploration through food, that offers access to the present, enabling one to understand the history of a place and its people as Durrell, Forster and Lawrence have demonstrated. We observed the sensescapes in part III that connected the narrator to the land. In this section we will look at the way these inner sensescapes provide a unique form of nourishment from sources related to food, such as memories and the environment, as well as shaping meals from these elements that serve more than nutrition**.** The symbols of nourishment as well as those of rituals surrounding commensality enrich the overarching food narrative, and we will endeavour to show that food as symbol is more than the sum of its gestural preparation and consumption.

1. Narratives of sensorial reverence

Writing about sensations is perhaps the first condition of understanding oneself, of remembering through the senses via food and recipes as we have seen in part III B. Sensual narratives, of which culinary memoirs, with their multitude of sensorially-rich descriptive texts are a unique and pertinent example of testaments to aesthesia. The Indian memoirs, for example, are narratives of the rich immediacy and sensuality of Indian foodways. The Mediterranean writers offer homages to the cuisine and life-style of southern Europe. The most vibrant and memorable passages are those describing cooking and eating. Jean-Pierre Carron reminds us that "[l]e rapport au monde est originairement vécu sur un mode pré-langagier selon une temporalité bien particulière [...]" (Carron, 136); it is both sensorial and atemporal, as we have seen previously, both immediate and timeless. We explore the way in which the sensorial appreciation of food brings us the nourishing wisdom, to which Milner points (10), as it begins the process of recall. We conclude this chapter with a review of the vast topic of hunger as it is broached in culinary memoirs, as a source in itself of understanding.

Spiritual and archaic perception

Sensorial perception offers a unique form of self-knowledge. Lawrence Durrell explored the Edenic Mediterranean hinterlands with both a self-conscious devotion and sensorial innocence, presenting us, as we have seen in the previous section with a panorama, and cornucopia (once harvested, to be shared) of sacred fruits. The sacred dimension extends beyond the literary portrayal of fruits of the land, to an attitude that influences one's view of the world. In *Spirit of Place* (240), Durrell encourages one to avoid the temptation to interpret, and emphasises the importance, as we have seen, of the value of instinctive reactions. Writing of Delphi, he says, "Don't ask mental questions, but just relax and empty your mind" (234). Adam Gopnik agrees with this precept that "we shouldn't intellectualize food, because that makes it too remote from our sensory pleasures." (*Table Comes First*, 8). Durrell's Dionysian philosophy embraces the spiritual connectedness in human sensory perception. In describing the harvest of Prospero's wine, he captures the sacredness of the landscape in a Brueghelian panorama, a holy polyptych, each facet drawn in sensual detail, tending towards romanticism. The sleepy, unearthly emptiness, that Durrell recommends, is a void that fills with a sense of self-understanding that translates into our contemporary interest in mindfulness therapies that focus on the senses in order to free, and thus nourish, the mind:

> The valley curves away below the arbour with its delicately curved panels of landscape. From the orchard a guitar strikes up, and after a few moments' hesitation the sound of voices [...] The conversation wells up in waves [...] Some of us wander away to bathe or sleep out the long afternoon. [...] Ourania is filling the bowls with flowers—autumn crocus and cyclamen from the walls of the vineyards. Donkeys unload mounds of red tomatoes [...] Bocklin has brought his flute. Its quaint twirls and flourishes sound unearthly on the empty lawns where the nymph stands. (*Prospero's Cell,* 123-5).

We have noted the ocularcentrism inherent in the sensorial dimensions of these works that creates a form of meditative iconography around food. Elizabeth David writes enraptured of the Cavaillon market, scanning the stalls as though observing a painting, forgetting no detail:

> [T]heir melons and asparagus, their strawberries and red currants and cherries, their apricots and peaches and pears and plums, their green almonds beans, lettuces, shining new white onions, new potatoes, vast bunches of garlic [...] the chip vegetable and fruit baskets making a sea of

> soft colours and shadowy shapes in the dawn light. (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 255).

Descriptions in Durrell's works, notably colours, abound with food connotations: The sea "grinding and crushing up its colours under the house [...] the olives tacking madly from grey to silver" (*Prospero's Cell,* 15), "the day world expiring in its last hot tones of amber and lemon, and the night-world gathering with its ink-blue shadows and silver moonlight" (105). Before this landscape, the senses and the source of stimulus are active: "The oranges in the Bishopric put out their gleaming suns" (*Bitter Lemons,* 54).

The sense of taste is also omnipresent, often used figuratively within the context of a form of pantheistic appreciation of nature. It resonates with nourishment. As Trubek defines it: "Taste is the difference between food as a mere form of sustenance and food as part of life's rich pageant, a part of sociability, spirituality, aesthetics, and more." (6). Durrell experienced the Provencal terrain with both his feet and his tongue:

> [...] long walks and long potations have characterized my innocent researches, the ideal way to gain access to a landscape so full of ambiguities and secrets. Yes, secrets black with wine and gold with honey, landscapes of an almost brutal serenity, piled one upon another with almost quixotic profusion, as if to provide the historic confrontations which have made them significant, muddling up the sacred and the profane, the trivial and the grandiose with operatic richness, mesmerizing one! (*Caesar's Vast Ghost*, 6).

According to David Sutton, taste allows one to acquire embodied knowledge and access memories through the sensorial experience of repeated rituals of preparation and consumption of food. Also, for Durrell, absolute tastes offer a spiritual encounter through sacred food and one that offers vitalised nourishment:

> In this little bowl I wash the grapes I have brought with me. They are the little early grapes, delicately freckled green, and of a pouting teat-shape. The sun has penetrated their shallow skins and has confused the sweetness with its own warmth; it is like eating something alive. (*Prospero's Cell,* 101).

Specific tastes can be complex, archaic, evoking antique origins. Nourishment is the equation of archaic memory and spontaneous sensorial reaction. Frances Mayes' evocations echo Durrell's, as though taking up a refrain: "I have never tasted anything so essential in my life as this grape on this morning. They even smell purple. The flavor, older than the Etruscans and deeply fresh and pleasing, just leaves me stunned" (*Under*

the Tuscan Sun, 112). What is "essential" for Mayes, is a nourishment that goes beyond words expressed in similar tones by Durrell as something as fundamental as cold water.

Water is miraculous and life-giving, impregnated with the scents of the landscape and described in absolute terms. Durrell describes the people of Corfu as having "so delicate a palate as to be connoisseurs of cold water" (*Prospero's Cell*, 97). The glass of water is ubiquitous; it is an adjunct to every kind of sweetmeat, and even to alcohol. It has a kind of Biblical significance. "When a Greek drinks water he *tastes* it, and pressing it against the palate, savours it" (97). The waters of the Castilian spring taste of thyme or mint. "Cold and pure, they nourish the roots of the giant ancient plane-tree" (*Spirit of Place,* 413), "the Aegean water [is] clear and cold as wine" (*Reflections on a Marine Venus,* 11), "water, harsh with the taste of iron and ice-cold, runs from the ravines" (*Prospero's Cell,* 19). The recurrent symbols of cold water and cold wine were used by Dionysian priests in the ritual of self-transformation (Gkountis, 82), a fact which resonates with Durrell's own experience. Durrell's repeated references to water have multi-religious connotations, carrying Neopaganistic and Christian symbolism, as well as revealing his affinity with Greek mythology, in allusions to Dionysian practice. However, it is perhaps pertinent to align his usage of this metaphor with Christian theology, in terms of its atoning and cathartic qualities. It is predominantly used in *Prospero's Cell*, which Durrell wrote, we recall, in part as a defiant counterpoint to the sensorial and aesthetic austerity of British society from which he had just fled, conveying a sense of need for purification. The "fresh mountain walnuts and pure water from the highest spring that had been carried up on the backs of women in stone jars for several hundred feet" (*Prospero's Cell*, 97) are worthy of a sacred and reverential delivery. Allusions to water are frequent, preceding Durrell's own litany of references to the mystical qualities of water, notably in *Prospero's Cell*. The ubiquitous glasses of water lend a holy atmosphere to a place "something nourishing and sustaining" (13, 14). More recently, Diana Abu-Jaber describes the water in her protagonist's homeland Iraq in the novel *Crescent* in the same absolute terms: "it tasted like rocks and wind and pure…pure *coldness* […] She can just about taste the cold sweetness of that water" (*Crescent*, 69).

Grapes are washed in a mountain stream as at a sacred source that offers vitality. The air too can be tasted: "the spring breeze tastes of lemons, of lemon blossom" (*Bitter Lemons,* 240), and sounds and scents become interwoven: "the silver olives slide

breathlessly down in groves below one as if to plunge into [the sea]" (*Spirit of Place,* 431), "[t]he long thrilling sweep of the olive groves [...] is like the sudden sweep of strings in some great symphony" (409), "the crash of a falling orange in an island" (*Reflections on a Marine Venus,* 231), "the faint burring of honey-bees in Agamemnon's tomb" (131), the whole interwoven with the lemon tree scent refrain, alternately vibrating with the chill air and the hot sun (*Bitter Lemons,* 176). Durrell's words: "we ate grapes and watched the valley unroll before us." (*Reflections on a Marine Venus*, 132) suggest that the fruits of the land offer a spiritual understanding of the landscape and one's place within it, absolute nourishment. Abu-Jaber's parents sustain their memories of the Mediterranean by creating a garden in Florida: "There's was also an orchard, a rock streaming water, stepping stones, tangerines, olives, kumquats, rosemary bushes, live oaks [...] trellised grapevines. Over time, their backyard has turned into a Mediterranean garden. Rustling with perfume, the yard contains mosaics, tiled tables [...]" (*Life Without a Recipe*, 199).

An observation by food critic A. J. Liebling, in his memoir *Between Meals: An Appetite for Paris* regarding Proust's *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu*, helps us to understand the nature of archaic taste as a function of literary memory. He claims that Proust's madeleine led him from taste through triggered memory to the writing of a book: "The man ate a tea biscuit, the taste evoked memories, he wrote a book. This can be expressed by the formula 'TMB', for Taste > Memory > Book." (3). Liebling had an inverse experience with Waverley Root's *The Food of France*, Root's culinary journey through France, that we also identify in culinary memoirs, particularly of the diaspora, which take the opposite route, leading us from the book to a memory which brings forth a taste that can be formulated as 'BMT'; this process is sensorially accessible through recipes. Taste, as we have seen, is both a catalyst for remembering and for forgetting. With dry irony, gourmet Liebling bemoans the evidence that Proust's literary genius was not matched with a heartier appetite.

The sacred arouses primary instincts and primitive reactions. While Adam Gopnik differentiates between Liebling's "mock-epic" food writing style and the "mystical microcosmic" worlds of David, Fisher and Pennell, both he and Liebling evoke the primary importance of archaic or primitive tastes that are genuine and authentic. Archaic tastes leave the trace of a diasporic food experience and are associated with a journey: "First you must eat it as a ravenous child, in memorable twilights [...] Then you

must have yourself removed from the house of your simple feast, across the oceans, to a land where the cherished pastry is unknown even by name." (Antin quoted in Gabaccia, 175).[301] Taste opens up an inner landscape that reflects memory, journeys and desires. Part of diasporic trauma is the absence or loss of taste, which cannot be retrieved in its original or transformed state. Mayes describes eating lunch in the shade of the linden tree from the heat, with tomatoes "so intense we go silent as we taste them" while retelling their house renovation saga, "forgetting the labor [...] we dream on about other projects. The sun through the flowering trees bathes us in gold sifted light. 'This isn't real [...]'" (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 120). They taste the past, but she also adds "we taste the future" (240), as their house restoration work draws to an end.

Taste is a personal act of faith of the past and in the future journey, in which one must trust one's sense particularly in travel, whether endotic or exotic. Binh, the Vietnamese cook in the enlightening memoir-fiction, *The Book of Salt*, by Monique Truong, learnt from his brother Anh Minh to see and taste what was not there: "I had to dream and discern it all on my tongue" (*Book of Salt*, 66). Trusting one's taste—or one's instincts—is a secret form of survival for travel. Elizabeth Gilbert writes: "one should only trust what one can experience with one's own senses, and this makes the senses stronger in Italy than anywhere in Europe" (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 114). Taste in food, as in other domains of culture, implies discrimination, standards of quality. T. S. Eliot evokes the link between mind and sensation in Kipling's verse: "[Kipling's] gift is to make people see (for the first condition of right thought is right sensation, the first condition of understanding a foreign country is to smell it)."[302] As Durrell expresses it, sensuality is itself a journey, as well as a moral appraisal. Our senses provide us with the capacity to evoke memories and emotions that transcend consciousness. The festival at Soroni, celebrating tradition, sensuality and abundance, is rich and chaotic, with outdoor cafes, pits of roasted sheep and oxen, stalls with "sweetmeats, lemonade, almonds, cheese." (*Reflections on a Marine Venus*, 179). It is shaped by descriptions of sweets, but also of sheep killing and the preparation of offal. The scene is medieval, primitive, sensual and

[301] Mary Antin. *The Promised Land*. 1912. London: Penguin Classics, 2012, 90. This novel is a turn of the century story of American immigration and assimilation.
[302] T.S. Eliot. (1943). *A Choice of Kipling's Verse*. London: Faber and Faber, 1976, 17.

archaic, (178-183), embracing a simple, miraculous generosity and chaotic connection (192).

Taste and smell have a greater association with episodic than semantic memory, with the symbolic rather than the linguistic, with recognition rather than recall through the linguistic elements of narrative constructs. They help to encode the random yet powerful memories of the past better than vision or words, explains Sutton (101-2). While our previous approach to sensations has been based on lexical semantics, the taste and smell tend to be idiosyncratic and randomly associative (161), exemplified by Proust's madeleine. Abu-Jaber, speaking of Proust, indicates that the moment was spontaneous and unexpected: "I do think Proust was right—that taste and scent are the best senses for retrieving memories—which makes food such a rich source for all kinds of artists. We each have our madeleine cookies." (Abu-Jaber, 2016, Interview, n.pag.). With the retrieval of archaic memories through the senses established, we are drawn to examine further the intersection between food and memory, at the point where food provides access to memories otherwise inaccessible, or accessible only in a rational way, limited by the constraints of consciousness, in the relationship between food (preparation) and thought (writing).

In his introduction to M.F.K. Fisher's *The Art of Eating*, James Beard writes, "For an art as transitory as gastronomy there can be no record except for a keen taste memory and the printed word" (Beard, xx). For Beard, the printed word serves gastronomy as thought for food, rather than the inverse. It records and disseminates the ephemeral art of making food. (Moyer, 128). Firstly, one recognises and then one recalls. The power of food to activate memory lies not in its simple evocation, but in its preparation and consumption, a synergy unique to the culinary memoir genre, which unites recipes with autobiography. Madhur Jaffrey, decades later, teaching a James Beard class on taste, hears herself asked the question: "Do you think there is such a thing as taste memory?" She equates it to hearing the music when you read a score. "When I left India to study in England, I could not cook at all but my palette had already recorded millions of flavours. From cumin to ginger, they were already all in my head, waiting to be called to service [...] I could even hear the honey on my tongue." (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, xiv). She has already recorded the tastes on her childhood through her senses. (xiv). Taste is the channel for memory: Colette Rossant's step-father invites her to play guessing games

with food "to appreciate a dish you must know what's in it. It is important to remember the taste. Food is memory." (*Return to Paris*, 100).

Within this process of sensual recall, we find echoes of a common spiritual register. Ruth Reichl acknowledges her literary standard as the sensual and legendary prose of Lawrence Durrell, and finds sustenance in an association of food and writing, for like Gabrielle Hamilton she realized early on that she wanted to be a writer. She eats an olive whose taste remains and matures in her mouth: "I bit into one. 'Lawrence Durrell,' I said, wondering if I was pronouncing the name right, 'said that olives had a taste as old as cold water.' I rolled the musty pit around in my mouth, thinking that if I could come up with just one description as good I would call myself a writer.'" (*Tender at the Bone*, 281). She repeats, in her cookbook *My Kitchen Year,* that same sense of sacred and Durrellian wonderment: "the flavours framed by the ancient taste of olives" (197). Kate Christensen describes olive oil as "bitter and rich and tasted like nothing else on earth" (*Blue Plate Special*, 339), taking into ethereal realms, while the olive and other endemic fruits of the Mediterranean soil had a mysterious power for Patience Gray's, who was "held in the mysterious grip of olive, lentisk, fig, and vine" (*Honey from a Weed*, 9), and for whom, the olive was "as old as time" (30). Taste memories give narrators not only access to earlier sensual experiences but to universal memories of mankind that embody spiritual mysteries.

Henry Miller, like Lawrence Durrell describes the spirituality of nourishing landscapes that evoke journeys: "the clear atmosphere and the blue-violet hues that descend with the twilight [...] about individualistic herbs and trees, about exotic fruits and inland journeys, about thyme and honey and the sap of the arbutus which makes one drunk" (*Colossus of Maroussi*, 42). His "blue-violet hues" are reminiscent of Durrell's description of the island "sinking into blueness as if into some great inkwell." (*Bitter Lemons*, 258). Miller writes, "Greece is a holy land to me [...] the blue decomposing into the ultimate violet light which makes everything Greek seem holy, natural and familiar" (*Colossus of Maroussi*, 136, 162). Durrell's Rhodian landscape winds a path through a mined landscape, symbolic of the potential dangers of a journey into oneself: "A maze of dry paths led us across the valley, through silvery groves of olives, and pastures richly scented with thyme and myrtle bruised by the hooves of goats." (*Reflections on a Marine Venus*, 114). The land-sensescape is nourishing: "[...] a happiness as idle as this shadowy

garden, with its heavy odours of flowers, coffee and tobacco-smoke, mingled with early sunlight." (103).

The lavish, ecstatically sensual food descriptions of fruit and vegetables that D. H. Lawrence offers, contrast with references to food that are either life-giving or "dead-cold" and meagre, tasting of "dead nothingness". Dark and light, warmth and cold, vitality and weariness, death and life are recurrent antipodes that construct the travel memoir around Lawrence's sensual responses to the environment he explores. It is an environment that he would like to assimilate, in order to absorb the manly virtues that he esteems and that he finds still survive in the peasant communities, for in order to establish the certainty of his own vitality he must observe that of other people. However, this other world scarcely permeates the impervious construction of self which is paralleled in the still life pictorial aspect of the food which remains static and impenetrable, captured in Lawrence's use of enumeration, accumulation, parallel structure and a series of intense compound adjectives, such as "curd-white", "black-purple", rose-scarlet", "blue-crimson, "sugar-dusty", "brown-purple" and vivid-coloured". He is not able to become intimate with it, through spontaneous sensorial response:

> The intense deep green of spinach seemed to dominate, and out of that came the monuments of curd-white and black-purple cauliflower [...] From this green, white and purple massing struck out the vivid rose-scarlet and blue-crimson of radishes [...] sugar-dusty white figs and somber-looking black figs [...] Scarlet peppers like trumpets, magnificent fennels, so white and big and succulent [...] clean-fleshed carrots [...] long, brown-purple onions [...] and then of course, pyramids of big oranges [...] The green and vivid-coloured world of fruit-gleams. (*Sea and Sardinia,* 71-72).

Traditions represent the inheritance which must be re-appropriated, tried and tested, so that a new identity can emerge, a transformation that results from many forms of trauma that we identified in part II, this is the ultimate progression and journey. Counihan claims that cuisine, as a means of transformation, facilitates at least metaphorically, all transformations, the evolutionary process at the heart of culinary memoirs. (Counihan, 1999, 20). "In 2003, many Florentines continued to eat regularly the traditional foods of their ancestors, either out of habit or out of self-conscious desire." (2004, 190). The younger generation however relied on their parents to prepare

the traditional food "contributing to the continuing strength of the family" (Counihan, 2004, 190), implying that although traditions were respected, it was not necessarily the younger generations who wanted to be their custodians: this is reflected in certain of the culinary memoirs, such as that of Shoba Narayan, who gives her own version of traditional recipes, sometimes adapted to American techniques, ingredients or presentation, or Ruth Reichl, who scarcely had a family and culinary model on which to base her adult cooking experiences.

The nourishment of sensescapes

In part II C we considered historical memory recall provoked by the senses, or, in other words, sensuality at the service of memory. Carol Bardenstein explains that narratives explore the enduring and profoundly affecting qualities of early personal memories connected with food, which are "preserved in our bodily senses long after the intelligence has lost sight of them" (Bardenstein, 2002, 356). We explore present-day incorporation, as it influences immediate perception, bypassing intellectual grasp, nourishing the spirit as well as the body. Although a dish may undergo modifications, the point of departure is always a taste and a culinary tradition, which are articulated in culinary memoirs in the form of recipes. Kate Christensen, in her first memoir, questions the influence of food: "Food is a subterranean conduit to sensuality, memory, desire, but it opens the reader to all of it without changing anything" (*Blue Plate Special*, 2), suggesting that the sensual embracing of food experiences remains at a primitive unprocessed level. There is a dominant idea that sensorial experiences are not simply there to stimulate memory channels, but also, on a primitive level, to provide fundamental pleasure and satisfy desires. A connection is made with the landscape and not merely with the plate. These connections make food narratives universal and not purely personal hedonism. She speaks of the reader who indeed ostensibly remains unchanged until she tries a recipe. The ("generous") addition of recipes in an interview on a women's interest Internet site that Kate Christensen gives, add a persuasive quality and give credibility to the culinary memoir *Blue Plate Special* under discussion (Doll, 2013).

The sensuality of descriptive texts, of which the multi-adjective descriptions that cascade over the pages of Christensen's second memoir *How to Cook a Moose*, are all the more vivid and rich for their arbitrary punctuation, convey a hedonism and a lavish, seemingly unstoppable sensual abundance: "the sweetness of the clams and the mealy cubed potatoes; the cold, crisp white wine cooled out tongues" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 92); "the root vegetable hash was rich, savory, dense with flavour" (114); "[t]he roe, a bright red-orange, dense, spongelike mass called coral, is slightly fishy-tasting, sweet, and delicious" (131); "[s]teamers are so meaty, so muscular and chewy and tender and sweet" (132); "[t]hey were warm and sweet and bursting with juice" (166); "[t]he oysters were robust and salty, even coppery, flinty-tasting, extremely intense" (192); "that genuine old-fashioned homemade feeling; light, nutty, cakey on the inside and crisp on the outside" (201); "rich and deep, porky and molasses-y, salty and sweet, soft and dense" (219). These descriptions steep the book in a sensorial awareness that returns the narrator to the past experiences, creating an array of mealscapes, and invites the reader to accompany her.

Elizabeth David, likewise, invites the reader to follow her, drawing her in with texts that describe her Mediterranean. Despite her aristocratic reserve, she is a writer of discreet sensuality. She is prosaic, meticulous and precise, but she loses some of her poise before the enticing preparations of luscious ingredients in a Greek restaurant. Describing the dishes arrayed in an Athenian *taverna* kitchen, she writes: "It is impossible to describe the effect of the marvelous smells which assail one's nose, and the sight of all those bright-coloured concoctions is overwhelming. Peering into every stewpan, trying a spoonful of this, a morsel of that, it is easy to lose one's head and order a dish of everything on the menu." (*Mediterranean Food*, 134). Amongst the many authors that she cites, Henry James' evocation of the food of Bourg-en-Bresse stands out for its sensuality as well as literary intensity. James describes "the poetry of butter" that leaves him with an impression of "late gothic sculpture and thick tartines" (31), a richness of archaic perception.

The connection between sensations and their literary transcription, that is, recipes, is manifest in these memoirs. However, Luce Giard insists that language must not replace the bodily encounter in which skills are incorporated into our bodies. She explains that the gestures of cooking mobilize the resources of the body as well as the

mind (Sutton, 126). Taste is then more than recovered memory, it can also represent embodied knowledge or incorporated skill, a competence learned through a sensorial experience. It is learned, mobilized and repeatedly practiced, a sensory experience, but one that enables us to travel outside of ourselves (like the journey we embark on with the proverbial madeleine). (Sutton quoted in Counihan, 2013, 301). Hence the importance of the invitation to cook that is offered repeatedly by the recipes that will take the reader to another place through sensory experience, perhaps new to both author and reader.

The embodiment of nourishment in memories and knowledge is transmitted through the gestures of preparation as well as through taste. Molly O'Neill writes, "the contemporary food writer uses taste and sensation to discover and explain what makes her human" (xxi), sensations providing nourishment through wisdom and understanding "food keeps one in the present. The physical sensation of a flavor in the mouth is an antidote to the flavorlessness of our increasingly abstract [...] world" (xxi), offering the nourishment of a sensescape. The body serves as a homeland, a place where knowledge, memory and pain are stored by the child, and to which one must return through sensorial acts.

Hélène Cixous expresses a vision of feminine writing as a way of reestablishing a relationship of pleasure with the female body (2010). We find this utopian vision in the sensual creative writing of writers such as M.F.K. Fisher. The ultimate chapter in Fisher's memoir is entitled "A Feminine Ending" giving a triumphal note to what Fisher considered the success of women finding liberty through the senses. Fisher operates alone in appropriating culinary traditions to her own ends, while Narayan must subject herself to traditional rituals which represent the influence of her community. As we have previously noted, she must regularly nourish herself with her family's dishes in order to feel 'grounded'. Wizenberg found the preparation of food, the sensual, physical contact of textures and sensations grounded her as she prepared her wedding meal: "For all the heart and guts wrapped up in a wedding, planning it is essentially a cerebral exercise. Brining carrots and grapes and onions, on the other hand, is wholly, *heavenly* tangible. It's slow. It's messy. It's slippery and sticky. It made me feel like a real human being" (*Homemade Life*, 289).

Skills are incorporated into bodies, as habit memories "acquired in such a way as not to require explicit reflection on their performance. (Sutton quoted in Counihan, 2013, 301). For Tim Ingold, as for Paul Connerton, skilled practice involves not the mind telling the body what to do according to a preconceived plan but rather a mobilization of the mind/body within an environment of 'objects' which afford different possibilities for human use. (Sutton quoted in Counihan, 2013, 302). Adam Gopnik marvels at the agility of food to make connections between the mind and the body: "With no other crafted thing is the line between sensation and meaning quite so quickly crossed, quite so easily extended from something felt, to something known, as with food. The tongue has no sooner said 'Sweet' than the heart says 'Home!'" (Gopnik, 2012, 232). This reminds us of Liebling's Proustian debate and the transition from sensation to knowledge, from taste, or nourishment of the memory to knowledge itself.

Carol Bardenstein explains that, "[p]ersistently retained sense memories are profoundly incorporated into the creation and structuring of collective memory and cultural identity." (Bardenstein, 2002, 356). Contact with food is vital for exiles, to assure physical and emotional needs but also to maintain a corporal knowledge. Sasha Martin suffered exclusion from the kitchen of her adopted home: "Mom had always raised me with the implicit understanding that cooking is the answer to all life's vicissitudes—not just the antidote to boredom, but also a way to ward off the darker realities of grief, separation and loneliness." (*Life from Scratch*, 78). She understands that she needs to experience physical contact with the food during its preparation, activating the synergy between sensory experience and the healing of cognitive processes (Sutton, 12), the "mindful body".

Recipes are key components for the construction of identity in exile (76) putting fragments together, literally and symbolically. For migrants, "food is essential to counter tendencies towards fragmentation of experience." (Sutton, 77). Diana Abu-Jaber writes in her novel *Crescent*: "Occasionally a student would linger at the counter [...] He would tell her how painful it is to be an immigrant [...] For many of them the café was a little flavor of home." (22) "The baklava is important—it cheers the students up." (66). While recipes themselves seem fragmented and at times digressive, raising clamorous voices in the kitchen they also provide cohesion and, as we have discussed earlier in the discussion of embodiment as a memory recall mechanism, provide physical grounding,

stressing culinary community as well as inheritance. Sidney Mintz reminds us of the importance of iteration or repetition as the baseline for the construction of memory (quoted in Sutton, 110). Recipes serve as mnemonics and details serve to substantiate reality, accompanied by the joy in naming, a way of authenticating the veracity, an important function provided by recipes in diasporic and trauma memoirs. Mundane repetition of recipes and ingredients gives sensory experiences their meaning over time, what David Sutton calls "sedimented in the body" (Sutton, 12), as well as generating a form of intimacy with the food and the sensorial experience. Also, inscribing or incorporating practices as opposed to semantics, provides the knowledge of a skill, of how to do something. (Connerton, 11).

Recipes create dishes, mobilise ingredients, articulate traditions and permit personal voices and choices. Yet their role is more than the transmission of traditions, sharing of foodways and preservation of culture, their role in memory recognition, rather than recall. Recipes awaken sensorial memories, naming gustatory and olfactory experiences that render specific spatial locations insignificant: the narrative intention to locate memories in places is replaced by a more intimate mapping. Memories are identified in a sensorial landscape, providing the points of attachment that are traditionally linked with place.

Traditional staple foods represent memories of *Gemeinschaft*[303] (Sutton, 71). Anthropology of the senses and bodily experience are seen through the synesthetic properties of food. (71). Food's memory derives in part from synesthesia – the synthesis or crossing of experiences from different sensory registers. (17). David Sutton even provides a recipe so that the reader can better ingest his theoretical and ethnographic reflections, emphasizing the importance of incorporation. To know recipes, we have to learn them and write them through our bodies. Writing suggests taking distance, while embodied learning of recipes implies identity. This inner journey reveals the formative power of cooking. Reichl describes her own recipe sharing as "conversations, not lectures" (*My Kitchen Year*, xix), not categorical assertions. She compares her approach to that of Julia Child who guided "her readers through a carefully choreographed map of

[303] A sociological term defining a communal society based on traditional social rules determined by personal and family ties.

each recipe—with no deviation allowed." (xix). Like other memoirists, she encourages the idea of a nourishing conversation in which recipes evolve, although the image that she portrays of Child, the reassuring cartographer, still has her disciples today, as other memoirs have shown. Recipes are in some ways a semantic, rather than a nostalgic pretext for returning to memories.

While recipes can be ephemeral, poetic, comforting, they also anchor the narrative in the safe and nurturing sensuality of the present instant, allowing the narrator to return to revisit the past from a safe vantage point, establishing a secure and tangible link with an elusive tradition. Armed with new knowledge and experiences, the narrator is then free to begin a process of renewal, at the same time retaining contact with her roots. Recipes and food preparation ground narratives in the reality of here and now. Beyond reminiscing about food, recipes provide an anchor to the present. In the dramatically structured chapter, innocently entitled "Cake" in *Miriam's Kitchen*, Miriam's traumatic holocaust story is interwoven with detailed descriptions of Miriam's cake baking in her kitchen while Ehrlich looks on. She bakes from an emotional, even existential need, creating a bittersweet warp and weft:[304]

> *They took away our horse, and cut my grandfather's beard. This was just to insult him. A religious Jew doesn't cut his beard.*
>
> Miriam bakes. Her greatest pleasure is the grandchildren's birthday cakes.
>
> […]
>
> *Later they took my father away, to Buchenwald. He was very sick and hungry. He died a day before the American army came.* (*Miriam's Kitchen,* 155, 164).

There is an involuntary desire to connect diverse parts of a personal history, to create a whole that is understandable without it necessarily being historically true. (Lejeune referenced in Miraux, 33). Recipes serve to make those connections fluid and the seams invisible between disconnected parts. They provide the thread that accentuates the authenticity of the story. For Miriam, at this point in her life, it is as important to provide cake for her grandchildren, as it is to tell her holocaust story. The former gesture provides the succour to make the telling of the latter possible. Her

[304] See also part II A chapter 1.

father's hunger is silenced with devoted cooking, sweet cakes and love. Such is Miriam's intention when she prepares food for her family; poignant emotions are contained in the painstakingly precise preparation of dishes from a past time, of which she is the keeper.

The hungers of the world

> I pray that nothing be looked on in this book but the seeing of an [sic] hungry man, and the telling of a most weary man (Doughty, 95).

Writer, poet and traveller, Charles Montagu Doughty's comment is a statement on the universality of hunger, a condition that moves the important response of nourishment to the centre of his book, and to the centre of the memoir narratives. The myriad recipes, their diversity, their random order and recurrent presentation in the autobiographical narratives, are, paradoxically, an abundant manifestation of the centrality of hunger in these memoirs. Sensorial perceptions are portrayed as a partial awareness of hunger which resonates throughout the narratives as a multi-faceted need. Many of the same authors who offer us feasts of sensual food, awakening distant or forgotten memories through sensorial stimuli, also present treatises on the pervasive presence of hunger. Indeed, the sensuality of food is expressed by some as a sensuality of hunger. An early example is George Orwell's shop windows, sources of desperate fascination. In a contrasting style, as lavish as the hunger is pervasive, Gabrielle Hamilton describes her hunger in explicit sensorial detail: "My hunger grew so specific I could name every corner or fold of it. Salty, warm, brothy, starchy, fatty, sweet, clean and crunchy, crisp and watery, and so on." (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 129).

Hunger is at the heart of many immigrant stories, such as those of Abu-Jaber, Ehrlich, Furiya, and Pellegrini, as well as stories of childhood emotional displacement and trauma, such as those of Hamilton, Martin, Slater and Rossant; there are also the more pervasive discourses by Fisher, Hemingway and Christensen. Carole Counihan's study group of traditional foodways, in Florence Italy, had known hard times with little to eat, but while modern times brought abundance, the bittersweet side of that abundance was the loss of longing: "Tastes were rich and delicious, smells fragrant and pungent, hungers strong and deep." (Counihan, 2004, 1). It is as though hunger colours and even nourishes part of their immigrant or itinerant identity. Mennell's reminder

that appetite and hunger are different, is revised by the observation that appetite is a state of mind and the setting for hunger (Mennell, 21). Adam Gopnik writes: "The essential dialogue between the frame of our expectation and the experience of our senses is not the thing to be defeated when we talk about our hungers, but the thing to be celebrated: it is what gives shape to our sensorium." (2012, 200). He goes on to add that the writings of David, Fisher and Pennell are "essentially poetic, and turns every remembered recipe into a meditation on hunger and the transience of its fulfillment" (2012, 222). As mediations on hunger, these recipe narratives contribute to the sensescapes of nourishment.

Diana Abu-Jaber sums up the immigrant relationship to hunger as a common condition: "Everyone who 'comesover' is hungry: for home, for family, for the old smells and touches and tastes" (*Language of Baklava* 4, 6). As her story evolves however we understand that hunger in the immigrant condition embodies a two directional ambivalence, that of identity, for they are hungry for home, but also hunger for assimilation, and for the host land, America. This form of hunger impregnates the desire for alterity as well as for home, Bud's hunger for hamburgers and assimilation, as well as for Jordanian food and the homeland. Angelo Pellegrini expresses some of the noble pride of having experienced hunger, and survived. He is opinionated about what he eats, but respects and is thankful for all good food whatever its origins – "an Internationalist long before the Atomic Age". His palate, he claims, is unprejudiced if somewhat "aristocratic". His gratitude springs from his intimate and early knowledge of hunger and scarcity of food. Experimentation and the purging of all culinary prejudice are crucial to the development of a "humane attitude towards the dinner hour" (*Unprejudiced Palate*, 232).

As well as hunger related to the need to connect with or find one's roots and origins, we witness numerous examples of emotional hunger, as in Nigel Slater's poignant text, in which the author associates food and affection, describing his search for food like a search for his mother's love; without his mother's food, he is without love. He incurred his father's wrath when caught going through his mother's handbag—symbolic of her person—looking for barley sugars, or when he ate half her batch of fairy cakes in one go (*Toast*, 8). "Mother was desperate to be a homemaker (28) but failed: "Mother made up for this humiliation by making rice pudding. Warm, milky rice." (29).

So important was this dish to him that he asserted: "Warm sweet milk was what a mother should smell of." (30). His barely satisfied hunger for love is reflected in the short, pithy paragraphs, measured in emotions, offering a fleeting taste of something insubstantial, scarcely nourishing and often sweet. In her childhood anecdotes, Rossant highlights similar scenes of transgression, of off-limits spaces and forbidden foods, that paint an image of physical and emotional hunger, from the kitchen, the only place she felt at home, to the street food, both of which were considered beneath her class and gender, but which offered her comfort and pleasure (*Apricots on the Nile*, 91).

These examples speak of emotional necessity stemming from childhood trauma. Children also observe the traumas of their parents. When Furiya watched her father foraging for food in the bin, she learned the truth of his past: "Dad once told me that after he experienced starvation, hunger by comparison was bliss. Her mother explains: "Your father was a POW. He'll eat anything. He's never full." (*Bento Box*, 289). Furiya listens to the story of his POW days at dinner, "[o]ver Japanese-style salted salmon and grated daikon radish" (290). Her father, above all, describes a hunger that heightened his sense of smell, playing a guessing game with the other prisoners over the origins of the odours coming from the guards' barracks: "When the wind blew from a certain direction, he could make out the mouthwatering aromas of cooking meat and baking bread drifting toward him from the nearby village like music." (295). Furiya struggles to listen to his traumatic story, focusing on eating to deflect the unendurable words: "I was shoveling the rice, vegetables and seafood into my mouth while Dad talked, unaware of how and what I was eating, engrossed in the same way I would be if I were eating popcorn at the movie theater during a scary movie." (291). Her father teaches her a moral lesson about hunger and need: "'After being in the POW camp, when you never knew the next time you would eat, I changed my thinking. Eat your favorite first [...] 'If you wait too long, it won't be there to enjoy.' [...] 'Enjoy the best first', he told me. Enjoy the moment." (304, 306). Hunger reverses the typical childish deferment.

Sasha Martin embraces the appetites as well as the hungers of the world. Her childhood trauma inspires her to undertake the single-minded creative pursuit of a path to achieving a sense of belonging. She nourishes herself not simply with dishes from the world over, but also the knowledge of each nation's foodways, the key to growth, fed essentially by cookbook writers and not maternal figures, hence her incomplete

knowledge that causes her near fatal cooking accident. She must also learn the sense of security that food, abundant or otherwise, can bring, a lesson in having confidence in life: as Martin watches a woman overfill her plate for her and her children at the Global Table event, she hears her mother's voice reassuring her that there must be a need, and there would be enough for everyone: "From our living room kitchen back in Jamaica Plain to this global table, it's been all about getting our fill. Not just of food, but of the intangible things we all need: acceptance, love and understanding." (*Life from Scratch*, 343). The word "fill" implies a basic need, but translates in each of these immigrant or trauma texts into something much more.

For Virginia Woolf, hunger was holistic and it was necessary to fulfil all the needs that an independent woman and even a writer need. When she declares the need to have a room of one's own, she claims not just the right to a personal space, but also to good nourishment to feed body, intellect and soul. The hunger of the female writer has the right to be satisfied with good food as Woolf states in *A Room of One's Own* (18). This is echoed by M.F.K. Fisher mid-twentieth century, and more recently, in the early twenty-first century, by Kate Christensen. Christensen explains: "Eating well and simply is a way of life I consider both a luxury and a necessity." (*How to Cook a Moose*, 2). Need and desire are described in terms of sensation and understanding. Like Fisher, Christensen expresses her multiple hungers in terms of appetites: "Hand in hand with my love for this place comes an obsessive, lifelong love of food. I'm not a foodie—I'm an eater: I'm hungry." She reiterates axioms about eating well: "I'm a food populist, a curmudgeonly traditionalist, but emphatically not an elitist." (3). Christensen quotes from Fisher's book *How to Cook a Wolf,* the direct inspiration for her title, emphasising that in all circumstances dignity must prevail, without which there is no nourishment:

> 'I believe one of the most dignified ways we are capable of, to assert and then reassert our dignity in the face of poverty and war's fears and pains, is to nourish ourselves with all possible skill, delicacy, and ever-increasing enjoyment.' (*Art of Eating*, 350).

Christensen explains the importance of Fisher's ethic to her, evoking delicacy and balance, resonating with the key elements to successful cooking:

> This last sentence echoes one of my own most deeply held convictions: that eating both well and wholesomely, insofar as it can be done within one's budget and means, with elegant balance and the occasional indulgent luxury, is an expression of hope and dignity as well

> as a cause of happiness [...] The wolf is back at the door these days, but this time, he's howling and hungry for food that's not only cheap, but also delicious, nourishing, and not unduly harmful to the ecosystem and natural environment. (*How to Cook a Moose*, 5, 7).

The terms "well and wholesomely", "hope and dignity", delicious, nourishing" speak to the immigrant situation as much as the war-rationed victim, and confirm, indeed, that it is not 'fill', but nourishment that is required, which is what the 'hungry' family at Sasha Martin's Global Table Adventure are ultimately seeking. Hunger is not simply assuaged with careful and thoughtful eating: "I began to play closer attention to what I ate; I began to see it not as a substance to assuage hunger or homesickness but as something to savor when it was good, like a well-written book or piece of music." (*Blue Plate Special*, 159). A well-written book is like a well-composed and executed meal. Food as we will explore in section C abounds in literary tropes. Hunger feeds writing and perhaps writing feeds hunger, as Hemingway has suggested. "Nostalgia and craving are blunter, more animal and immediate [than memory and desire], and therefore closer to my own experience living here. They're also basically the same thing, except one is hunger for the past and the other is hunger for the future." (*How to Cook a Moose*, 81). Living away from home and eating to appease loneliness and emotional hunger, then dieting to lose weight, Christensen focused desperately on food and words: "I managed to ingest enough olive oil every lunch hour to keep me from keeling over during afternoon classes [...] While I ate, I looked down at my journal and wrote. I wrote and wrote; I was so lonely and hungry, and writing was an excellent outlet for the voice in my head [...]" (*Blue Plate Special*, 138).

Preparing a meal for others is to prepare a beloved story that sustains her guests against what M.F.K. Fisher describes as the universal hungers of the world, spatially and emotionally. In Mexico, she feels conspicuous and intrusive with her "vocabularies of suffering and hunger" (*Gastronomical Me*, 229), in a country where there was so much that one was silent. Hunger is equated with a loss of freedom, while food, in its most nourishing form, conceived with the dignity and delicacy that Fisher and David evoke, equates with freedom. Fisher writes: "I felt a kind of humility and thankfulness that we were leaving. Juanito would be free again, as much as anyone can be who has once known hunger and gone unfed [...]" (189). She claims that: "[h]unger robs you of your freedom" (183), implying that food preparation and consumption offer freedom from the

hunger associated with the strictures of society and, even, paradoxically, of its traditions. Fisher pinpoints the compelling nature of memoirs linking food with the emotional and social needs for love, acceptance and happiness at the core of human nature, describing the warmth and richness of hunger satisfied (Waxman, 373). In reaction to changing post-war society, Fisher positions herself on the periphery, blurring literary genres and refusing to conform to societal standards.

According to Fisher, a form of hunger is caused by the privations of sensual pleasure and the denial of appetite, the roots of which, lie in the historic puritan attitude to food and the denigration of the woman's place in the kitchen to that of domestic slave. She expresses a fascination with hunger and the way one eats, painting vignettes of Dijonais guests with a sometimes-malicious humour, a sign of her imaginative preoccupation with the question (105-107). She recalls the generous, rich meals with details of each course, yet she adds: "when I think of it all, it is the people I see. My mind is filled with wonderment at them as they were then, and with dread and a deep wish that they are now past hunger." (*Gastronomical Me*, 79). "I remember with a kind of anguish the prodigal bounty of their table, and their childlike inability to conceive of anything but richness and warmth and sensory perfection for themselves and their friends. They were less able than ordinary people to withstand the rigors of physical hunger." (85). Afraid, she writes the comforting tale of a full table for them. As the world moved towards World War II, Fisher crossed from America to Paris, in a ship redolent with a sinister atmosphere of fear and foreboding. She and the other passengers eat as though in a "gluttonous dream" (131), the descriptions of heavy food suggesting that they are weighed down, trapped in a sort of sinister hoard: "I felt that most of the other people were eating almost as if the whipped cream and pressed duck and pates de foie gras would be stored somewhere in their spiritual stomachs, to stay them soon, too soon, in a dreadful time of hunger." (131). Hunger would soon be real, but the spiritual hunger provoked by the violence and hatred, was already there. Hunger is once more the subject of a dream this time evoking opposing sentiments of love and humanity in the chapter "Once I Dreamed", in which a larger than life cat catches a bright-blue field mouse, which she brings to Fisher and eats gently and lovingly at her feet and "I understood the gentility of her hunger", a lurid image that defends the dignity of consumption in all

circumstances. (170). The strange sea-borne life shielded her from her own grim dreamings. "It was based on hunger, all of it [...]" (184).

The loss of freedom associated with hunger is extensively explored in George Orwell's memoir, *Down and Out in Paris and London,* scarcely a *culinary* memoir, but one that places food at its centre. In the early pages he describes hunger, a diet of bread, the procuration of which occupies hours of each day, which enables one to at least look in shop windows "everywhere there is food insulting you in huge, wasteful piles; whole dead pigs, baskets of hot loaves, great yellow blocks of butter, strings of sausages, mountains of potatoes, vast Gruyere cheeses like grindstones." (Orwell, 1961, 19). Hunger and eating make people animal-like, while eating real food engendered "a sort of heavy contentment, the contentment a well-fed beast might feel, in a life which had become so simple" (91). Orwell describes an underlying fear of starvation, in which days without food were described as "an ugly experience" (37). Hunger reduced one to "an utterly spineless, brainless condition" (38).

In contrast, for Hemingway—if we can trust his poetic words[305]—hunger coexisted with feasting, artists treading a fine line between financial precarity and short-lived affluence, he would not share Orwell's view for he saw the privation of food as a stimulation for creative energy, despite the visual temptations that Paris offered, suggesting that he perhaps did not ever experience extreme hunger: "You got very hungry when you did not eat enough in Paris because all the bakery shops had such good things in the windows" (*Moveable Feast*, 69). He continues "When you are twenty-five and are a natural heavyweight, missing a meal makes you very hungry. But it also sharpens all your perceptions" (101). At the Luxembourg museum "all the paintings were sharpened and clearer and more beautiful if you were belly-empty, hollow-hungry. I learned to understand Cezanne much better and to see truly how he made landscapes when I was hungry. I used to wonder if he were hungry too when he painted [...] Later I thought Cezanne was probably hungry in a different way" (69), confirming the idea of multiple facets of hunger and consequently the multiple needs for nourishment. Contradicting Fisher's idea that "[h]unger robs you of your freedom" (*Gastronomical Me*,

[305] Jacqueline Tavernier-Courbin (1992) questions whether Hemingway was as impoverished as he claimed to be in *A Moveable Feast*.

183), Hemingway argues that it stimulates perception and creativity. Like Fisher however, Hemingway recognizes that there are multiple forms of hunger that capture different parts of the literary imagination and engender an aesthetics of food and eating.

Paul Theroux writes of the map that Hemingway draws of his hunger on the streets of Paris, the physicality of the sensation, its trace, and the places he visits to assuage it:

> Being poor, hungry most of the time, Hemingway constantly reverts to the subject of food—flavors, aromas, simple food, good wine; the pleasures of eating and drinking. It is a book about physical sensations, and the intensity of such physicality in Paris [...] The book is filled with restaurants, bistros, and bars, and their specialties in food and drink. The result is that, reading *A Moveable Feast* [...] we are able to make a map of Paris in our imagination and to follow the comings and goings of Hemingway and the literary lions who stalk its pages [...] this is a vivid portrait of the city as it looked and smelled and tasted in the twenties. (Theroux, 251-252).

Hunger, however, surpasses the physical need in his text. Waiting to eat outside an expensive restaurant and observing the already successful James Joyce and his family, as though a window onto the future he writes: "There are so many sorts of hunger. In the spring there are more. But that's gone now. Memory is hunger"[306] (*Moveable Feast*, 56-57) and the sensation remained after they had eaten: "the feeling that had been like hunger when we were on the bridge was still there when we caught the bus home. It was there when we came in the room and after we had gone to bed and made love in the dark, it was there. When I woke up [...] it was there" (57). Multiple seasons add to the multiple facets of hunger, an accumulation of elusiveness echoes in the memoirs. Clare Coss in her essay "My Mother/Her Kitchen" captures that desire that could not be named. Evoking her mother's hunger, she writes: "She related to food with a sensuality which disguised and fended off deeper yearnings she could not name." (*Through the Kitchen Window*, 13).

Gabrielle Hamilton came to know hunger in a way that Hemingway probably never did, with the physical and emotional abandon of her family, yet nonetheless with the same existential fascination that Hemingway and Fisher expressed. Her observations of her sensations and increased knowledge of herself resonate with the words of Fisher.

[306] This is echoed in Sutton's words: "Hunger is in the memory and not in the food" (90).

As she travels the world, uncertain of her future, she explores the condition: "on those journeys, those crossings, I came to know extraordinary and particular hunger (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 128). Hamilton reflects a form of abandon and desolation, referring to starvation as a repeatedly occurring incident, inducing not death but a sense of desperation that fixated her attention on every aspect of the condition, occupying her time and her imagination:

> I [...] went quite still, with a total slackening of will or need, and I thought of all my thoughts, sifted through all my old nostalgias [...] I starved. And I starved so many times on this repeated three-day bus ride or train journey from somewhere to somewhere else that I came to know every contour of my hunger in precise detail. When I came to be actually holding the keys to my new restaurant, wondering what credentials I possibility possessed for owning and operating such a place, I counted knowing hunger and appetite as one of them [...] I came to see hunger as being as important a part of a stage as knife skills. Because so much starving on that trip led to such an enormous amount of time fantasizing about food, each craving became fanatically particular. Hunger was not general, ever, for just something, anything to eat. My hunger grew so specific I could name every corner or fold of it. (129).

Hunger and appetite, in its most granular specificity, as we have indicated earlier, shape the identity of a person, but also offer credentials when it comes to feeding others. In Hamilton's restaurant she wants to create all the poignant and authentic—if incoherent—food from her childhood and travels, served spontaneously according to need, not menu—a desire to satisfy emotional hunger (136). She learned during the hungry times of her travels the desire to have ones specific hunger taken care of without words as a mother instinctively takes care of her child, relating her hunger experience to her emotional starvation as a child: "I forever want to arrive somewhere hungry and thirsty and tired and be taken care of" (131), as though the journey itself offers access to nourishment, as a necessary passage to healing emotional and spiritual hunger.

However, her sense of isolation amidst the idyllic large Italian family dinner, highlights hunger that is equated with a sense of unbelonging, in the form of a "gulf" between her inner being and her conflicting desires, excluded from the intimate family dinner, and the nourishment of food and conversation, in which the "plate of spaghetti" and the "glass of wine" cannot fulfil hunger when they are divested of a sense of attachment:

> I spend a lot of time on the terrace with the kids while everyone is inside having lunch and conversation [...] I, too, long for my vacation to start with a fat plate of Alda's zucchini and a glass of cold white wine from the Alto Adige and a boisterous catch-up session with my family around the table [...] But I am reliably alone [...] while my glass of wine warms on the dining room table where my seat remains empty. My hunger feeds my exhaustion. My exhaustion fuels my sadness [...] (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 272, 273).

The spaghetti and the wine are emblems of familial sharing from which she is excluded. Hamilton hungers for a sense of belonging, of being part of a functional family—according to her perception. She fantasizes about the presence of her own family, united and healed, speaking their shared made-up language, a sign of their own intimate closeness and bond of belonging. Far from being filled and nourished by the pasta and wine, she experiences solitude, hunger, exhaustion and cravings. The tone is tragic, but as she reiterates several times, her suffering gives her the credentials to open a restaurant, knowing hunger gives her the credibility to nourish others, and from that gesture she is able to nourish herself.

2. Symbolism, the sacred and sustenance

> Observing local rituals while travelling is important, not for its dubious sanctity, but because the set of gestures in rituals reveals the inner state of the people involved and their subtle protocol. (Theroux, 9-10).

Paul Theroux's proposition to focus on the local, rather than the global reach of travel, finds its parallel in the local and specific nature of recipes within the global context of an autobiographical journey. Rituals and gestures, the minutiae of everyday life, are essential to understanding others and consequently self. Whether or not the authors who undertake, or who are subjected to, multiple displacements are wiser and emotionally richer, is the subject of many adages and a point for moral debate beyond the scope of this study. However, what emerges from a study of these multi-trajectory memoirs is the abundance of influences and experiences, reflected in the plethora of recipes and food tips that stimulate an awareness of needs that can be fulfilled on a primary, instinctive, non-intellectual level.

A number of anthropological elements reveal the way in which memoir narratives are anchored both in the body and also in community and family traditions. Returning to the past takes stock of family history and traditions offering an anthropological perspective that elucidates the present. While culinary memoirs do not aspire to be research treatise on exilic cultures and their foodways, the attention to details of daily life, notably of eating, as well, Parama Roy specifies, of having an awareness of distance and loss (Roy, 170), means that they encapsulate the idea that food transcends the home and the community circle and invites a scrutiny of broader themes than those of personal identity and origins, as they relate to cultural connection, the evolution of ethnic groups, and the relevance of spiritual and existential questions. The overarching food narrative to which they contribute extends beyond personal to universal connections.

The metadata of culinary memoirs is revelatory: publishers use symbolic details on book covers to highlight elements of the memoir related to food, origins, traditions and identity, including iconographic symbols of foods, of ethnic origins or of conflicts of ethnic identity. Abu-Jaber's divided table cloth, one representing America and the other the Middle East speaks of her personal dilemma but also that of larger communities, with inevitable political connotation.[307] Some use decorative ethnic symbols; others represent some of the dilemmas which authors explore in the texts, such as the generational issues that Ehrlich's memoir explores in which generations reveal ambiguous and uncertain loyalty to ancestors and traditions, represented in the family photograph of Ehrlich and her mother in which her grandmother hovers anxiously at the kitchen door behind them. Reichl is shown standing at the stove at a young age, perhaps a role beyond her years, assuring her own nourishment in an environment of emotional and nutritional neglect, speaking for others like her. Some emphasise the importance of home values such as Martin's rolling pins, Wizenberg's country kitchen shelves and Zonana's cookie-cutter, doubly symbolic in the form of a house, highlighting, like many second-generation immigrants of the need to find and shape a home from her reconnection with foodways. Hemingway is seated at a café terrace on

[307] The cover images are provided in an appendix. Viewed as a collection, we note the use of personal photographs, symbols of ethnic and regional food and cooking, and some connotations of culinary indulgence.

the cover of *A Moveable Feast*, representing a generation of writers and artists who sought inspiration and nourishment at the tables of cafes and restaurants in France and across Europe in the aftermath of the First World War.

These images are symbols of nourishment, or its precarity, of the fragility and, in part, sacred nature of foodways, evocative of the communion and rituals that surround them and the narrative ways in which one finds nourishment to preserve past memory and identity to sustain one's present existence which we will explore in this chapter. Symbols such as these, however, are oversimplifications, just as rituals can be empty, and the very notion of nourishment itself superficial and meaningless, as we will discuss in the next section in the debate on the feel-good label adhered to these memoirs. The book covers however demonstrate a commonality of symbolism for a diversity of tables and foodways. Could the authors sit together at the same table as a supportive community? They do indeed have common needs, but while it is not enough to say that home values and traditional foodways are a cure-all, an unquestioning idea of nourishment pushes us to remember that all nutrients must be correctly dosed for individual needs.

Nourishment as symbol

Hunger then, can be paradoxically, seen as a symbol of nourishment, where lack increases one's awareness of self and one's place in a spiritual sensescape. Preparing food and eating is rooted in traditions and couched in beliefs and myths about food's intrinsic properties or the relationship that the partaker has with it. It generates a restoring process of memory embodiment when associated with the senses, a symbol of preservation of both life in the present and conservation of selected memories from the past. Jean-Pierre Poulain explains : "[l'h]omme se nourrit de nutriments [...] mais aussi de signes, de symboles, de rêves et de mythes [...] Manger mobilise des croyances, des structures imaginaires fondamentales. [...] le mangeur s'appropriant les qualités symboliques de l'aliment." (Poulain, 20).

In part III B, we reviewed the sacred 'fruits' as individual elements that populate and define the landscape of culinary memoirs and foodway-oriented travel books. The symbolic nature of food enables prohibitions and taboos to signify social boundaries,

religious integrity, status and gender difference. Carole Counihan explains that infants establish relations with adults through feeding and generally receive organized responses about the world (Counihan, 1999, 133), evident even in dysfunctional families such as that of Rossant. Feeding, she adds, symbolizes fosterage, adoption and family. (48). The metaphor of forbidden fruit, symbolic of original sin, reinforces the link between food and access to one's unconscious. (Rouyer, 248). Indulgence and ascetism are frequent opposites and yet together are an expression of a need for nourishment. Following her painful divorce, Elizabeth Gilbert runs to Italy, a destination associated with good food to shamelessly eat her way to emotional recovery. This indulgence is followed by an ascetic period of prayer, fasting and introspection, which she places on the same continuum as gluttony. Her conscious consumption was as much a form of introspection as unthinking self-gratification, reflected in her interest in the aliments she consumed.

In many cultures, food plays a central role in mediating and expressing one's place in the world. In transforming food from raw nature to edible products, by manipulating food combinations, cooking mode, colour, texture, taste, form and terroir sources, humans convey messages. As such, food also implicitly becomes symbolic of a spiritual hunger, portrayed as an offering, a prayer, a ritual, a request for transformation. Martin's decision to make her mother's German Tree Cake for her husband and daughter for the first time since her childhood, invests her with comfort at the prospect of this familiar tradition: "After so much foraging in other countries, this cake at least is certain." (*Life from Scratch*, 293). She has foraged, or sought nourishment in distant lands, the foodways of foreign places and finally turns to find some at home in her mother's tried and tested cake recipe. However, when her husband is rushed to hospital with a heart problem, the cake becomes for her, what it had always been for her mother "a walking meditation. Step-by-step, one foot in front of the other, it was a sheer exercise in willpower—an edible prayer." (297). It is an act of faith that the transformation will occur. It does indeed sustain her: "Later when Keith and Ava eat it, I smile, knowing that I have not only fed them: I have kept going." (297). Her words have the same spiritual consciousness as those of Fisher: "I, with my brain and my hands, have nourished my beloved few, that I have concocted a stew or a story, a rarity or a plain dish, to sustain them truly against the hungers of the world." (*Gastronomical Me*, 18).

Cooks themselves mimic the practice of prayer. Gloria Wade-Gayles calls her chapter "'Laying of Hands' through Cooking: Black Women's Majesty and Mystery in Their Own Kitchens" in Arlene Voski Avakian's anthology, in which she describes cooking and feeding as a spiritual experience (*Through the Kitchen Window*, 98), with ingredients "from a memory passed down through the generations" (96), associating the spiritual laying on of hands with the manual manipulation of ingredients. The act of writing is itself a form of laying on of hands for the morality and the lessons learned are imparted—like the recipes—as gifts that are shared with the reader. Emotional nourishment is received through the hands of cooks. Ruth Reichl is in part saved from her mother's reckless emotional behaviour by maternal cooks: her Aunt Birdie who upheld the belief that food was comfort and healing. (*Tender at the Bone*, 20-21), and Alice, who "cooked more for herself than for other people, not because she was hungry, but because she was comforted by the rituals of the cuisine" (26).

Linda Furiya describes her father's teachings about eating as a religion, of "the spiritual aspect of eating thoughtfully, mindful of the source, and pacing oneself as in meditation or prayer" (*Bento Box*, 45-46). Adam Gopnik marries notions of sensual reverence with spirituality in his discussion of Alice Waters, culinary priestess of the socially responsible and culturally loyal American food movement: "you could sense Alice Waters's eyes radiating the spiritual intensity that for so long startled and impressed her friends and admirers and has set her apart from other chefs making her a kind of materfamilias to a generation of chefs" (*Paris to the Moon*, 242). In the spirit of Durrell and Hemingway, Gopnik cites a guru in the food industry writing of Waters: "'She's one of les vigils *en haut*, the watchman in the crow's nest, seeing far ahead. The thing I most admire about Alice is the sense that the sensual is not really sensual if it is not, *au fond*, spiritual.'" (243). Thomas McNamee in turn cites the sensitivity of the critics to Alice Waters' spiritual awareness in cooking: "'She penetrates to the essence—the soul, you might say—of a quail or an oyster or even a sack of flour or a bottle of oil.'"[308] (McNamee, 204). The sensual and the spiritual are associated with a discourse that promotes awareness of self and universal truths.

[308] Jason Epstein, *House and Garden*, February 1983. (McNamee's note).

Food is a symbol rather than process; as David Sutton explains, cooking is very much "in the making" (Sutton quoted in Counihan, 2013, 316). This is evident in the symbol of preserving and conservation, as a form of embodiment, tactile, tangible memories of the past. Writing of *Midnight's Children*, Marie-Claire Rouyer explains: "tout accès à la connaissance passe par l'odeur et la saveur, il se donne pour bût la chutnification de l'Histoire" (Rouyer, 17), designating the figurative conservation of memories in writing transformed into pickles. Food is the object of symbolism in the act of preserving. Preservation is a form of semi-permanent embodiment able to capture and hold on to sense memories – culinary memoirs with recipes perform this role. Storytelling, pickling and chutnification are about more than preservation, explains Roy (157). Indeed, Luisa Weiss explains that: "[p]reserving is more than just putting up fruit before it spoils. It also preserves a moment in time, making the past available in the present. […] In the winter months after our foray into the wild orchard, each jar of *Pflaumenmus* I opened reminded me of that hot, quite day when Max and his family and I picked fruit together companionably. And each jar contained everything that I loved about this city in its rich, dark depths." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 237). Janet Dike Rood in her article, "Vermont Kitchen", describes a woman who came and went from her grandparent's kitchen observing but never learning the long food preparations, until circumstances forced her to learn by trial and error, now through the help of another woman, with the memory of 'Gram' and Mrs Murphy. Despite financial and family pressures, she ultimately finds peace and pleasure in the food preparation, in the nourishment of a tradition of preservation, understanding that the pickling that must be perpetuated, as an age-long tradition, and the ripe garden vegetables must not go to waste. (*Through the Kitchen Window*, 48).

Rouyer discusses the preservation of memories through writing in *Midnight's Children*. By tasting the figurative pickles, the reader is able to reconstitute the story, and discover the subtlety of the measures of flavours and rhythms (Rouyer, 17).[309] Preserving also embodies the notion of skill, time-consuming preparation, and slow consumption (over time), as opposed to the ephemerality of other dishes, which are prepared and eaten to the rhythm of daily meals and an undercurrent of necessity.

[309] "Le lecteur retrouvera la subtilité des dosages de saveurs et de rythmes." (My translation).

Gabrielle Hamilton's escapist travel fantasy of self-discovery: "a slow meandering trip around the whole world where I might be swallowed and digested and composted by the earth itself" (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 117), is reminiscent of the line from *Midnight's Children*: "To understand me, you'll have to swallow a world" (Rushdie, 1981, 458). Life as well as literary texts must be tasted, and swallowed, consumed without reticence to achieve understanding, the pillar of nourishment. Storytelling, pickling and chutnification are about more than preservation, which is a meditation on an intricate amalgamation of spices, but also a capturing of truth:

> To pickle is to give immortality, after all: fish, vegetables, fruit hang embalmed in spice-and- vinegar; a certain alteration, a slight intensification of taste, is a small matter, surely? [...] One day, perhaps, the world may taste the pickles of history. They may be too strong for some palates, their smell may be overpowering, tears may rise to the eyes; I hope nevertheless that it will be possible to say of them that they possess the authentic taste of truth [...] (Rushdie, 1981, 549-550).

Parama Roy writes of Madhur Jaffrey that she situated spices within an idiom of culinary authenticity, poised against the culinary corruption of the western reduction of Indian gastronomy (157). She establishes a hierarchy of pure foods. (158), describing her writing as part of a colonial script that Jaffrey resists and then concedes to. (161). In Jaffrey's memoir, authenticity resonates, above all, in the detailed recollections of her culinary childhood landscape.

Spices represent a particular important in many cultures, including for embalming, for magic rituals, for cooking and preservations, and medication. They also hold a place in the imagination as symbols of exoticism, travel and vestiges of journeys. Wolfgang Schivelbusch argues that the taste for spices implies "a peculiarly medieval longing for faraway places [...] for the Paradise that they thought could be tasted in the spices [...]" (Roy, 4). This gustatory fantasy, he postulates, was the engine that made Europe what it is today, launching it from medievalism to modernity through its long sea voyages and subsequent colonial conquests. Spices represent ethnic distinction in many cuisines, Indian, Middle Eastern, such as those of Abu-Jaber and Jaffrey. They represent the dignity of subtle, personal and thoughtful dishes in the jars that Martin's mother carries in her handbag, that allow her to prepare family dishes wherever her travels take her, as well as the spice jars she offers Martin for her new home, a sign of new roots.

Commensality, ritual and mealscapes

The symbolism of nourishment is prominent in meals, which in many instances are far more than the shared consumption of prepared food. They are often the scene of complex dramas of family communion. Sidney Mintz and Christine Du Bois assert that ritual meals not only connect participants to invisible beings, but also perform critical social functions. Eating in ritual contexts can reaffirm or transform relationships with the visible other, and can also powerfully reinforce religious and ethnic boundaries (Mintz and Du Bois, 107). Shoba Narayan starts her life, like Jaffrey, in a birth ritual of rice-eating ritual and sacred blessings, wishing the baby not good health but a "lifetime of healthy eating" (*Monsoon Diary*, 3); health is not independent, but the result of nourishing food.

Migrants maintain their ties to a homeland through their preservation of and participation in traditional customs and rituals of consumption, which Roy refers to as "[p]oignancies of nourishment." (162, 163). Poignancy is a word that resonates with the passion of family affiliation and strong emotions. Within that intensity of emotion lies a certain fragility which exposes ritual as the sum of many parts, and also the most fragile of elements, that can mean all or nothing. Gopnik observes that "[b]etween the rhetorical and the real, lies the ritual" (2000, 201), for ritual can be private as well as communal. Living away from home and missing her mother, Christensen ate to appease her loneliness, and then dieted in a gesture that became a "private ritual, ascetic" (*Blue Plate Special*, 137). We are reminded of Theroux's opening words to this chapter, that "gestures in rituals reveals the inner state of the people." The identity of those who practice the ritual is nourished, while at the same time to an observer—the reader—the ritual offers a medium for conscious—"love and sweet energies"—and unconscious communication. Preparing repetitive dishes, for example, biscuits morning and evening is a ritual meditation, "filled with love and sweet energies" (Kavash, 104). Recipe preparation symbolically imitates the ritual of shared meals, the breaking of bread, a spiritual healing connection, a ritual common to several religions, serving as an allegory, a regularly practiced spiritual narrative. Fisher, describing hunger, talks of the deep need for love and happiness, and the shared meals where those needs can be met. "There is a communion of more than bodies when bread is broken and wine drunk. And that is my

answer when people ask me: Why do you write about hunger and not wars or love" (*Gastronomical Me*, Foreword).

We have seen multiple examples of social communion that connects people spiritually, often of divergent origins, notably in the travel and residence books of Durrell. He writes: "the whole of heaven stirs and trembles" (*Prospero's Cell*, 16) as they eat a simple dinner under the cypress tree. Commensality, sharing the table, was "an important means of social connection, for it brought people together around the pleasurable act of eating." (Counihan, 2004, 117). Gustatory pleasure was important to family meal interactions. Culinary memoirists enact the socio-anthropological idea that cooking and eating together define group and gender identities, celebrate social cohesion and perform rituals of cultural belonging.[310] Counihan adds that feasts are exaggerated consumption for exceptional occasions diminishing differences and bringing communities together. (1999, 37). Molly Wizenberg offers simple home truths: "It was the steady rhythm of meeting in the kitchen every night, sitting down at the table, and sharing a meal [...] We built our family that way—in the kitchen, seven nights a week. We built a life for ourselves, together around that table [...] When I walk into my kitchen today, I bring all of this with me." (*Homemade Life*, 2). Wizenberg's heritage is born of a nourishment that includes the knowledge and skills she learned and the rituals that she assimilated. In hers and other memoirs, an accumulation of traditions, rituals, meal preparation and sharing form a chaotic narrative response to hunger and need for nourishment.

To extend the meal beyond the kitchen table, David Sutton explains that meals, like historical events have structures that define the memories and histories they will generate. (Sutton, 123). Traditional foods convey symbolic messages for the community (Counihan, 1999, 41). There is a parabolic and allegoric dimension to food, in which meals and moments of sharing represent communion with a spiritual awareness. In a meal, the parts recall the whole and the whole recalls the parts (104), creating mealscapes, a reflection of the relationship between individuals and the larger community: "[...] meals by their very structure provide for the similarity and difference

[310] Anthropologists who have explored these aspects of food and culture and studied within the context of this work include James Clifford, Carole Counihan, Mary Douglas, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Sidney Mintz and Penny Van Esterik.

that becomes the stuff of narrative." (Sutton, 109). One recipe cannot represent the whole of a culinary culture, nor one type of recipe, that excludes parts of a meal. Mary Douglas' work on part-whole relations in meal structures, in her article "Deciphering a Meal", describes the difficulties of defining a precoded panhuman message in the language of food, because meal rituals, depend on the specific familial and cultural environment. Meal categories are also social events, although food may also be taken for private nourishment (40). Distinctions can be made between intimacy and distance, between patterns of major and minor events (41). Barbara Kingsolver notes that an Italian meal "is a play with many acts." (*Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, 246); it is calculated, organized, and non-incidental. Douglas reminds us of the specifically individual nature of meals to families and communities, using the analysis of her own family supper as a starting point. What constitutes a meal varies from family to family and culture to culture. However, the particular composition of the meal, as well as the 'nutrients' and dishes, serve to nourish the eaters.

As 'recipe' books, culinary memoirs do not provide meals but the elements of meals, the fragments that the reader can perhaps compose into a whole. Some memoirs do not provide recipes, but rather describe meals, such as Hamilton's and Mayes' memoirs (although the latter does also provide a sample of recipes, well separated from the narrative in separate chapters). The order of recipes is random and their categorization inexistent, leaving it to the reader to compose the meal from the elements provided, as one defines a journey from elements of guidebooks and maps. Significantly, a number of memoirs, notably those of Abu-Jaber, Christensen, Ehrlich, Martin, Narayan, Wizenberg and Zonana end with family gatherings around a table, as though needing to draw together the parts of a whole to affirm a coherent identity, to provide an example of how, with multifarious recipes and foodways, one can create a structured meal that is coherent with one's sense of identity and origins. In the case of Narayan and Zonana, culminating hybrid meals are composed of diverse cultural culinary elements, but which provide personal and spiritual satisfaction. Sutton explains that food is not just mnemonic, it can also create prospective memories with the seasons and its rituals, linking past present and future (Sutton, 28-9). "Food is not a random part that recalls the whole to memory. Its synesthetic qualities, when elaborated as they are in Greece, are an essential ingredient in ritual and everyday experiences of totality. Food does not

simply symbolize social bonds and divisions; it participates in their creation and recreation." (Sutton, 102), hence the importance of recipes in culinary memoirs that symbolize exactly that creation and recreation.

Ritual can be meaningful and poetic as well as loud and announcing. (Connerton, 20). Pierre Nora, writing on gastronomy, called ritual a mythology, a collection of seemingly concrete practices that are more or less ritualised (Nora, 283). One can talk about the sacred rites of meals in a specific family as well as the sacred connection that it ties with ancestors. Angelo Pellegrini claims that the authentic, but simple meal of bread, cheese and wine is "the luncheon that binds me close to my ancestors" (*Unprejudiced Palate*, 141), and indeed many meals in Durrell's and Miller's works describe fraternal meals round bread, olives and wine. Rituals are, however, considered with ambivalence, both symbolic of constraining customs, but also beauty and respect for ancestral pasts that give narrators a sense of peace about their origins, offering a form of spiritual nourishment, most markedly described in the Indian memoirs. Culinary rituals involve precise timing and optimal conditions, the unburned ghee at the newborn ceremony at the temple (*Monsoon Diary*, 6), or the seasonal cooking rituals of first *vatrals*, then *vadams* (26-27). The family is described in relation to their food and eating rituals, dinner for forty, feasts for weddings. (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, chapter 17). Eating rituals are used for climactic effect, recorded as significant moments that precede or presage change, or indicate a new momentum. There are a number of 'Last Supper' scenes**,** a final taste, mouthful or meal, before starting out on a journey towards something new. "Food metaphors point to a shared humanity." (Mark Stein, 147-8). They are designated by Sidney Mintz as a deep affective overlay in which food and eating are symbolic practices that include the Last Supper. We are reminded of the symbolic eating of an orange that saved Kate Christensen's grandfather from imprisonment during the war: "So they sat on the bunk, all four of them, and shared the orange that Ruth had peeled as slowly as she could [...] And so they all came to America, saved by a piece of fruit." (*Blue Plate Special*, 13).

One can make the distinction between domestic rituals and meal rituals, between preparing and eating food, vestiges of a past that nourishes identity, whether they were positive or negative. In "Appetite Lost, Appetite Found", Helen Barolini writes that: "[t]he rituals in Italy reminded me of the few remaining rites in my Italian

American family at home. I began to sense their beauty and importance and to wish I had paid more attention to them and their celebration through special foods." She began to see her grandmother in a new light "not as a silent nobody, but the veritable pillar of the family well-being." (*Through the Kitchen Window*, 233). Fisher, however, describes the culinary rituals of household duties of her grandmother's time as "indistinguishable from a dogged if unconscious martyrdom" (*Gastronomical Me*, 3). Ehrlich writes: "Another set of complicated meals, fatiguing rituals, required forms of work that has little to do with freedom or choice. I suppose we are laboring for our families, for the perpetuation of our people, and that is the difference" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 230), yet at a later point on in her spiritual journey, she asserts that "[y]ou are what you eat" (259), repeating Brillat-Savarin's adage; however she makes the distinction between excess and sufficiency, between want and need. For Ehrlich, rituals are vessels containing a precious substance, she uses an image that has connotations of a precious ingredient:

> What is the lure of ritual when passionate belief is hardly ever to be found, when fulfillment of ritual is a matter of choice? It is more than the preservation of an empty vessel. It is the conviction, deep and unspoken, that ritual, the vessel, contains a precious substance, though I cannot name it. My ignorance is my problem, not that of the vessel. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 3).

Miriam is "[a] keeper of rituals and recipes, and of stories [...]" (xii). Rituals endeavour to create permanence but Miriam's story is a reminder of how fragile that permanence can be.

Nonetheless, rituals can represent safe homes, as Elizabeth Gilbert writes: "we do spiritual ceremonies as human beings in order to create a sage resting place for the most complicated feelings of joy or trauma, so that we don't have to haul those feelings around with us forever, weighing us down." (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 187). Like Ehrlich, Gilbert explains that rites must be practiced as a form of meditation that allows for clarity of thought, enabling one to understand the precious substance in the vessel: "Your treasure—your perfection—is within you already. But to claim it, you must leave the busy commotion of your mind and abandon the desires of the ego and enter into the silence of the heart." (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 197). For Sirine, in Abu-Jaber's novel *Crescent*: "her mother's small lessons felt like larger secrets when Sirine was a girl: how instructions in the fine dicing of walnuts and the way to clarify butter were also meditations on hope and devotion"

(*Crescent*, 68). When seeking spiritual comfort, she inevitably comes back to food: "It seems that whenever she tries to deliberately seek out something like God, she gets distracted, her mind winds back to her body, and she finds that instead she is thinking about something like stuffed grape leaves rolled tightly around rice, ground lamb, garlic, onions, currants, fragrant with green olive oil." (264). Furiya's father considered the whole meal as a form of meditation before he ate with the passion and respect for every grain of rice: "Dad ate all his meals with vigour and passion, as if each were his last. He hated eating in a hurry as if each were his last. [...] Dad admired the whole meal placed in front of him and then studied each dish, appreciating its appearance and aroma." (*Bento Box*, 48-49). Attention and intention are important; Reichl adds: "when you pay attention, cooking becomes a kind of meditation." (*My Kitchen Year*, xvi).

The ritual of the picnic is recurrent in journey narratives, including those of Jaffrey, Roden and Narayan, and even in Forster's fiction, *A Passage to India* and *A Room with a View*. Taking the rituals of the usually highly codified meal outside, into an uncontrolled environment where usual rules and ethics are susceptible to be disrespected, offers both a sense of freedom as well as risk, and a heightened sensual awareness. The elaborate, long-prepared mountain picnics of epic proportions were exotic in every respect, not least for the specific varieties of fruits that were ordered from far-away northern cities, and assumed mythical status that lingered in imaginations. Of the mangoes chilled in the stream "Cool and sweet, this nectar had the taste of ecstasy, the ecstasy of our summer in the hills." (*Climbing the Mango Trees*, 101-104). These picnics were in themselves a long-established ritual which mobilized people and energy as well as a communion with tradition. Cuisine is the art of transformation and therefore foods are the essence of rites of passage. Picnics transform meals adding both freedom and danger. Sutton claims that we should not oppose ritual (time for the symbolic) and everyday (time for the practical) (19).

Ritual is a key site where food and memory come together. As Mary Douglas has explained, everyday and extraordinary eating are correlated with connected systems of metaphor and meaning (Sutton, 20). Yet ritual can also be both mundane and ceremonial; everyday experiences have the power to evoke memories on which identities are formed, as well as rites of passage, for food is a cultural site. In foodways, there is an inevitable mingling of the everyday and the ritual.

Sustaining memory

Rituals accompany travel, both exceptional and mundane, from D. H. Lawrence's melted butter for his parsnips in his "kitchenino" to Kate Christensen's Vietnamese *pho* ritual when she moves to Maine. We think of Fisher's Atlantic crossings that she circumscribes with private eating rituals, marking important changes in her life and personality. Travel in pursuit of identity is emotionally charged. For journeys that mark traumatic passages, there is sometimes an individually-led, community-assisted effort to rehabilitate the lost identity and preserve memory led by an inspired individual. Two such works are the comprehensive reference tomes by Claudia Roden, *The New Book of Middle Eastern Food*[311] and *The Book of Jewish Food*.[312] As books they represent a 'definitive' source of knowledge that aligns them with Max Milner's idea of wisdom as a source of nourishment. Complete works of this nature and scope on such cuisines were non-existent. Roden insisted that her family had never had any cookbooks, "[t]here had been none in Egypt", they depended entirely on oral transmission "from mother and mother-in-law, to daughter and daughter-in-law" (*Middle Eastern Food,* 4). They can be classified in the category that Traci Marie Kelly defined as auto-ethnographic cookbooks which illuminate practices of community and family, in which food is presented contextually and is representative of shared values, behaviours and standards (Kelly 255).[313] They were intended to record the culinary memory of two culturally distinct, yet socio-ethnically overlapping cuisines. Roden's culinary collection—and recollection—are a comprehensive presentation of peoples and ingredients, complex culinary traditions and hybrid tastes. On a community level, Roden's preoccupation was the danger that the foundational culinary cultures, or foodways, of geographically and culturally dispersed people, would dissipate and disappear. On a personal level, Roden sought an anchor and a living reminder of the home she and her family had lost, and the

[311] Published in 1968 in Great Britain and in 1972 in America.
[312] Published in 1996 in Great Britain and in America.
[313] Some of the ideas elaborated in this section on Claudia Roden's seminal works are drawn from an article to be published by the Centre D'Études sur les Littératures Etrangères et Comparées (CELEC) EA 3069, Université Jean Monnet, Saint-Etienne, France, following a colloquium held at the University of St. Etienne on *Memories, Traces and Imprint* (20-21 November, 2017). The title of the article is "From Memory to Impression, Recipe to Embodiment, in The Auto-Ethnographic Cookbooks of Claudia Roden".

close-knit family life that had been shattered. The works serve as a written memory, and a literal and metaphorical source of nourishment.

By their sheer scope and scholarly integrity, they become much more than community cookbooks; they were monumental in every respect, representing a place in time, and a contemporary diasporic situation, as well as an ageless memorial to something vaster. Victim of the Suez crisis, her family together with their community were expelled from Egypt in 1956. Motivated certainly by nostalgia, for a lost homeland—perhaps vicariously at first—she started to collect recipes, firstly within the family circle and then beyond, with anthropological and intellectual fervour. As well as her own personal trauma, Roden was preoccupied with the culinary diasporic narrative of her Egyptian Middle Eastern community and Jewish people.

The books are, above all, extremely comprehensive. Israeli chef Yotam Ottolenghi[314] noted this characteristic in his review of *Middle Eastern Food,*[315] as well as their importance as a source of reference: "Beyond the evocative stories and buoyant style, beyond the comprehensive list of dishes and unfailing set of instructions—there is always information, hard information, meticulously collected, compellingly assembled, lovingly told. (Ottolenghi, n.pag.). The key to the comforting, or nurturing, aspect of these 'monuments' lie in Ottolenghi's description of meticulously collected data that is "lovingly told", the past preserved with benevolence, the "loving" narrative a personal touch that provides nourishment. Their comprehensiveness was a bulwark against oblivion, a fate which was not only culturally tragic to Roden and other diaspora, but personally unbearable, as well as a way of anchoring memories, and creating a coherent whole, by bringing together and ordering many remnants of memory. The recipes, symbolizing the fragmentation of places and people, which is accentuated by the recipes' relative conciseness, can be taken individually as isolated splinters of memory, but Roden explicitly wanted to create a memory that was more than a simple collection of fragments, a work that captured a civilisation, a way of life, that would serve as a dam against the tide of dispersion and forgetting. In this respect, the stories, anecdotes and tips that she weaves around the recipes are a way of maintaining them as

[314] Ottenlenghi is a culinary autodidact, much like Roden is in the realm of anthropology.
[315] While in its most recent edition, the British Penguin edition uses the article 'A', the Alfred A. Knopf edition uses 'The' affirming its definitive nature: *The New Book of Middle Eastern Food*.

a whole: the individual recipes taken alone do not constitute the memory, they are brushstrokes that must be perceived as part of a whole, "as a framework for the realms of memory",[316] which, according to Nora, "we seek in research, as our memory cannot be found in any history book".[317]

Roden's works condense cultural history in vignettes of foodways and lists of ingredients, culinary traditions performing as the synthesis of the entire diasporic culture: "they are that part of an immigrant culture that survives the longest" (*Jewish Food*, 11). They incite a clustering of superlatives such as 'monumental' and 'definitive'. The first indication of the scope and intention of these works is the use of 'food' and not 'cooking', 'book' and not 'cookbook', in the titles, indicating that they evoke something essentially more fundamental. They are dense: *Middle Eastern Food* is 513 pages long, and *Jewish Food,* 668 pages.[318] The cover description of *The New Middle Eastern Food* reads: "The classic cookbook, expanded and updated […]", implying that it was unique when first published, has stood the test of time, and has now been even further enhanced and adapted "with new recipes and contemporary variations on old themes". Despite Roden's remonstrations—"This is not a scholarly book, and I have not followed a system" (*Middle Eastern Food,* 6)—it is scholarly enough to feature a bibliography, if we take 'scholarly' to imply impersonal, elitist rather than democratic, codified rather than liberal. The use of the word "odyssey" in the subtitle of *Jewish Food*, "An Odyssey from Samarkand to New York", as we have previously noted, evokes mythology and mysticism, emphasized by the use on the jacket of images from a medieval Spanish Bible and Passover Haggadah.[319] Nearly thirty years separated the publication of these two works, and in the latter, Roden favoured the historical context, as though finally assuming the role she frequently rejected of historian or ethnographer, comfortable, at last, with the task she set herself and no longer disguising her intentions.

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[316] "[C]omme une trame de lieux de mémoire" (Nora 964, my translation).
[317] "Nous cherchons aujourd'hui dans la Recherche notre mémoire parce qu'elle ne figure pas sous cette forme dans les livres de l'histoire." (Nora 963, my translation).
[318] The American Albert A. Knopf editions, 2012 and 2016 respectively.
[319] While *Middle Eastern Food* includes three sets of photographs in the style of traditional cookbooks, *Jewish Food* is interspersed with texts on peoples and places. It contains numerous black and white photographs, a few personal and many historical, portraying Jewish people and their foodways sourced from academic and cultural institutions or private collections, and instilling a museum-like quality in the book.

Roden writes that for her, part of the appeal in researching *Jewish Food* was "that there is more to Jewish food than cooking and eating. Behind every recipe is a story of local traditions and daily life in far-off towns and villages" (*Jewish Food,* 8), the sum of which, creates a form of cultural and emotional nourishment, elicited by the exiles' journey. Each recipe is a piece of a larger history—"you could retrace the family's ancestry by looking at the spread on the table" (*Jewish Food,* 8)—but each one also has a history: "interspersed with remarks about who gave the recipe long ago in Egypt, how much the dishes were appreciated by a certain person, and the occasion on which they were served" (*Jewish Food,* 4).[320] A memory, or a web of memories is created, in the form of a memorial, or monument, massive, material, authoritative works of reference, of which Roden is the sculptor who leaves her signature, her mark: the book becomes the place where the memory resides.[321] When the project seemed too vast and tentacular, Judith Jones, her editor at Albert A. Knopf, suggested that she abandon the "comprehensive" dimension and make it her "personal odyssey", but selection was even more difficult for her: her monument would have been incomplete, and could not have served the same purpose for herself or her readers. We are drawn to make a comparison of scale with Roden's desire to retrace the family from the mealscape with Doris Schechter' memoir *At Oma's Table*, in which her ambition is that of her grandmother's table recalling a mythical city like Cairo: "Writing this book has connected me to the lives that my grandmother and mother lived in the once-magical city of Vienna before the war and the Holocaust. It also realigned me to my heritage, especially to the strong women in my family." (Schechter, 9).

Amongst the definitions of the word monument are the figurative meanings that include a commemorative, memorable or exceptional work and the idea of a boundary

[320] Gopnik talks of the pleasure of the encyclopedic form for its "hyperorderly and completely random" (*Table Comes First*, 231) organization. In *The Book of Jewish Food*, for example, "The American Story" follows "Appetizers and Salads", "France" falls in between "Poultry" and "Meat", "Israel" concludes the Ashkenazi section, the city of Salonika nestles between "Savory Pies" and "Soups" in the Sephardi section, "Yemen" after "Soup" and before "Fish", "The Bukharan Jews" follow "Persia" that follows "Grains", and precedes "Italy". Discussing Alain Ducasse's Culinary Encyclopedia, Gopnik suggests that: "images of Heaven are painted to encourage you to go there, not to help you build it in your back yard." (231).

[321] She writes that she conceived the book "as a comprehensive project" (*Middle Eastern Food*, 11) but had to write other books as she worked on it, for building such an edifice required funding to complete it.

marker, this latter idea supporting the notion that Roden is attempting to establish borders around an imaginary homeland, with two facets, Middle Eastern and Jewish, like interconnecting circles that foster a sense of containment and belonging and as such provide a form of literal and symbolic sustenance to its scattered communities. Roden's works create, through the recipes, a single monument of two interwoven cuisines. They were written firstly to remember and preserve, but also to honour and sustain her legacy, the sum of her family, her people, her culture and their cuisine, which is encapsulated as memory in the act of writing, rendering the impersonal personal. These two works can be seen as a diptych, an icon to the cuisine of her region and that of her people, taking her personal story from two angles, the geographical and cultural, and the ethnic. The cuisine itself can also be considered a memorial, a trope for the history of the Middle East. She explains that "[d]ishes carry the triumphs and glories, the defeats, the loves and the sorrows of the past" (*Middle Eastern Food,* 17). As monuments, they occupy a space, both literally and metaphorically, asserting their presence materially and aesthetically, in terms of their structure and narrative. The books are memorials to much more than food, or even culture, but to the history of a people and the trace they have left in different places.

Narratives as homes

> [Theodor] Adorno's reflections are informed by the belief that the only home truly available now, through fragile and vulnerable, is in writing. (Said, 2000, 147).

Edward Said's observation is based on his belief that all of life is pressed into ready-made forms—prefabricated "homes'. Everything is a commodity, a statement that we have suggested—referring to Julie Rak's research—may be applied to the culinary memoir itself. In previous sections we have identified another aspect of culinary memoirs that offer security, identity and a sense of belonging, including the recipe book collection such those of Claudia Roden, as an essence of a familial and community identity, the recipe itself, a symbol of a moment in time that epitomises belonging. The narrative represents not a past, but a present home, constructed from memories that have been activated in the present, current experiences and a new identity honed from

that experience. It is a place to be consumed rather than a place where one consumes, as represented by the recipes. This is less true of memoirs such as those of Colette Rossant, which are almost exclusively retrospective. As a symbol of home, food is a set of representational practices of meals, rituals, and associated narratives such as Roden's, that construct a feast as a trope for multitudes of foodways and a monument to culinary cultures. For Roden, the narrative itself, the monument she has constructed, becomes home.

The narrative as home emerges in the act of writing, the process of reclaiming memories, selecting and finding a new personal path. Sometimes this written journey takes place over more than a single memoir, encouraging the idea of repetitious and recurrent acts, the first describing the initial journey and possible trauma, the subsequent, a second journey which sometimes retraces the first from a different angle or in more detail, as that of Abu-Jaber's, or a new travel experience that elucidates the first as in Furiya's, or the return journey, that contextualises the outward journey as in the case of Narayan.[322] For Abu-Jaber, Christensen, Ehrlich or Furiya the act of writing is conscious and commented, whether in the narrative itself with exegetical texts that precede each month as in Ehrlich's memoir, or introspections on the memoir writing in subsequent tomes for the other three, as a form of autobiographical *mise en abyme* that often revolves around the performance of writing itself.

The act of writing is a symbolically liberating motion to freedom. Arlene Voski Avakian writes: "Because cooking has been conceptualized as part of our oppression, 'liberation' has often meant freedom from being connected to food." (*Through the Kitchen Window*, 5). Culinary memoirs offer a sometimes-simplistic response with food leading to harmonious well-being in a multi-ethnic celebration of food and the women who create it. Kitchens are 'temples', lost paradises, where wounds of oppression can be healed. Avakian offers a middle ground: "Cooking becomes a vehicle for artistic expression, a source of sensual pleasure, an opportunity for resistance and even power" (*Through the Kitchen Window*, 6). Ehrlich suggests a compromise, that the ultimate goal

[322] Diana Abu-Jaber, *Life Without a Recipe* (2016, 11 years after the publication of *The Language of Baklava*); Linda Furiya, *How to Cook a Dragon* (2008, 2 years after the publication of *Bento Box in the Heartland*); Shoba Narayan, *Return to India: an immigrant memoir* (2012, 9 years after the publication of *Monsoon Diary*).

is balance and not necessarily freedom, which Fisher sought so fiercely. Kosher eating gives her an awareness that "equilibrium is dynamic. A sense of balance this has given me." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 259). Fisher and her husband delighted in the social and sensorial liberty they felt in their new home in France, equating food with freedom and a life free of social constraints: "We basked in the new freedom, and absorbed sounds and vapors never met in a politer life." (*Gastronomical Me*, 97). Collectively, food narratives offer a nourishing space for discourses that contextualize food in an essentially feminine dialogue about women's circumnavigational journeys to and from the kitchen.

Representational functions of food are contested by a global but not homogenous world. Representations are a complex play of here and there, absence and presence which lie at the heart of all representations. As we have seen in part III, food representations are an effective means of mediating distances in space and time (Kunow, 151). While still being widely used as a sign, and even a proxy of 'home', food as representational praxis now functions inside new and what Clifford calls "discrepant cosmopolitanisms" (Kunow, 152). It is less a clash of civilizations than the mundane praxis of diasporic people struggling to mediate conflicting claims between old forms of life and new affiliations by renegotiating traditions.

Janet Theophano shows how a 1972 Jewish fund-raising cookbook represents "an archive of the food and the ritual events that brought individuals together as a group to celebrate its history and identity" (Le Dantec-Lowry, 70). The story of this community is thus recalled and reinvented. Reading autobiographies, as we have seen previously, draws readers into *ad hoc* communities of similar experience, where they find provisional settings which can both extend and confirm the meaning of individual and communal experience, offering a construction of a reality that is both codified and commodified. The text itself becomes an object of belonging, a piece of driftwood from which the narrator can build a raft offering security, a story that names origins and traditions, those elements of identity that are essential to preserve. Narrators make a home in the unique story they tell about themselves, for "the memory has an uncontrollable narrative impulse" pursuing a dynamic of self-unification. Finding home in one's personal narrative is necessary, for Linda Anderson asserts that the desire for unity begins and ends in the unknowable, and which we cannot find within ourselves

(Anderson, 2011, 117). The story becomes, what Pierre Nora describes as a place of memory, which he identifies as any significant entity which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community. Sites of memory are where cultural memory "crystallizes and secretes itself". Their purpose is to block time, to stop the process of forgetting (Shackleton, 2008, 126).

The memoir cookbooks of Elizabeth David, like those of Claudia Roden, serve the purpose of creating a place of memory for specific Mediterranean cuisines, the recipes, anecdotes and metatexts, weave a narrative which becomes a surrogate home for the author. In her introduction to the 1988 edition of *A Book of Mediterranean Food*, David explains the book was her personal antidote to the bleak conditions of post-war England (4), or her "escape" according to Clarissa Dickson Clark in her Forward (ix); it was where she put her memories of the Near East Mediterranean countries and recommends Roden's book to discover the food of the Middle Eastern countries in the 1969 edition. Any creation is a re-creation, in terms of memory recall, but as Rushdie says above "The shards of memory acquired greater status, greater resonance" (1991, 12), resonating in David's desire to bring to the British "a flavor of those blessed lands of sun and sea and olive trees into their English kitchens" (*Mediterranean Food*, xvi).

James Beard's description of *Middle Eastern Food* as a "landmark" is perhaps the most telling in our consideration of these works as testimonials of a community's memory. Roden wrote books about national cuisines such as those of Spain and Italy, about foodstuffs like coffee, and food events such as picnics, however the two books studied here, are about geographically disparate identities, about peoples that do not have a specific homeland as such (putting aside the Zionist debate of the Jewish people), such that the works serve as a "landmark" in an imaginary homeland, to use Salman Rushdie's term (Rushdie, 1991, 10), and serve as a sort of homeland in themselves, contained within the pages of the book, by nature of their breadth, scope and cultural integrity. As well as the recovery of the real historical past, there is also the creation of an imaginary one (Samuel, 169) in which recipes and resurrected traditions create a living history. The imaginary homeland becomes synonymous with an imaginary past. The *New York Times* described its "flavors, accessibility, warmth [...] not just an introduction to Middle Eastern food but a true guidebook" (Bittman, n.pag.) to places and people, which thus, reconstructs a world, even a civilization, with the concurrence

of the reader. In *Middle Eastern Food*, Roden had to negotiate between the impossibility of sharply-defined national boundaries and the risk of presenting an undifferentiated mass. (Banerjee-Dube, 203). Although Roden does not categorize the recipes according to their countries of origin, preferring to emphasize the culinary coherence of the globality of the region, she does offer signposts, designating geographical categories: Iranian, Arab (Syria, Lebanon, Jordan), Turkish, North African. She describes her collection as revealing "one broad culinary tradition" (*Middle Eastern Food*, 16).

Roden explains that when they fled Egypt, her vast extended family were uncertain whether they would see their homeland, or each other, again (Roden 2012). She saw food and recipes as a way to tie them together, a project for survival: "Hers is an impassioned quest to stitch together the fabric of a culture" (O'Neill, 1997). Her fear of losing her family's closeness and cohesion was undeniable, but her determined and exhaustive approach to documenting culinary traditions from her former world suggests she was also confronted with the realization that she was, in effect, rootless and without an ethnic homeland. Egyptian Jewry had lived in a privileged and cosmopolitan disdain for Egypt and its Arab culture. As Naguib explains, Roden, in effect, only retroactively laid claims to Egypt (49)—and her community's Mediterranean-Egyptian cuisine—as an emotional and cultural homeland, speaking English and French, as well as Italian with their governess, and only using a broken Arabic to speak with the servants.

Reflecting Roden's cultural and culinary loss, Amitav Ghosh, in his novel *River of Smoke*, gives an example of the ephemerality of places that once enshrined feasts: "Years later when that escarpment crumbled under the onslaught of a cyclone, and the shrine was swept into the sea by an avalanche, this was the part that the children who has been on those pilgrimages would remember best: the *parathas* and *daal-puris*, the *ougougails* and *masavaroos*, the *dahi* and the ghee." (Ghosh, 8). The food memories of the sacred family picnic remain long after the place has gone. Even this sanctuary that saved and protected cannot resist the elements and disappears. The food memory remains, a firmer foundation for their family than the shrine itself, the dynamic culinary memoir, a place to preserve and to challenge memories, an identarian safe harbour.

The books became, in effect, Roden's personal homeland, where none had really existed before or since, for as members of the wealthy Egyptian Jewry, they chose to immigrate to Europe for its culture and class, rather than Israel, the destination of poorer

emigrants. The cookbook as memory therefore offered the materializing of a tangible homeland that could be created every day in the kitchen, one of warmth, colour, taste and sharing, her oft-repeated romantic litany. The book became a place of residence for memory, the writing, a form of homecoming in which one finds one's place in the world (Martinière, 8). The cuisine that Roden presents is indeed a "cultural site" as Naguib describes it (Naguib, 51), but, by the crafting of a literary work through intertextuality, as well as the attention to authentic recipe descriptions interwoven with stories and myths, the books are essentially more a poetic than a sociological exploit.

B. Nourishing narratives

> [Linguistic virtuosity] is a form of displacement, whereby you hope to discover in discourse a richness denied to you in reality. (Eagleton, 1998, 206).

Narratives homes provide a place to revitalise, while food nurtures identities, as well as a journey—"a form of displacement"—as Eagleton describes it; resourceful narratives are in themselves a form of journey where you can find yourself and other riches that transcend our perception of reality. M.F.K. Fisher wrote about the nature of our hungers in all forms, and above all how to eat, particularly in times of hardship—economic depression, war, and even emotional trauma—in order to, not merely, satisfy those hungers but rise above them with dignity. She defines a quality of defiance that enables one to exploit a journey, however hard, and draw nourishment from local foodways along the way.

Heike Paul explains that food is nutrition as well as protocol, a notion which embraces the symbolic and ritualistic dimensions that we have discussed in the previous section (117-8). In its most abstract form, nutrition can be understood to define the interaction of the substances or nutrients of food with the human body. This relationship, as we will reveal, cannot be reduced to the equation of healthy home cooking that generates a healthy body and mind.

We will consider the aesthetics of eating in memoirs as a notion that surpasses food, emerging from a condition of self-questioning and journeying, and will determine whether it is a sign of a morphed literary genre that perhaps does more than propose a different path for travel literature, offering a new form of autobiography in an age of mobility, globalism and itinerance. We have reviewed in the course of this study, how the literary exploration of food suggests answers to many conditions and states, not least those related to origins and identity. However, our readings suggest that culinary movements and traditions are writing a more complex narrative. We can ask how far food takes the narrator—and the reader—on their journey and in what direction.

We will explore the aesthetics of culinary activities—preparation, eating, recipe collecting and their role as nourishment within a genre that, above all, extolls the virtues

of culinary pleasures, considering the relation of the narrator to food and to the omnipresent recipes. To obtain a holistic picture, we consider the forces and dangers of food and the nurturing dimension of nature, as well as review food and eating as a multifaceted trope that serves the narrator author in the acts of reading, writing and in questions of otherness.

1. The aesthetics of eating reinvented

> Food as one of the fine arts, then, is not just the domain of the rich […] It was an aesthetic adventure […] (*Reflections on a Marine Venus*, 29).

While Sandra M. Gilbert draws attention to Fisher's own claim that she writes about hungers, "the 'wilder, more insistent' ones and those that go unfed" (Gilbert, 160), she affirms that Fisher's real intention and success is in defining an aesthetics of eating, culinary skill and style: "Though her art is everywhere darkened by dread, it's not so much energized by the force of gastronomic desire as it is by the memories that flavor past appetites." (160)[323]. For Durrell, the aesthetics of eating is an adventure for all. It seems appropriate to consider that these two stances are complimentary and imbricated rather than contradictory. The aesthetics of eating that he elaborates, is one that evolved from a need to find a personal space of freedom and a new identity, one that fulfils the specific and multitudinous hungers of each. Anne Zimmerman, writing of Fisher's extravagant hunger, claims that from early on in her career, even as a young bride in Paris, her writings about daily culinary delights, in letters, journals or books, became a way to weave a sustaining narrative around her sometimes lonely existence (Zimmerman, 7). Fisher explains the melding of these basic human needs:

> It seems to me that our three basic needs, for food and security and love, are so mixed and mingled and entwined that we cannot straightly think of one without the others. So it happens that when I write of hunger, I am really writing about love and hunger for it, and warmth and the love of it and the hunger for it…and then the warmth and richness and fine reality of hunger satisfied…and it is all one. (*Gastronomical Me*, ix).

[323] The dread that Gilbert refers to, emanates from the tragedies that Fisher experiences—the death of her lover, the World Wars and the Depression years—that make of her narrative a grief memoir, as well as an informal cookbook, and culinary polemic (144).

It is the aesthetics that Fisher captures in the "warmth and richness and fine reality", revisited and reinvented by contemporary memoirists that we will analyse in this chapter, the aesthetic adventure that delights Lawrence Durrell. The study of the aesthetics of eating in culinary memoirs reveals the nature of the genre and its evolution. The aesthetics of eating are sometimes unexpected in a literature which is ostensibly 'feel-good'. Intellectual and literary proclivities merge in the genre to create an aesthetic that is at once personal and universal.

Feel-good literature: culinary pain and pleasure

Julie Rak explains that reading is about desire, even a pleasurable obsession. (2013, loc. 383). The sensorial carnival of food descriptions and recipes, as well as the comforting presence of recipes themselves, a consistent formula used to portray food as salutary to existential questioning of identity, makes of these personable, benevolent tales, a 'feel-good' literature that inspires optimism in their message and denouement.[324] We have noted a spirit of resilience that comes from facing challenges of identity and finding one's place that defines a positive narrative. Feel-good literature is primarily about food: however, its narratives broaden our horizon to embrace the whole table, our journey to get there and our onward steps; the memoir is a staging post on a journey.

Elizabeth Gilbert writes that we have a moral, even spiritual responsibility to make something positive emerge from one's life experience: "You were given life; it is your duty (and also your entitlement as a human being) to find something beautiful within life no matter how slight." (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 115). Her philosophy is symbolic of the creative resilience with which we make sense of our lives. We are invited by the memoirists to compose meals from the jumbled recipes that punctuate the chapters. Food is the instrument which allows that positive dynamic. Indeed, anthropologist Mary Douglas describes food as a cultural category and a field of action (Bower, 20). Aware of the transience of life, Elizabeth Gilbert wrote: "If I were going to have such a short visit

[324] Humour is a dimension of food writing and certain memoirs that we have not explored in this study, although it is not antithetical to the themes of the memoirs: Elizabeth Gilbert's humour reads as part of her healing process. Humour related to food is often self-deprecating, and conceals issues related to hunger and appetite of which there are numerous examples by food writers and critics, as in those of Jeffrey Steingarten's *The Man Who Ate Everything* (1997), or Calvin Trillin's *The Tummy Trilogy* (1994).

on earth, I had to do everything possible to experience it now. Hence all the traveling, all the romances, all the ambition, all the pasta." (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 153). She shares the idea that food and eating can be as intense and as shape-shifting experience as travel. She describes the simplest of meals, arranged as a painting, that she eats in her spartan apartment in Rome: "when I had fully absorbed the prettiness of my meal, I went and sat in a patch of sunbeam on my clean wooden floor and ate every bit of it, with my fingers [...] Happiness inhabited my every molecule." (63). Although memoirs written early- to mid-life do not necessarily bring closure to a narrative, but conclude rather at a propitious moment to pause, there is often, what Gilbert articulates at the end of her memoir, as a sense of recognition for the food, for the journey so far, and the one to come, gratitude for the learnings along the way, and expectation that the future holds promise. The spirit of feel-good literature extends to an idea of feel-good travel, promoted by Gilbert or Fisher's "warmth and richness and fine reality" that we noted earlier. The reader induces and expects a satisfying, emotionally and morally rational ending and a significant dose of otherness to impart the sensation of travel. In travel, one has the expectation of finding something that will nourish, both body and soul. Part of the attraction of Fuchsia Dunlop's travel memoir *Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*, is the discovery of a relatively unknown part of the globe and an even lesser known collection of regional cuisines. While her culinary memoir won two food writing awards,[325] food writer and critic Paul Levy hailed her work as destined to become "a classic of travel writing".[326]

Gilbert's pursuit of harmony and compromise that resonate with resilience and gratitude are about finding balance, reducing the distances between opposites and the many paradoxes that we have discussed throughout our study. Diana Abu-Jaber recognizes her father's "rootlessness" and "control and scrutiny", that translated, for her, into "movement and confinement" (*Language of Baklava*, 327): "The fruits and vegetables, the dishes and the music and the light and the trees of all these places have grown into me, drawing me away. And so I go. Into the world, away." (328). Ehrlich

[325] Dunlop created an intimate travel fascination for the other, and a deeply researched and explored food adventure. Notably, she won the IACP Jane Grigson Award for food writing, and the Guild of Food Writers Kate Whiteman Award for Food and Travel.
[326] Paul Levy, "Anyone for caterpillars?", *The Observer*, 24 February 2008.

concludes her long journey towards religious observance, taking the kosher-compromised soup in her stride: "as good as any soup I ever have had." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 361). Linda Furiya resumes: "I had the courage to examine the memories I had carried with me all those years and allow myself to feel and savor the legacy of my parents, their stories, and the shared love of food and cooking." (*Bento Box*, 307). Many of the recipes are the encounter between two or more worlds, the bringing together of opposites; the recipe for Zimbabwe Peanut Butter and Butternut Mash | Nhopi with which Sasha Martin concludes her memoir, describes with bold symbolism salty peanut butter and sweet squash as "a celebration of opposing forces—one I wish I might have encountered years ago." (*Life from Scratch*, 345). Narayan is grateful for where she finds herself: "for now, I had a glass of wine and Ram by my side. For now, this was enough. For now, this was bliss." (*Monsoon Diary*, 223). For Joyce Zonana's closing Rosh Hashanah meal, she is: "ready to lead the prayers with assurance, gratitude, and joy." (*Dream Homes*, 203). In a similar tone, Molly Wizenberg writes: "That's the best we can ever hope to do: to win hearts and minds, to love and to be loved." (*Homemade Life*, 311). Almost all of the memoirs conclude with two to three pages of acknowledgements which speak of their ruminations and decisions around the question of identity, assimilation and the development of their writing career around these topics.

However, many memoirs are distinguished by a rhetoric of absolutes. Wizenberg's memoir is an example in which relations to food are described in absolute and superlative terms. Notwithstanding her youth, her teenage text anticipates her later style: "This cake will be incredible—mark my words [...] It will be good. It will be delicious, yes. The kitchen smells full and alive, and the pears bubble with sugar and cream." (*Homemade Life*, 74). Her enthusiasm remains intact, and to it she adds qualifiers that enhance the potential pleasure with nuances and propositions of adaptations: "These pancakes are great on their own, but they're even better with some fruit" (68); "I like the cake itself so much that sometimes I don't even bother with the oranges. They are lovely with it, though, especially with a dollop of tangy crème fraiche." (88). Her familiar tone, childlike enthusiasm, humour and the profusion of recipes, on average, one every two to three pages, make the memoir a pleasant and entertaining read, despite the central drama which is the death of her beloved father. Rather than

seeing her attitude as setting boundaries as one might with absolutes, one can interpret it as looking for positive outcomes.

Beyond Wizenberg's idealization, home, like relationships, are contradictory, as both the source of sustenance, but often of familial dysfunctionality and trauma too. Narratives as home are required to be many things to many people, which causes Parama Roy to ask whether home cooking alone can satisfy both the palate and the taste for the real thing (173). We return to the recurrent question of authenticity. In a postmodern world, the taste of home may not be guaranteed in the plate: "In a world that is increasingly characterized by exile, migration, and diaspora, with all the consequences of unsettling and hybridization, there can be no place for such absolutism of the pure and authentic" write Morley and Robins (27). Zonana struggles with what she considers the chore of food preparation, but ends up finding a spiritual pleasure in the connection with ancestors when preparing stuffed vine leaves. Memoirs offer the possibility to experiment with new relationships to self and even food, although there is an expectation that the traditional foodways will be acknowledged, as we said earlier for this is part of the authentic attraction of ethnic memoirs. Sirine, the protagonist cook, in Abu-Jaber's novel, *Crescent*, finds emotional shelter in the Middle Eastern café that felt like the home of her deceased parents, but the success of her dishes depends on her sense of well-being. She struggles to make baklava when Han, her admirer, visits her, tearing the delicate sheets of pastry. In a scene reminiscent of those in *Dream Homes* and *The Language of Baklava*, she prepares stuffed grape leaves while listening to a tragic immigrant tale, choreographing the preparation of the leaves, the knife cutting and posing with the troubled reactions to the story (*Crescent*, 96-100). Within the normally reassuring gestures—"It's a soothing task she likes to save for the solitary meditations of evenings" (96)—there is a tension created through the silence of unspoken loss, concentration on the manipulation of the knife and a sense of unease provoked by prowling Nathan the melancholic immigrant.

Finding something beautiful is a relative and qualified intention for reality is not ideal. As Wizenberg suggests, there may be nuances and the need to adapt, both recipes and attitudes. Memoirs, even those with a dominant feel-good factor, have an underlying strain of painful reality which indicates that food is not always perfect and the cooks not always great. This reality that addresses the important questions of origins

and identity, potentially saves culinary memoirs from the criticism of superficiality. Although in Diana Abu-Jaber's *The Language of Baklava*, we are witness to scenes in which home is suffocating, family food cannot be stomached and family favourites cannot be reproduced in Jordan, the tone remains consensual and the ending is aligned with expectations of diasporic resilience and assimilation. It is not until her second memoir *Life Without a Recipe*, that the author is able to address issues of disorientation, life mistakes, food disorders, implying that a simple, single narrative, such as the culinary memoir, may conceal traps: "maybe it was foolish to insist on one narrative, one easy way of interpreting such desires" when considering what drove her into her second marriage (45). Hybridity and deconstruction are at the heart of her interrogations: "On the outside, I looked just as American as anyone, but the Jordanian daughter emerged from within, addled by a thousand years of Bedouin etiquette and advice." (49).

The flaw in the feel-good narrative, as Abu-Jaber suggests, lies in the single layer narrative, reminding us of the symbolically charged multi-layered dishes, notably baklava, the staple that Sirine prepares for the lonely immigrants in *Crescent*, who tell her how painful it is to be an immigrant with their multilayered lives, one of whom expressed the ultimate ambivalence: "even if it is what he'd wanted all his life." (*Crescent*, 22). The single layer—without home, community, cultural context—is too thin to sustain them. Despite the 'fictional' nature of the memoirs that we have discussed in part II, there is a single voice narrative with, generally, a single rather than multiple plot progression. The characters are drawn in relation to the essential theme of origins and identity, though typically perceived from one perspective alone. Although there are no subplots, the presence of recipes and food anecdotes leaves an impression of multiple narrative layers. As Abu-Jaber indicates, it is in revisiting the dilemmas from the perspective of a second memoir that other facets are revealed. After her father's death, her reflex is to imitate the cooking of her maternal grandmother, not her father. Like Miriam, she bakes to assuage grief, losing the balance between dinner and dessert (that reflected the rivalry between Bud and Grace). "I've had trouble finding my way back to dinner" (*Life Without a Recipe,* 249), to her roots and her identity.

Shoba Narayan's first memoir writes of the resolution of her identity dilemma like a fairy story in which a magic meal wins her ticket to America where she smugly confirms that her new hard-won host land was superior in every way to her stagnating

backward-looking homeland. In her second memoir *Return to India: an immigrant memoir*, she gives a more detailed account of her parents' resistance and the depth of her own rebellious spirit, which she brandished for a long time in America. With distance she reflects on memoir-writing and immigrant condition admitting to manipulating of the story-telling elements to allow the immigrant question to emerge:

> At its heart, a memoir is a recollection [...] There are some events from my childhood that I remember vividly. Other incidents are but a feeling. From that feeling I have tried to recapture the context. I [...] have compressed time for the sake of storytelling. I have exaggerated certain characters or dramatized events. What is unchanged, however, is the immigrant dilemma that is the heart of this book. I hope this truth will resonate with the reader, even if the individual incidents sound forced or fake. (*Return to India*, 6).

Her analysis is a plea to take the memoir for more than a feel-good tale, for despite elements that might seem contrived or overly ideal, the intention is to write a fable of the immigrant dilemma. Yet the reality is a somewhat predictable analysis. Abu-Jaber adds a similar nuance: "I think whenever immigrants are involved, the connection to food gets kicked up a notch—it's a link to the native land that's richer and more immediately alive than other sorts of artefacts. [...] the memoir demands a kind of truth-telling that's far more specific and literal than that of fiction." (Abu-Jaber, 2016, Interview, n.pag). For despite Narayan's words and the fictional overcurrent, one of the ostensible hallmarks of culinary memoirs is honesty, including the admission, at certain moments, of the rejection of culinary and domestic commitment. Zonana for example, rejects her mother's sense of domestic obligation, studying the narratives, as English professor, of other people's lives rather than her own. Christensen's itinerant youth and early adulthood is marked by parallel moments of nutritional self-negligence and periods of cultural vagrancy.

Although some domestic as opposed to immigrant dramas taint the insouciance of the narrative with ostensibly inadequate responses to the trauma, the author succeeds if, at the conclusion, the reader has the feeling that the narrator has come sufficiently far on their journey to have found some reparation for loss. In Sasha Martin's case, after the cataclysm, the narrative resumes at the same pace, with similar concerns for purist recipes, sensual descriptions and authentic dishes, and draws to a conclusion in which she has established her own family and found a healing career in food writing. Kate

Christensen is once more united with her whole family, and can finally quietly, unitedly address the father that tormented her childhood. The relationships that Reichl and Rossant have with their mothers, however, are not resolved within the memoir, recalling Linda Anderson's claim that the pursuit of desire in self-writing has an unknown conclusion. Rossant expressed hatred for her mother and a sense of freedom when she dies. Reichl's criticism of her mother is unmitigated and we must wait twelve years and the publication of her memoir *For you Mom, finally* (2012), for her to write a memoir reconciling her relationship with her mother, provoked by reading letters after her death which reveal the true person, her mental suffering, and, in particular, the rationale behind her attitude towards her daughter.

It is also hoped that the journey be agreeable, for the enjoyment of food intensifies its cultural significance. In her anthropological study, Carole Counihan observes: "Their cuisine conveyed their identity as Florentines. They enjoyed eating as a channel for pleasure and self-expression." (2004, 34). Overarching all is the potential to aestheticize a certain social order, coded in cultural and culinary terms (Anne Allison quoted in Counihan, 2013, 168) as culinary memoirs seek to do. Patience Gray describes a peasant cook's simplicity of style: "Her frugality mysteriously combined with liberality epitomised the old Catalan way of life, so that [...] the provision of food took on the quality of life-restoring, rather than the satisfaction of appetite" (*Honey from a Weed*, 83). Elizabeth David's lyrical and generous description of war-time Egyptian food comprising a meagre larder complemented with fresh food, has the overtones of a healthy Mediterranean diet, and a corresponding aesthetic that was coherent with her literary intentions:

> I have seldom seen such wonderfully glamourous looking, and tasting, food as the Levantine cooks of Alexandria could produce for a party. And yet when you got down to analyzing it, you would find that much the same ingredients had been used in dish after dish—only they were so differently treated, so skillfully blended and seasoned and spiced that each on had its own perfectly individual character and flavor. (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 23).

David is exemplary of Sandra M. Gilbert's claim that food writing prolongs the pleasure of a meal: "Not only the creation of culinary delicacies but the appreciation of the idea of such delicacies gives joy to the diner, whose imaginings of meals past, present and possible, like Proust's memory of his childhood madeleines, bestows on food an

insubstantial, perhaps even aesthetic cast [...] Yet not only are we sustained by what we eat, we are consoled, comforted, and even, sometimes, transfigured by it, since gastronomic experience is ultimately more mental than it is physical" (Gilbert, 30), reminding us of the mythical qualities of food memoirs that we explored in part II.

More than mere food

Throughout our study we have exposed food as a medium for diverse messages, inviting us to perceive the aesthetics of food as symptomatic of an expansive, all-embracing communication, that channels, primarily our desires, for nourishment, but also for belonging, purpose, roots and a path forward. Elizabeth David's eating experiences transcend mere sustenance, taking it to a plane, that like travel, can be, as Sandra M. Gilbert says, more mental than physical, and food, through the literary devices of memoirs is much more than food as nutrition, or even tradition. Linda Furiya is witness to the potential transfiguration of the total aesthetic experience of food: "That evening in the Spartan ryokan, with the hot spring, our leisurely dinner, its pace, and its focus on the presentation that varied from the dish itself to the position of the chopsticks, created a fissure in my consciousness and introduced me to the idea of aesthetics, a concept that would expand through the years." (*Bento Box*, 156). This process is played out in the successive memoirs by Frances Mayes that find a winning formula in *Under the Tuscan Sun*, the title itself evocative of the luscious and captivating Tuscan landscape, whose old stones and rich fruits embody a form of archaic nourishment.

David's litany of Mediterranean ingredients commemorates a nurturing land of plenty, and is a testimony to a lost paradise, which transfixes us with its beauty, with "oranges, lemons, apricots, and almonds, the honey and cream cheese, the eggs, wine, and honey, and, most especially, the fresh fruits of those lands" (*Mediterranean Food*, 161). Reciting ingredients in absolute terms, brings the cornucopia to life as in a still life painting. David's book is both entrenched in tradition and serves as a catalyst, shaking up British culinary traditions with her documenting and recording of exotic and sensual recipes, symbolic of the paradoxical influence of narratives that both preserve and revolutionize traditions**.** Aesthetic pleasure, by narrowing down the scope as in localism,

extends the possibilities of our pleasures. The journey is immobilised, there is a focus on place, often of residence, and one is restored. As Gopnik explains, where everything is possible, little registers. In the battle between the superficial and the authentic, to return to a world of limited choices, forces the flower of invention. (*Table Comes First*, 179).

Stories of food have to do with something more far-reaching; they channel wholeness as well as questioning, and satisfaction as well as curiosity. Diana Abu-Jaber tells stories of her father, Bud the storyteller, describing how in his stories: "the food always turned out to be about something much larger: grace, difference, faith, love [...] The immigrant compresses time or space [...] It's a sort of fantasy to have the chance to re-create yourself. But it's also a nightmare because so much is lost." (*Language of Baklava*, Foreword). Furiya writes that when her father talked to her about food, telling her how a meal should be eaten and enjoyed, she complies: "As usual, what he was telling me had nothing to do with food, but something bigger." (*Bento Box*, 305). She knew that her parents' devotion to their authentic cuisine spoke of their emotional and spiritual need to connect to their identity and their homeland: "[Japanese cooking] was like a comforting familiarity that assured them they could make it through the daily challenge of living in a country not their own" (95), her tone and syntax echoing that of Fisher. For Alice Waters, the bigger story, was the bigger table and a focus on nourishment: "'The way you have that happen [create community] is when you eat and care about their nourishment around the table, and the bigger table is the community.'" (Burros, n.pag.). For Sasha Martin, kitchens, synonymous with cooking, became a realm that would restore to her the innocence that she had lost: "the kitchens I grew up in and around, continued to draw me in like a moth to a flame, as though I might capture whatever innocence I'd lost in that warm, fragrant space." (*Life from Scratch*, 18).

Food is highly articulate in its anecdotal and recipe form in culinary memoirs, making connection between different media and across genres and fulfilling multiple genres. Parama Roy writes of Madhur Jaffrey's works: "It is a chain of substitutions that operates powerfully in all of Jaffrey's cookbooks that allows food and words, recipes and recollections to comingle without constraint." (Roy, 172). As Furiya and Ehrlich have shown us in their trauma story devices, important topics are evoked while eating or preparing food, as Eagleton explains: "Food looks like an object but is actually a relationship" (1998, 204), between the narrator and the reader or the narrator and

herself. Diana Abu-Jaber invites us to discover the 'language of baklava', as a food that replaces dialogue. Linda Furiya writes: "eating had been my family's communion. We communicated not through direct words but through actions and food. When I left for college Mom didn't tell me she would miss me with tears. Instead she packed a box of rice balls into my pile of belongings." (*Bento Box*, 305). Claude Fischler, citing Lévi-Strauss says that food must not only be food to eat, but good for our minds—"bonne à penser"—as well. (Rouyer, 246). Food replaces words, but words can also replace food, at the heart of nourishing narratives.

Memoirists, as chroniclers of hunger and desires, of needs and nourishment, give space in their narratives to nonverbal communication and silence. The rhythm of verbose anecdotes, followed by a time of action for recipe making, creates patterns of speaking and silence, manifested in a rhythm of alternating cadence, from trauma stories to blithe or humorous anecdotes that we find in the narratives of Ehrlich or Furiya. While we have insisted that foodways and recipes can give immigrants and diaspora back their lost language, it is also a space where food articulates silent nourishment, accomplishing a need. Food that speaks, stones that serve as food, or as a vehicle for words, that become a "'tongue of jade,' an oracle or the vehicle for oracles" (*Daughter of Heaven*, 272), a stone that is symbolically placed in the mouth of the stone man at the burial monument to her father, a stone that is wrapped in words, in the preface to her book, stones that are proverbially associated with silence. Pleasure and bounty prevail at meal tables with Li's grandmother, Nai-Nai, but also silence, a communion without comment. Often at meals, it is the food that does the talking: "At a Chinese table, it's the unspoken words that count. The meal is the message [...] Happiness for all declares the shark's fin. Abundance intones the sea bass. Family unity says the slippery-ball soup. Long life murmurs the peach. To say more would be superfluous" (31).

Speaking and silence also signifies expansion and contraction, embracing and excluding. Food is self-articulate and a space for self-expression. Laurie Colwin announces that "second to [eating] is talking about eating [...] People who like to cook like to talk about food (*Home Cooking*, ix). "Talking about food is way of talking about family, childhood, community. Remembering foods open the floodgates of the past, as friends and acquaintances describe who they are, where they come from, and the

textures and tastes of the time gone by." (Diner, xv). Memoirs provide a framework of historical events that are able to contextualise trauma especially in the case of displacement.

Leslie Li's memoir opens and closes with the story of the stone that stays hunger if one sucks on it, contains sermons, appeases the dead, and distances ghosts. But her memoir contains only stories, supported by the act of eating Chinese food that was "one of intense yet subtly nonverbal communication" (*Daughter of Heaven*, 186). The true meaning of stories must be divined within the narrative. At a reconciliatory encounter between Li and her estranged father, "a meeting which took place over an assortment of pastries and a starvation diet of meaningful conversation" (186), they "drank tea, spoke in platitudes, and, when we weren't speaking or eating, maintained a strained silence [...] Between us lay a chasm of miscommunication and incomprehension" (186). In the harrowing scene in which her father, previously invisible in the narrative, punishes his wife for undermining his authority by refusing to let her into the house, Li vomits her food, describing a scene where an abundance and an absence of emotional display are incompatible, indigestible even, and devasting emotions of fear, violence, manipulation, cruelty and solitude are packed into a tightly-compressed prose, the succinct expressions articulating her father's restraint:

> [...] his anger was all the more frightening because it was so quickly suppressed, gone almost as soon as it had appeared. No verbal tirade. No physical violence or the threat of it. Just his usual cold self-control [...] We gathered around her, sobbing and hugging her, and my mother wept and hugged us back. My father stood a few feet away, expressionless, wordless, alone. (*Daughter of Heaven*, 51-53).

Li's father is mute, while the food and wordless emotions speaks volumes: Li's supper is vomited, rejected as she rejects him. The food he serves is "detested" and the sautéed prawn recipe that follows begins with the 'brutal' instruction to dissect the prawns, by removing only their legs, to allow the juices to be trapped inside. It is then proposed that the prawns are deshelled using only teeth. The following chapter begins with a discussion of noodles which Li asserts "is a complicated affair" (55).

Writing about food is also noted as a way of changing perception about the way that food is perceived, and therefore, by extrapolation, about how the subject's dependence on the written language is perceived. Gopnik writes: "the words make the

wine before the wine makes the words" (*Table Comes First*, 38, 194, 199). He asserts here that the food writer has greater power to shape our desire for food with words than the taste of the food itself. The professional food writer, the gastronomic journalist, is the chronicler of changing desire (39). Christensen's second memoir—inspired by pioneer food writer, Fisher—is a chronicle of changing attitudes to the food literature genre, as well as a contributor, looking to the past in its narrative inspiration, as well as the traditional foodways of Maine, and to the future in her innovative memoir-food guide, and discovery of new restaurants and food production initiatives.

Aesthetics of the table

> The table comes first, before the meal, and even before the kitchen where it's made. It precedes everything in remaining the one plausible hearth of family life, the raft to ride down the river of our existence even in the hardest times. (*Table Comes First*, 9).

The table is, indeed, a space in which one travels or is transported to new levels of understanding, a space, also, for social dramas, for culturally codified expectations revolve around commensality and communion. Gopnik insists that the table, a euphemism for the meal, is the sustaining raft that will enable us to navigate the hazardous journey that life represents. It is not simply about food, but a way of life, representing family values, authenticity, slow food and slow travel.[327] For Döring, the table is not set for a meal but for contemplation, like the still lifes that Durrell paints. The meal table is a ritualistic space of communication with or without words, and much more than a place where food is partaken. Diana Abu-Jaber describes it thus: "I felt better at the table, which I thought of not just as a place to eat but also as a story-telling, argument-having place, useful and plain-faced and reassuring." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 12). It is central in culinary memoirs, yet curiously less present than the kitchen-centric cooking and eating experiences, which is where the teaching and the preparation, the transmission and the nourishment of one's identity take place. There are surprisingly few meals, and those that are described are revealed in partial segments, rather like the presentation of the recipes themselves, with an analysis of ingredients and procedures.

[327] American writer, Adam Gopnik resided in Paris for five years with his young family, describing the experience in his book *Paris to the Moon* (2000).

Luisa Weiss shares with us the intricacies of a deceptively simple family tomato sauce with spaghetti (17), her *pflaumenkuchen* recipe (237), and her series of vegetable dishes (182-183), but rarely elaborates a meal. For Weiss, and others like her, the meal is not always the ultimate goal, for food preparation is often where they find fulfilment. This is however in contradiction with the objective of preparation, and the meal has therefore an understated presence with an idealized aesthetic. The table is an absolute ideal, with a perfect aesthetics, epitomized by Frances Mayes' Tuscan table, a romanticized setting of commensality and communion. As an ideal it represents an imaginative force in narratives, an undercurrent of diasporic and trauma memoir ambition.

Hemingway presents the meal or café table as a sentimentalised part of his citizen and writerly existence. He also ate at Gertrude Stein's table, no doubt tasting the dishes that we read about in Alice Toklas' cookbook and in Monique Truong's novel. The Lost Generation of Americans had returned to the Old World to find solace for their post-World War I anxiety in a world whose very moral and social fabric had been rent. Hemingway and his companions move nomadically from restaurant to café seeking nourishment in France's gastronomic heritage: "As I ate the oysters with their strong taste of the sea and their faint metallic taste that the cold white wine washed away [...] I lost the empty feeling and began to be happy and to make plans" (*Moveable Feast*, 6).

The meal table is central to the works of early twentieth century authors who evoked the essence of social communication through meals, notably Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster. This literature is important in the perspective of the thread of food and travel themes in twentieth century literature that have influenced the evolution of food writing from the latter half of the century. The table is a place where family and social dramas are acted out. In *To the Lighthouse* "c'est dans l'ordonnance de la table et du repas que Mrs Ramsey instaure l'ordre par les auteurs surtout femmes" ("La tables des Ramsey", Jacqueline Jondot, Rouyer, 25). It is also a comment on feminine aesthetics, which in the case of Woolf is not denigrating to women but rather exalting the importance for women to a place where they command family events and serve nourishing food to restore the women as well as the men, for just as they need a private room in which to write, they also need good food to eat. The careful and lengthy preparation of the *daube* in *To The Lighthouse* mirrors the lengthy debates around family events and most particularly, the literal and symbolic journey to the lighthouse.

Other more discreet tables are also the end goal. Barbara Kingsolver's memoir of her quasi-scientific locavorous experience is a personal and family adventure, with the ultimate objective of putting a balanced meal on the table. When enumerating the meaning of cooking, she insists on the social aspect, especially in the potluck formula, admitting that, economy and environmental pressures aside: "Cooking is the real divide between good eating and bad" (*Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, 129), as well as being "good citizenship" (130), insisting that there is no shame in learning from experienced guests. With humorous modesty, she adds "With all due respects to Julia, I'm just thinking *Child* when I hazard a new throw-in-everything-stew." (130).[328] The culinary and literary references are acknowledged, but the reality is more arbitrary in the face of constrained circumstances. The aesthetics of the table reside in the quality of the product and its source; no acknowledgement is made to gastronomic legacy or superfluous observance of beauty beyond the warmth of culinary fellowship.

For some the aesthetics of the table are found in solitude. Virginia Woolf's 'room of one's own' is where a woman can be alone to write, but, also, by implication, nourish herself. Molly Wizenberg reminds us that there is a pleasure in eating for oneself alone and not always as a social event, as Fisher has described at length, as a form of detached self-protection often associated with travelling alone. The slow, sensual and pleasurable consumption of food became Fisher's security. The art of eating alone: "so thoughtfully and voluptuously" (*Gastronomical Me*, 192) gave her courage to face the dangers and social snares of the world. She received special gastronomic favours, which make her feel special and free (18), developing a pattern of behavior that she used when travelling to keep herself "aloof of skulduggery", implying a risk of moral dangers (182).

The ethic of pleasing others, traditionally secondary to pleasing oneself (McFeely, 2001, 153), is displaced in contemporary cookbooks and memoirs, in which pleasing others becomes synonymous with pleasing oneself, and also makes personal pleasure in food acceptable. This is not an argument for altruism but a recognition of primal connections. Molly Wizenberg writes "Food is, of course, a social thing, one of the most positive, primal ways of spending time with people, but eating alone is also an

[328] She refers to cook and food writer Julia Child who wrote *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, during her many years living in France, described in her memoir *My Life in France*.

affirmation. It's a way of enjoying me." (*Homemade Life*, 121). Her suggestion is that in shared meals is an inevitable degree of self-abnegation, of bowing to tradition. There is an undercurrent of ambition and self-protection in her stance. As she turns to independent cooking, Ruth Reichl learns the new extent of skills: "I had been cooking all my life, but only as a way to please grown-ups; now I discovered that it had other virtues [...] appreciating the alchemy that turn flour, water, chocolate, and butter into devil's food cake and make it disappear in a flash." (*Tender at the Bone*, 74, 75), giving her a sense of personal power.

There are also numerous tense meals described in the memoirs of Abu Jaber, Christensen, Li, and Rossant, which we have discussed. Other meals are noticeable by their absence. Hamilton's parents' separation is marked by the disappearance of the family meal: "It probably took over a year, or almost two, to dismantle the family. But I was eleven turning twelve, and I felt as if I fell asleep by the lamb pit one night and woke up the next morning to any empty house, a bare cupboard" (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 28). When her mother leaves, Hamilton is left with a symbolically incomplete larder, providing nothing to nourish her. Abandoned, she likens her predicament to that of a widow: "Now without her, but left with the strange contents of her pantry, which my father had not cleaned out—the way a griever won't empty the closed closet of the deceased spouse? Or the way of a man who has not had to do any cleaning in his whole married life?—I relied on what I had seen her do and improvised from there." (37-38).

Gertrude Stein and Alice Toklas's immigrant and essentially homeless cook, Binh, describes the meals he cooks for is "mesdames" with exquisite detail, and the poignancy of one who, although allowed to share the same food, will never share the same table: "Every day, my mesdames and I dine, if not together, then back-to-back. Of course, there is always a wall between us [...] My mesdames do not even ask that I wait until they have finished, that I scrape together my meals from what is left of theirs." (*Book of Salt*, 209-210). He is excluded from the dinner table, as he is excluded from the metaphoric table of life, condemned to live a marginal existence, where he does not have the right word for the ingredients he needs, his attempts at communication and even his name are misunderstood, and the beautiful dishes he prepares are never shared, though he is allowed to consume them alone. Adam Gopnik, however, asks the question: "How much can the table *truly* reconcile—how sweetly can, or should, the rituals of social life

reconcile us with our opposites." (*Table Comes First*, 271). At the beginning of this section we designated the meal table as a space in which one journeyed to acquire new self-understanding. However, the narrator's relationship with this space is dynamic, as these examples reveal, which leads Gopnik to suggest that we should reconsider the omnipotence of this institution in its capacity to nourish and heal individual identity.

Reconsidering recipes

What then should we think of the recipe as itself an aesthetically nourishing form? As we have seen in earlier sections, there is poetry in the literary presentation of food, not simply in the sensual descriptions of landscapes and dishes, but also in the prosaic recipe-form. Recipes, as detailed and specific, concrete, prosaic, requiring presence and concentration, are grounding; in contrast to the trauma stories. They are also, as we have discussed in part I, a necessary commodity for the diaspora (notably in America) that provide a much-needed continuity for alienated immigrants, and a means of exchange within and beyond communities. Like poetry, they invite the reader to conjure the alchemical combination of ingredients in the cooking steps and the interpretation or outcome, after following the procedural steps to conclusion, like a path in a fairy story. Cooking and recipes invest the reader-cook with an interpretative role while the writing has a revelatory quality which divulges its nature slowly as it is processed. It offers a variety of syntactical forms that makes us question the pseudo-normative nature of recipe recording.

Recipes slow the narrative, requiring a pause, a reflection, and, in the narrative scheme, the time to make the dish. They require rectification, symbolic of changes of heart and reconciliation, which equates with emotional growth and nourishment. They also disrupt and fragment the narrative, as we have already noted. Adam Gopnik considers the disruptive element of cooking itself:

> Cooking [...] ought to be a sensible craft, as a peace-making practice, a human act of reconciliation and repetition [...] Yet there is another kind of cooking, whose point is to press borders, turn corners, suggest extremes—extremes not merely of possible palates we might possess but of possible positions we might take. (*Table Comes First*, 154).

Each recipe requires that the cook takes a position, to respect to the letter, to deviate, to be inspired to invent. Is it a passing node to Julia Child, or a reverential

recreation of one of Elizabeth David's recipes? Recipe sharing embodies an attitude that speaks of the nature of the author's journey. In an oversimplification, we speak of the dominant characteristics of each narrative condition; we can say that Abu-Jaber's recipes are ironic, Martin's conciliatory, Weiss' comforting, Wizenberg's challenging, Roden's urgent but determined, David's authoritative and defiant. Recipes scattered throughout the memoir are the most readable idiom, although it must be recognized that the prosaic ingredients and preparation method with a sauce of anecdotes to ease their passage, can make for dispiriting reading, even with a list of delicious, atmosphere- or memory-provoking ingredients.

Food preparation is a process and a symbolic act of sharing, across generations and people. In cutting, paring and preparing, lies a symbolism of the readerly act of understanding that goes to the heart of the narrator's story, indicating the true nature of the story behind the feel-good façade, encapsulated in Zonana's laborious preparation of stuffed grape leaves. In culinary memoirs, two tempos coexist, one active, one reflective. Cooking requires action, but recipes may also incite reflection. Recipe-making is akin to the idea of slow cooking and slow travel exemplified in the travel-memoir *Eating Up Italy: Voyages on a Vespa* by Matthew Fort, in which amidst colourful encounters and culinary adventures, he discovers fundamental truths: "Food, as well as language, carries the culture and history of a people, and, given the Italians' loyalty to locality, perhaps it is not surprising that even thoroughly urbanized, Italians retain a passion for the cooking of their place of birth" (*Eating Up Italy*, 151).

In these examples, the reader-cook who accompanies and shares the recipes is, in effect, "consuming the passions" of the narrator as she travels,[329] the family treasures, the momentous family moments, charged with emotion, poignancy, hope, traditions. This proposition resonates with the idea of the romance of food of which Hemingway speaks, as an intimate aspect of the aesthetics of food, suggesting flights of imagination which dispense with rules and recipes. Hemingway asserts: "I have discovered that there

[329] A number of food-related works, books and articles, including a memoir have adopted the notion of 'consuming passions' in their title, notably: Philippa Pullar. *Consuming passions: a history of English food and appetite*. London: Hamish Hamilton, 1970, which Laurie Colwin finds eminently comforting as a neophyte gourmet cook (*Home Cooking*, 4), and Michael Lee West. *Consuming Passions: A Food Obsessed Life*. HarperCollins, 1999.

is romance in food when romance has disappeared from everywhere else. And as long as my digestion holds out I will follow romance".[330]

With recipes one is also prone to disappointment, if the recipe does not match up to what one believes to be the authentic taste and experience. Young Abu-Jaber's experience of Jordanian American food has the same look and feel but tastes nothing like it: "As it is with so many things—fruit, pancakes, eggs [...] I'm disappointed all over again with Neapolitan and wish for the hundredth time for chocolate marshmallow." (*Language of Baklava*, 55). Her homesick father, "most recently of the semiarid village of Yahdoudeh", saw, in the prawns that his mother-in-law serves "a combination of cockroach and scorpion" (21).

Our reflection also invokes the question of the necessity for recipes beyond the narrative scheme, in a specific cultural and historical context. Recipes may be perceived as mere trappings of memory, vestiges, heirlooms, not of the present moment but constraining and limiting, and that even when reinvented, are a journey back in time that some do not want to take. Are the many variations of Roden's Middle Eastern recipes worth preserving? The absence of recipes may also imply not so much a loss of creativity as an absence of control, a scenario of unpredictable and unexpected outcomes, similar to the unknown dimension of travel. One seeks to reproduce traditions, but there is a part of the quest that is to renew, break away, follow the other. The absence of recipes is subversive in a narrative that describes foodways.[331] Ehrlich writes of her mother-in-law's reverence for creative cooking: "Her mother, she believes, was the real cook. 'She knew so many recipes, and not from a recipe either,' she has said. Miriam's mother was a creative cook, where Miriam mainly cooks by rote." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 43). Even after she loses her sense of taste and smell "the senses essential to Miriam's understanding of life: that preparation of food is duty and life" each dish was perfect. Miriam "healed to cook again, to recreate the world again, by memory" (44).

[330] Ernest Hemingway. "Wild Gastronomic Adventures of a Gourmet, Eating Sea Snails, Slugs, Octopus, etc. For Fun" published 24 November 1923, under the byline Peter Jackson.
[331] We note that despite her intimate description of meals and dishes, Fisher does not propose recipes. Her intention was to write of the aesthetics of a nourishment that met deep-seated and complex hunger, rather than the specifics of foodways.

The absence of recipes is an ultimate paradox in culinary memoirs.[332] Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich in her article "But Really, There are No Recipes…", talks about preparing food that resists being passed down: "This is not my recipe. This is a memory, retrievable only as memories are, by evocation and gesture and occasional concreteness that is not factual. And I resist making it a recipe. This is about art and love, not about technique. Some things needed to be learned standing beside someone." (*Through the Kitchen Window*, 135). Just as the practicality of cooking and food preparation both perpetuates and distances one from traditions, so writing about food and eating both immerses the author in the act of cooking, while also distancing oneself through the process of literary creation. Abu-Jaber defines the preparation of food as a sensual experience which precludes the idea of taking advice from a book: "'You learn food by feel, not on paper. […] Why would you write down how to cook?'" (*Life Without a Recipe*, 260). One can argue that the answers to life's questions, like recipes, cannot be written down either, but must be learned by feeling and experience. To include recipes is essentially optimistic; it is to believe that an answer is available, although the outcome is uncertain and can be self-determined. In her study of Florentine familial foodways, Carole Counihan writes that most women cooked without recipes, nurturing husband and children and extended family. (2004, 82) Cooking was considered the best of the chores, because it required imagination and creativity and was valued as such (85), giving women influence and power because it created dependence and appreciation (139-140).

Just as we have concluded that recipes may be narrative—anecdote, tradition, poetry of remembrance—so the narrative can, itself, be considered the recipe and the meal, the elements that make up a story, an identity, origins. Li writes: "let me forewarn any reader expecting a traditional cookbook in these pages that the stories that precede the recipes are the meat of the meal" (*Daughter of Heaven*, xv). While recipes can be landmarks on a journey, related to emotionally charged incidents, the narrative itself provides the ingredients and instructions for finding one's way. In the Prologue to *Blue Plate Special*, Christensen suggests that food alone can bring as much comfort as eating

[332] A corpus that typically contained recipes, as we have defined the corpus, and which also represents the majority of works published.

the real thing: "Often, when I come up against something painful or difficult, my mind escapes to food. […] Even if I am too upset to eat, just the thought of a grilled cheese sandwich and a bowl of tomato soup is warm and cozy and savory and comforting. Unlike memories, emotions, experiences, food is an irrefutable fact, a bit of physical nourishment, and when it's gone, it's gone." (*Blue Plate Special,* 1). Food is ephemeral, but a written description provides a formula for eating the nourishment required. Excepting perhaps writers such as Toklas, David and Mayes, recipes are not selected for culinary reasons but because they recall a memory or fill an emotional need, as a piece of an identity puzzle on a journey to locate and relate origins. This is suggested by the jumbled order or recipes in terms of styles, courses, complexities, origins, reflecting the unexpected nature of journeys. They reflect spontaneous needs for guidance and nourishment.

Indeed, foodways and their expression, as pinpoints of a journey's map offer guidance, pointers, advice, moral indicators and recommendations, rather than orders on a macrocosmic level. They may be personified, like the voices of people, as we see in Abu-Jaber's use of personified adjectives for her recipes, or as the voice of specific nurturing people as in the case of Kamman. This guidance is a nourishment that helps one find one's way. The narrative evolves from the succinct, authoritative prose recipes of Elizabeth David to the detailed and nurturing recipes of Luisa Weiss who considers every detail from origins, sourcing, taste, texture, difficulties, timing, and reception in a clear, sans serif font that suggests simplicity and transparency. Describing *Basler Leckerli*, she writes: "[t]hese little cookies pack a wallop of spicy flavor […] The candied peel is crucial; you want these little pockets of bitter-sweet citrus flavor to counterbalance the honeyed dough […] And watch your timing: the sugar glaze and the cookie base must both be hot when you ice the *Leckerli*." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 160).

Recipes are also about nourishing others, as Fisher, David and Wizenberg insist. Their message is often encapsulated in the description of a journey, of a haphazard nature and uncontrolled outcomes, with learned lessons that the reader can adopt and apply. Gopnik writes of the ability "to make a map inside your head: to taste tastes and see places" (*Table Comes First*, 203). The narrator of Truong's novel writing of Stein and Toklas' nostalgia for America reverses the image: "their memories of their America heaped onto large plates". With her array of experimental and exotic ingredients,

"[Toklas'] menus can map the world" (*Book of Salt*, 27). Preparing food, the manipulation of ingredients like the writing of stories around food, and the resuscitation of traditions, is healing, the writing of culinary memoirs is remedial. Nourishment is defined as not simply about what keeps you going, but also what allows you to grow and flourish, moving forward along a path, the narratives offering idioms of progressive journeys, as well as of well-being related to fulfilment.

2. Acts of nourishment

> Literary language can be mouth-filling or subtly flavoured, meaty or hard-boiled, spicy or indigestible. Words can nourish or poison, and somewhere beneath this figurative equation lurks the eucharistic word itself, a body that feeds other bodies, a sign that is also a meal. (Eagleton, 1998, 203).

Terry Eagleton uses the metaphor of food as remedy or harm, together with a biblical allusion to talk about the power of literary language. Memoirists promote the idea of food as healing, offering access to wholeness and integrity. This is symbolized by the ostensibly comprehensive nature of the memoirs, that combine personal story, introspection, anecdotes, recipes, landscape and food descriptions. We have also indicated in part I B in our discursive analysis of the works, that this organisation can be interpreted as a fragmentation that expresses the fragmentation of the individual and their journey. In this chapter, we will present the evidence for food as both healing and reconciliatory and as harmful and indigestible, contrasting elements of ingested nourishment. For anthropologists, food sustains life, is the focus of desire, but incorporates an element of risk.

Food is portrayed as a multi-faceted device offering spiritual and emotional nourishment. It must be negotiated between the sacred and the profane, between the leaning and the functional. Abu-Jaber, aware of the partisan positions on food in her family, where Bud claimed never to eat "white food" (252), and her grandmother, whose joy was baking, becomes sensitive to the dilemma of the true nature of food. Abu-Jaber attends a talk where food is stripped of its emotional value and described as physical nourishment alone "'It's not your friend, it's not your mother. It's not your enemy. [...]

Food is nourishment, fuel, and nutrient.'" After hearing this, she returns home to her daughter asking "'What's for eat?'" (*Life Without a Recipe*, 253), revealing in her innocence, all the emotion and instinct that surrounds food desires. "Gracie has an elemental and uncomplicated understanding of food, a sacred trust in her food-bringers. Like Bud moving between the table and the Qur'an, my grandmother going from church to oven—we tend to the body but the spirit prevails." (254). The two form of nourishments are interconnected; unexpected discoveries and connections lead the narrator to make spiritual associations. Her grandmother's baking is like a fairy story: "I will fight anyone for you, she seems to say. Even if it means cooking you and gobbling you up" (19), while, in contrast to the ethereal, Bud cooks "earthy, meaty dishes with lemon and oil and onion" (19).

Food for atoning and healing

> Pounding fragrant things—particularly garlic, basil, parsley—is a tremendous antidote to depression [...] Pounding these things produces an alteration in one's being—from sighing with fatigue to inhaling with pleasure. (*Honey from a Weed*, 34).
>
> The health-giving and prophylactic virtues of a meal depend on the zest with which it has been imagined, cooked and eaten. (*Honey from a Weed*, 327).

Patience Gray describes two aspects of the healing nature of food, for the cook who finds healing and pleasure in the therapeutic pounding of ingredients and the consumer who benefits from a healthy meal prepared by a well-disposed cook. Claude Lévi-Strauss indeed stressed the importance of the act of cooking as a unifier and healer, generating harmony and balance, for the preservation and reinvention of family histories is achieved as much through food preparation as through the food itself. Elizbeth Ehrlich asserts that food tastes alter in their preparation depending on your life experiences, the cakes, we recall, rendered bittersweet by imbued memories. Tradition serves as a catalyst: "Serious cooking is an essentially optimistic act. It reaches into the future, vanishes into memory, and creates the desire for another meal" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, xii), while Mayes' tableaux of idyllic meals suspend time for those partaking, (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 61): "Sitting on the stone wall, sun on my face, big slice of watermelon – I'm seven again[...]" (63). Food celebrates family pasts and presents,

culinary traditions creating a momentum that spirals out from timeless micro to macro culinary systems: from taste to ingredients, dishes and meals, and beyond to traditions, season, cycles and into infinity.

In her Global Table Adventure blog, Sasha Martin writes:

> I started cooking the world for fun. What I didn't expect? To cultivate inner peace and a sense of belonging along the way. I reveal in my memoir *Life from Scratch: A Memoir of Food, Family, and Forgiveness* [...] how the meditative act of cooking meals from 195 countries helped me overcome a difficult childhood and become a strong mother. The truth is this: cooking has the power to help families bond, empower, and heal. What's more, setting a global table creates compassion and understanding—which helps the world heal.[333]

She was aware that the meals she was cooking were "voyages [...] bandages for a broken heart" (274), associating emotional healing with the travel idiom, an unexpected conclusion based on her own painfully nomadic childhood.

In Elizabeth Gilbert's memoir, prayer accompanies food: "I can feel my own peace, and I love the swing of my days between easeful devotional practices and the pleasures of the beautiful landscape, dear friends and good food" (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 259-260), while in Martin's troubled history, food accompanies prayer: the German Tree Cake, its layers symbolic of the layers of memory that must be respected and preserved, is a trope for healing. E. Barrie Kavash describes her grandmother's preparing biscuits morning and evening as a ritual meditation, "filled with love and sweet energies [...] Food has always been a vehicle for my memory to travel on [...] wading through conflicts of identities and cultures [...] "Through the lens of memory, I can look into the old oven and see Ma's biscuits rising, ghost biscuits from spirit batter and cloud dough that tantalize my senses and transform the food of my soul into modern recipes." (Kavash, 104, 105, 107). Angelo Pellegrini uses religious language to describe his survival when he immigrates to America. He resorts to "innate resourcefulness" to find "salvation", but the Mediterranean diet was essentially a fantasy (Humble, 251), seen as simple, honest and intrinsically related not only to basic human nutritional needs and ritual, but also to an affective nourishment at its core, sustaining the body and allowing for a kind of communion and sharing of that spirit that can be affectively cathartic.

[333] Global Table Adventure: http://globaltableadventure.com/welcome

Before healing even, eating offers a means of survival. Nigel Slater uses food talk as a way of speaking about his most painful and intimate emotions without overly exposing himself and giving it its full poignancy in the contrast between the banality of food and the 'tragedy' of his emotions, the protective veil of food offering him a cathartic literary experience, in a stereotypical British reserve. The evocation of each dish, each commercial product (numerous in the British foodscape of the 1960s) was an exorcism of childhood pain, a story of survival and a mark of atonement. However, the controversy that the film of *Toast* provoked within the family of his late mother-in-law, casts a shadow of doubt over the authenticity of his portrayal of the main characters. The debate does not put into question Slater's fundamental loss and hunger, but one can question the degree of nostalgia and pathos that went into his narrative mix.

These examples of baking, tasting, praying, indicate, not a single act of healing, but a repeated action that has a cumulative effect, which is the essence of nourishment. We encounter the use of repetition that associates the act of cooking and eating, a combined act of nourishment like the steps of a journey, relegating the destination to a lesser objective. It is the renewed making of the recipe, and its repeated consumption that leads towards healing. There is not one unique recipe for healing, although we have the message of 'homemade' that is offered as the panacea to well-being. As disruptive elements, recipes introduce other caring voices—those who have shared recipes, or who have left a culinary legacy. While this could potentially put into question the notion of wholeness, and cohesion, it is repetition that offers nourishment and a notion of integrity. The ongoing process is reflected in the unfinished nature of the memoirs that, for many, conclude at a turning point in young lives: these are not end-of-life autobiographies. Cooking is a daily task, a thrice-daily action, a daily prayer, a repetitive act, and, we remind ourselves, like writing. The repetition recalls of the notion of the chant or hum, the ritornello that Deleuze relates to home and personal territory, an indication of being at home, or in the transition of leaving or arriving, expressing a need to feel the security—which we can equate with nourishment—of one's personal space. The ritornello is the repeated refrain that provides the tempo for the journey.

The recipe requires an executor—cook, narrator, reader—to reproduce it. They are nurturers, cooks, surrogate mothers and maternal figures. Aunt Birdie, Ruth Reichl's surrogate grandmother is an archetypal grandmother figure and upholder of the belief

that food is comfort and healing (*Tender at the Bone*, 20-21). There is also Alice, the hired help, who "understood the power of cooking. She was a great cook but she cooked more for herself than for other people, not because she was hungry but because she was comforted by the rituals of the cuisine." (26). These women feed, nurture and heal; they are synonymous. The women who supported Madeleine Kamman were her culinary mentors, a role that she herself assumed when she moved to America, offering a cuisine that represented respect for people, tradition, generosity, laughter in the face of hardship. Victoire, a distant cousin of Grandmother, was a representative of the Auvergne region with her traditional clothes and local language. Even in 1939, time seemed to have stopped at an earlier period in history. Victoire represents abundant love, nurturing and food. Her loves were mushroom hunting, cooking and lace-making. Like Marie-Charlotte she is energetic, resourceful, nature-wise, a country woman of another era. She evokes taste and smell in abundance, primitive senses evoking archaic memories. Kamman is sent to Victoire as a convalescent. Her cuisine and her 'terroir' are healing. The chapter ends as the previous one with a present-day anecdote tying a link with the generations that follow. (*When French Women Cook*, 63).

The magical effect of surrogate mother, Joanie's elderflower syrup helps Luisa Weiss to start to find her home again in Berlin: "It was as though everything missing in my life was concentrated in that small, cool glass. If I could just stand very still in Joanie's kitchen sipping away, I might find myself again and leave all the sadness and despair behind [...] that glass of elderflower syrup drunk in Joanie's kitchen might have been that thing that broke the spell for me. Maybe that golden potion was what awakened me to what was still possible. It helped pave the way to my return home." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 189) "[...] as if it held all the promise of rebirth and regeneration, infused with the promise of spring and happiness. You might taste relief in it and even a little bit of joy. It's quite a potion." (190).

The feminine-gendered designation of these gestures is unavoidable. The repetition of domestic tasks including cooking, is inherent in creating a nurturing home. The characteristics include patience, empathy, collaboration, community, sisterhood. Women as cooks, are associated with domesticated food, traditionally tied to the kitchen by a generational legacy to provide nourishment for others, while travel is considered non-domesticated, the antithesis of home, adventurous, risky even, but not

necessarily immediately nourishing, although we have seen that for nomadic people, displacement is associated with seeking and finding food. Fuchsia Dunlop's culinary exploration of China can be considered to fall within the realm of masculine-orientated travel such as that presented by Anthony Bourdain in his travel writing and television series.[334]

Within the scope of nourishment as eating and understanding nurture and knowledge, Nicola Humble casts the reader in the role of a fellow-traveller: "travelling with David on her quest, the ultimate aim of which is much more than the educated palate of the gourmet; it is a knowledge of the fullest part food can play in the experience of being human." (Humble, 171). More recent memoirists convey ideas of nurturing food as generating a sense of general well-being. Humble affirms the modern focus on dishes that have the ability to comfort (257). Kate Christensen emphasizes a harmony of sensuality and well-being: "Eating well is the key to health, and health is the key to well-being. It's a sensual as well as a social and nourishing pleasure—a triple source of happiness" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 3). Needs and pleasure are reconciled, as her mother's example taught her: "home-cooked plain nourishing meals, the way she managed to feed us festively and well on almost no money; I felt that we were akin to the March family in *Little Women*" (14) for as Christensen goes on to explain following her literary allusion, nourishment is foremostly experienced spiritually, in the form of culture: "Real wealth was found in literature and music, the joy of owning one's soul and mind, a healthy body, the ability to laugh. Wealth was pleasure and adventure: fleeting, ephemeral, but all-important. Also, real wealth was access to good food" (14).

In her second memoir, *Life Without a Recipe*, Diana Abu-Jaber finds comfort in cake-making during her mourning for her father's death. The food is not healthy and wholesome but she was driven to the solace of sweetness and methodical recipe-baking, finding an anchor in the gestures, mental soothing in the repetitious steps, and forgetting in the rich sugars. Words, the narrative itself even, dissolve in the melting, mixing and beating:

> Concentration whisks away, words dissolving, sugar in tea. I get up and drift through the house to my anchorage. We keep the night-light in

[334] Anthony Bourdain. *A Cook's Tour: In Search of the Perfect Meal*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2001 (later sometimes published as *A Cook's Tour: Global Adventures in Extreme Cuisines*).

> the kitchen. I take out my soldiers—flour, brown sugar, vanilla, salt—wisps of powder like magical capes. I don't know what I'm making until I'm into it, sighing and stirring. Tonight an apple crisp; tomorrow, caramel bars; the next day, angel food. Here is the last sanctuary: The cool, methodical steps will clear the air, the recipes soothe me with their calm voices, and the sugar brushes away sorrow. (*Life Without a Recipe*, 239).

The sense of loss she feels at the absence of Bud's presence and cooking is filled sensually and temporally with baking—"witching hours"—when there is a blending of yearning for the loss of her father and his signature cuisine and an alchemic, magical state, where forms and ingredients become indistinguishable in an inclusive gesture that creates an emotional space of sweetness and forgetting:

> No more waking up from a nap to the scent of onions, lamb, and okra [...] the lure of waking into warm scents, anticipating the meal cooked by someone who loved you. [...] There were times when my grandmother's baking was the greatest good—witching hours when the colored crystals and grain of the dough were indistinguishable from brushstrokes. Which is part of sugar's hold on me—such big pleasure, not only dessert but fairy dust. (*Life Without a Recipe*, 249).

The loss of ritual culinary experiences itself is, in effect, healed by the immediacy of food preparation, in renewed and reinvented culinary practices, that describe a healing alchemy similar to that of Ruth Reichl, that offered "the greatest good" as well as "big pleasure".

Indigestible food

Food traditions can be both unifying and divisive. Durrell's travel books, for example, are sprinkled with communion moments in which he shares traditional foodways with his island neighbours in an almost wordless communication through food and drink, while the food traditions that Rossant shares with her mother and grandmother are often a source of tension and division, like the divisive quality of the repeated lunch box motif. It sometimes provokes unexpected situations and reactions. At times Bud's food expresses all the frustration he feels over his ambivalent immigrant condition: "he'll storm into the kitchen and fill it with the sense of cauliflower seething in olive oil and garlic, the bitter, sulfurous ingredients he hacks up when he's in a mood." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 19). The vocabulary is violent with the emotionally-charged images "storm"', "seething", "hacks up", while the food itself is "bitter" and "sulfurous".

Kate Christensen outlines the limits of food's powers in terms of emotional healing and spiritual renewal: "Food can be dangerous. For the unintegrated person—someone hiding a deep, essential truth from herself or someone in the grip of emotions almost too strong to tolerate [...] Food is not a means toward resolution. It cannot cure heartbreak or solve untenable dilemmas." (*Blue Plate Special*, 2). For Abu-Jaber's maternal grandmother, food is ambivalent, a well for her anger and a source of comfort. Her anger at being cheated and abandoned by her husband translates into food: "Penitent, exile, prisoner, she ate and drank the memory of betrayal [...] if she twirled sugar, butter, and salt together, just so, therein was found ease and pleasure and another kind of love—the kind that you make for yourself" (*Life Without a Recipe*, 28). Diana Abu-Jaber's example of cake baking reveals that this ideal condition is not always present or viable; some food is indigestible, dangerous and detrimental to well-being. This dimension also reveals the boundaries exposed in identarian narratives. Food does not always cure ills, and can, indeed, create them.

A number of scenes evoke the dangers associated with food, from external forces and even the hand that is supposed to feed you nutrition. Food can be associated with danger. The scene in which Rossant pulls from her lunch box a whole grilled sparrow, only to have it snatched from her hand by an eagle leaves a lasting trauma and a strong association of exotic food, violence—symbolically of one's identity as represented by food—and mortal danger. (*Apricots on the Nile*, 28). Exotic foreign food represents danger according to Rossant's European guardians, denying the street food that associates uncleanliness with alterity. Her nurse considers the street breads dirty, a forbidden fruit; she is fed one from the hand of her grandfather who loves her: "the *semit* was hot, sweet and crusty like a fresh baguette and covered with toasted sesame seeds that crackled under my teeth. My grandfather laughed at my delight" (18), associating joy and sensual pleasure with a first food, recounted with a certain immediacy as though it had just happened. The same scene is repeated in her later memoir on her years in Paris, as a sign of how it had marked her (*Return to Paris*, 7). The 'foreign' food of David's Mediterranean cookbook which arrived in desolate, war-torn, food-rationed Britain,

where most of the ingredients were unavailable was similarly regarded as "filth" (*Mediterranean Food*, xii).[335]

Reichl's mother makes her father taste suspicious food to confirm it is spoiled. (*Tender at the Bone*, 4). Reichl learned that "food could be dangerous especially to those who loved it" (5), adding that "[f]ortunately we were only sporadically dependent on my mother for sustenance." (35). Reichl's early experiences of food generated suspicion for her. Food was dangerous and not to be trusted, made doubly potent by the fact that it was served up by her, supposedly nurturing mother. She has to distance herself from her mother and find new experiences as well as absolute mastery of her own nourishment because she could not trust what her mother served her, in terms of food, or identity. There followed a period of years when she sought who she really was. Paradoxically, Reichl learns much through her trial of nutritional survival:

> Unknowingly I had started to sort people by their tastes. Like a hearing child born to deaf parents, I was shaped by my mother's handicap, discovering that food could be a way of making sense of the world. At first I paid attention only to taste [...] Later I also began to note how people ate and where. [...] I was slowly discovering that if you watched people as they ate, you could find out who they were. (*Tender at the Bone*, 6).

Revelation comes when she cooks at home for her boyfriend. Reichl discovers through food the affinity between the boyfriend, who she is trying to win with her cooking, and her father when she finds herself baking her father's favourite food for him: "It was Dad-food from the first [...] I must have known, somewhere inside of me, that I had found Dad's kindred spirit" followed by the recipe "Sauerbraten for Doug and Dad" (171-172).

Food can become toxic when its nutrients embody an identity that is rejected. We read in a previous section, how Leslie Li vomited the culturally and emotionally compromised food that her tormented father prepared for her, the night her mother came home late from work, symbolic of her rejection of his noxious dinner. Diana Abu-Jaber also rejects her father's food because at a point in her personal development, the nourishment he offered her held the essence of the identity that he wanted her to accept in swallowing his food, and from which she needed to free herself: "I turn inside out, my body physically rejecting the food. A rejection of something more powerful than food."

[335] See also *An Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 21.

(*Apricots on the Nile*, 227). Sasha Martin relies on cookbooks and reference manuals to define her Global Table Adventure menus, but is perhaps ultimately seeking her mother at her side in the kitchen, as well as peace over her own discordant origins as she travels the world. She is angry for poisoning herself a particularly challenging dish, and potentially her baby too, by inadvertently eating toxic *batons de manioc*, and frustrated with her mother, who knew the dangers but was not there to guide her: "Of course, it's the cassava" she exclaims, to which Martin replies: "Well, it would sure be easier if I knew what the hell I was doing" (*Life from Scratch*, 270).

Fuchsia Dunlop describes China as a land where many expatriates feel safer avoiding the local cuisine entirely. She suggests that one risks, not just the health of one's digestive system, but also one's very identity:

> Somehow it seems that the more foreign a country, and the more alien the diet of its natives, the more rigidly expatriates living there want to adhere to the rituals of their homelands. It's safer that way. Even now, many of my expatriate European friends in China live largely on European food at home. You take on the food of another country at your peril. Do it, and you inevitably loosen your own cultural moorings, and destabilize your fundamental sense of identity, It's a risky business. (*Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*, 14).

She pinpoints a fear of diasporic populations who cling to their home food, struggling with the conflicting knowledge that assimilation occurs foremostly in the kitchen, and the potential danger of losing their cultural anchor as they journey. Dunlop's anthropologically-researched food discoveries provide the annotations to sensational western publications about the seeming oddness and eccentricity of Chinese cuisine, setting expectations of extreme otherness: "There is nothing the British Press prefer to publish, or, apparently, the public to read, than a juicy story about a Chinese restaurant serving dog hotpot or penis stew. These disgusting delicacies seem to exert a fascinating pull." (*Shark's Fin and Sichuan Pepper*, 11). Dunlop's use of the term "disgusting delicacies" suggests that she herself succumbs to the temptation of shocking her reader, although as the narrative unfolds, she reveals that her western alimentary squeamishness and prejudices are dispelled as she tastes her way around China, finding gustatory pleasure in Chinese delicacies, previously considered taboo.

Food also has the power to divide communities and delineate boundaries in immigrant or migrant situations. Food taboos mark outsiders as unclean, unholy. Tasty

food is hours away from waste capturing the ephemeral nature of life and beauty. (Mark Stein, 134). Food of both her ethnic origins became a source of negative auspices for Abu-Jaber's family in Jordan: Munira the Bedouin gives them an alternative perspective on American food: "It sticks with you and doesn't just evaporate. She says eating American food is like eating dust! [...] full of jinns and bad omens" (*Language of Baklava*, 35-36). Ehrlich associates food with danger in Miriam's memory recollections, the boundaries have fallen and danger is at the door, even almost at the table: "the smell of Sabbath stews and the distant scent of danger" in their Polish village in the 1930s (176).

Discourses of discrimination and exclusion are painted in numerous memoirs, notably those of Abu-Jaber's with her marginalised Jordanian father, Furiya and her non-assimilated Japanese parents, Rossant and her multicultural homelessness. We have seen the associated food related dangers in lunch box scenarios, where food is consumed out of its cultural context, in the open, as though exposed to all the dangers of a morally lawless space. A similar scenario is presented in the socially fettered worlds of Forster's expatriate escapades such as the picnic at the Malabar caves in *A Passage to India* that we previously evoked. It occurs at the gaping mouth of the caves, as though ready to swallow the travellers, down a 'passage' into another culture and degree of aesthesia that they are not ready to take. The place is ready to devour the traveller, but also, perhaps, utter truths, giving rise to the question of ingesting and digesting another culture, marked in *A Room with a View* by Miss Allan's need to take digestive biscuits with her as though to help her digest the otherness that she will inevitably encounter. Catherine Lanone writes: "la répétition infinie des menus anglais cherche à imposer un code sémiotique à l'Inde insaisissable." (235).

In Forster's India the foods, markets, colours and tastes of India are remarkable for their absence. "La nourriture devient un ré-marquage, un symptôme corporel de reconnaissance, une rhétorique anglo-indienne." (237). Catherine Lanone explains: "A travers les métaphores de nourriture, d'ingestion et de rejet, se joue ici toute la problématique coloniale de l'impossible insertion en terre étrangère. Le texte oscille entre boulimie et anorexie – on parle beaucoup de nourriture mais on consomme peu [...]" (Lanone, 235). Amidst the abundance of English food, which is out of context, inappropriate and unconsumed, sits the mysterious and conflict-aloof character of Professor Godbole who eats in silence, while drama is acted out around him, as though

untouched and, above all, focused on the food. A similar air of gluttony reigns in culinary memoirs, in association with questions of starvation, privation and excess. Christensen and Abu-Jaber both struggle with finding balance in their eating and nutrition.

Hemingway provides us with a contradictory example in which nourishing food is presented in a context of danger, and assumes a sinister role. He presents the threats of sensuous eating in his unfinished novel, *The Garden of Eden*. Delicate and delicious meals become associated with adultery and moral decadence. The protagonists offer polite niceties around lunch against a background of dangerous adultery and promiscuity (189, 191). David and Catherine travel to Spain, always on the run, once their Eden has fallen, to discover Spanish cuisine rich with *jamón* Serrano, bright red spicy *salchichón*, *manzanilla*, garlic, olives, *gazpacho*. It is both deliciously sensual and inherently wicked, for the innocence has gone; the colours, the heat, the landscape, are all part of the experience: "The salad came and there was its greenness on the dark table and the sun on the plaza beyond the arcade." (54). Each vignette is painted with the meticulous details of a crime scene, with deep colours, light and shade.

Nurturing natures

> Although we are accustomed to separate nature and human perception into two realms, they are, in fact, indivisible [...] The healing wilderness was as the product of culture's craving and culture's framing as any other imagined garden. (Schama 6, 7).

Over the course of our study we have seen human nature and the natural landscape intersect over questions of authenticity and integrity, terroir and rootedness. Simon Schama draws our attention to the relationship between moral dilemmas and the environment. Overcoming the dangers that food might present, allows the metaphor of reconciliation to emerge, such that something potentially threatening can transform into something nurturing if nature, embodied in healthy human instinct, is allowed to dominate. The instinct of tolerance overrides Ehrlich's reaction to her neighbour's gift of non-kosher food during their house move: "the deep and basic conventionality [her] soul is revealing to itself over Mrs Henderson's so well-intentioned dinner" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 335). The importance of the intention triumphs; her father declares: "[the food]

is clean, nutritious and prepared with more kindness and humanity than any meal ever was. It fulfills all that God commands a person to do." (335).

We observe a recognition of the synergy between female sensibility and women's emotional response to nature. Madeleine Kamman is nursed back to health by her grandmother's cousin, Victoire, energetic, resourceful, nature-wise, a country woman of another era who loves mushroom-hunting and cooking. Counihan reminds us that in Western dualist tradition women are associated with nature and the sensual body that must be controlled and men with culture and the mind that controls. (Counihan, 1999, 103). Sandra M. Gilbert talks of the universal quality of the transformation from nature to nurture: "The pulse of the kitchen is the pulse of human life, which triumphs over death by turning nature into nurture, and, often, the raw into the cooked." (Gilbert, 44). Priscilla Ferguson Parkhurst, is explicit about the act of transformation, whether in cooking or writing that creates nourishment from food and displacement: "cuisine is not food, it is food transcended, nature transformed into a social product." (Trubek, 144). As though in confirmation, Christensen refers in both her memoirs to feeling "as macho as Hemingway" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 166), when catching and gutting a bass. Despite her inexperience, Hamilton is saved by nature, and her own naïve determination, when her parents leave her, deserted like their garden: "Our abandoned garden produced all summer, in spite of my inexperience, and I ate whatever it offered. I learned to cook a lot of different vegetables the way my schoolmates learned to put together a PB and J." (*Blood, Bones & Butter*, 38).

As we read in Max Milner's statements in the introduction to part IV, nourishment brings wisdom and understanding. It transcribes the moral messages and the lessons learned that populate culinary memoirs, acquired through experience, and as Fisher's repeated chapter title—"The Measure of My Powers"—reminds us, must be re-evaluated. The notion of repetition brings to the forefront a close association with nature, captured in the notion of cycles and seasons. It is explicit in Ehrlich's spiritually-defined year and Mayes' seasonal recipe selections. It is an inherent part of Christensen's second memoir that is both a personal diary of how she adopted Maine with all its physical and climatic challenges that confront her own limits and desires, as well as a culinary survey of the state and its nourishing agricultural and human resources. She idealises Maine, but wants to convey the message that people make a life from "nature's

bounty" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 6). Her editor, Genevieve Morgan, summarising the essence of Christensen's literary memoir, writes that despite "an environment that is more often than not stingy, bitterly cold and stubborn [...] People do it because generations before them have shown it to be the healthiest way to live, and because it is necessary for their community to survive." (x).

The rhythms of nature are part of the journey of nourishment repeatedly acted out in the works of Kingsolver, Kamman with her female nurturers who all live close to the land, and Pellegrini, who advises "the prudent use of Nature's gifts" (*Unprejudiced Palate*, 233). Barbara Kingsolver claims that the most trying part of her farming year was her "lost mobility". Yet, there are calculated trips, each involving visits to friends and other farmers to secure essential food and knowledge (*Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, 118). Nature and food within its environment, as a physical and emotional landscape, dominate the food narrative. Christensen writes of an impending summer storm: "I try to enjoy the beauty nonetheless, to let it win out over the sense of loss. All of life is like this; I think it always has been." (*How to Cook a Moose*, 94). And again, associating the seasons with physical and psychological change, and well-being renewed with the seasons: "it was autumn again, that time of smoky nostalgia and lucid reckoning as well as new beginnings and optimism." (97). Mayes indicates that providers of food, in harmony with nature, satisfy needs for several vital forms of nourishment, nutritious, emotional, and aesthetic. At her house, the alfresco table is "set for primary pleasure: lingering meals under the trees at noon. The open air confers an ease, a relaxation and freedom. You're your own guest, which is the way summer ought to be." (*Under the Tuscan Sun*, 118).

Christensen reveals throughout her second memoir the importance of finding wholeness and inner peace that can only come from an emotional independence. This finds an echo in the self-sufficiency of those who eke a living out of the rugged terrain of Maine: "These are the true Mainers, the people whose heels are dug into the soil, whose livelihood is tied to the fates and fortunes of the land and its vicissitudes, to the fish, lobster, oysters, shrimp, and crabs who live in the waters along the coast of Maine. These die-hard, self-sufficient survivors proved that it wasn't impossible to survive here, and they served as exemplars for the rest of the country" (*How to Cook a Moose*, 230), and above all as an example for herself. Her nourishment comes literally and

metaphorically from the fruits of the Maine soil, reminiscent of Durrell's relationship with nature: "Potatoes, blueberries, moose and maple, foraged mushrooms, lobsters and clams [...] there was an innate quality to all of them [...] there was a recognition of something that spoke to the deepest part of my humanity" (286). Patience Gray writes of the importance of closeness to growing food: "I have had the good fortune to experience the human-plant relation as a precious and everyday fact—quite apart from its relevance to the cooking pot. I know that people living in cities have been robbed of this vital contact and understanding of growing things." (*Honey from a Weed*, 325). The narrator's relationship to her emotional and physical environment past and present, must be understood and digested before it can be translated into nourishment and assimilated, a process where authentic food intersects with integrity and opens the possibility for self-sufficiency and emotional self-knowledge, rather than detachment or dependency: "nature transformed into a social product" (Trubek, 144).

3. The abundant trope of food

> Food is cusped between nature and culture, and so too is language. Nobody will perish without Mars bars, just as nobody ever died of not reading Paradise Lost, but food and language of some sort are essential to our survival [...] Food is what makes up our bodies, just as words are what constitute our minds; and if body and mind are hard to distinguish, it is no wonder that eating and speaking should continually cross over in metaphorical exchange. (Eagleton, 1998, 205, 207).

Terry Eagleton further explores the symbiosis between nature and culture, similar to that between food and language, central to our understanding of the functioning of culinary memoirs, that reveal to us that reading and writing also cross over in a "metaphorical exchange". The second form of travel writing that Montalbetti defines is the fable of the world as a book, containing complex knowledge that must be cited, translated and commented (121), the knowledge as nourishment, bringing together perception and reading, "lecture littérale de la bibliothèque et lecture métaphorique du monde [...] La métaphore permet au récit de voyage de fonctionner

idéalement comme citation du texte du monde" (Montalbetti, 125, 141)[336] removing, according to Montalbetti, the distinction between the world and the library, or our understanding of the world and the corpus of literary narratives that shape our perception. That fable is rewritten according to other perspectives, which have emerged from traditional foodways, by writers such as Christensen, Jaffrey, Narayan, and Li.

The notion of nourishment occupies the travel literature space in which writers and readers have expectations of finding some form of nourishment for body and soul, to sustain them in their travels, as a form of reward for the displacement and perhaps even a trophy of the journey. As we discussed in the section on feel-good literature, this notion of expansiveness extends to travel, with the idea of food writing as an imprint that leaves a trace. In displacement, the imprint of other experiences and otherness may be semi-permanent, like nourishment; it must be repeatedly and regularly renewed.

Reading and writing: the gustatory narrative flow

> I have derived a great deal of solace from books by the likes of M.F.K. Fisher, Julia Child, Nicolas Freeling, and Laurie Colwin. I have been nourished by their warm generosity on the page, their revelations about food and their own lives, as I would have been if they'd cooked me feasts. (*Blue Plate Special*, 4-5).

Kate Christensen was comforted and inspired by the food and the autobiographical writings of food writers, so much so that the books became in themselves her nourishing feast. She chose to become a writer, encouraged by the knowledge that her writings were also bringing comfort: "[I] started to write short essays about my life—ostensibly centered on food as a lifelong passion and favorite pastime but, in a deeper way, addressing my own experiences and memories". This description corresponds to her later travel-food memoir *How to Cook a Moose*. Reading the reactions of her blog readers, she realized "I was offering comfort, somehow, simply by revealing certain truths about my own life." (*Blue Plate Special*, 4).

In part I C, we presented the idea that texts could be devoured or savoured, the metaphor of eating the memoir as one reads, moderated by the literary style employed

[336] Refer to part III B, chapter 1, for a description of the other philosophical forms of travel literature as defined by Montalbetti.

by the author. Indeed, memoirs incite the reader or critic to explore images such as devour, taste, enjoy, assimilate, in an undeniable affinity between food and language. The author is likewise inhabited by the poetics of food as a trope for reading and writing. Christensen invites us to consider the act of reading in association with food, defining preferences in reading that relate to those of eating:

> [...] the urge to write comes for me directly from reading good books, just as the urge to cook comes from eating good food. And the coincidence of food and language is as excellent and reassuring a combination as any other I've ever found. My favorite writing about food, like my favorite food, is plain and unfussy: clear, declarative sentences with a strong undercurrent of feeling, a soulful, hearty meal, nothing fancy, nothing pretentious, nothing but a blue plate special. (*Blue Plate Special*, 5).

The temperament of each author is reflected in their style and recipes. Wizenberg is the effusive gourmet, Ehrlich explores a critical respect for tradition and a spiritual hunger, while Abu-Jaber reflects some of the humorous, if poignant, emotional chaos of her father in her own identity search.

Language is inspirational, with transformative powers like that of food, that transport one out of oneself: "My longing for what I couldn't have turned out to be a source of inspiration [...] writing about food gave me a sense of heady power that was in some ways even better than eating the forbidden item in real life." (*Blue Plate Special*, 102). Food, like reading is described as having a narrative flow, reflected in Christensen's mother's eating habits: "She appeared to have forgotten she was eating, as if the ongoing flow of bites that made up a meal, start to finish, were of no consequence to her, as if she were oblivious to any gustatory narrative flow." (40). Christensen iterates the healing quality of food, but as something that does more than simply fend off hunger. It is rich nourishment, fuelling the imagination and even the soul: "I began to play closer attention to what I ate; I began to see it not as a substance to assuage hunger or homesickness but as something to savor when it was good, like a well-written book or piece of music." (159).

The reading of *Daughter of Heaven* parallels the simile of the story of rice cultivation and its ritual eating in Li's memoir. Li intimates that the narrative idea is subject to the process of producing rice—the rituals of growth, preparation, cooking, and eating:

> Food, of course – the growing of it, the cooking of it, the people who prepared it, the people who ate it, the ritual surrounding it, the events which required it in splendid abundance – is the foundation of this book, as surely as rice and vegetables are the foundation of any Chinese meal. As for the savory stone which, if it is worth its salt, should flavor the repast from start to finish, from soup to nuts – that must be supplied by the stories themselves. (*Daughter of Heaven*, xiv).

Cooking is compared in several instances to an activity that, like writing, must be practiced every day, nourishment that must be regularly renewed. Writing must be cultivated like a crop explains Diana Abu-Jaber**.** Like her writing, her kitchen becomes an experimental zone, where she consults two classic tomes, *The Moosewood Cookbook*, and T*he International Cookbook*, inversely evolving to consider cooking as a practice, like writing: "Our cooking lab is an exploration of the creative process. Gradually, I'm seeing how the process can be nudged into a discipline." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 35). Abu-Jaber, like Zonana, fled domestic cookery, taking the inverse perspective in which writing is advised at university to be a daily activity like eating. She must choose between writing and family; she chose writing for "Writing is essential as a nutrient." (34). She describes cooking as a similar process to story-telling, using the bulgur preparation analogy: "The metamorphosis of cooking mirrors that of story-imagining. I learn to watch carefully for the stones, and sometimes stories come to me, emerging out of the starch, and explain things." (33).[337] Annotations to recipes assume the role of literary criticism, a criticism of life itself, in the case of her grandmother: "The recipe arrived with my grandmother's weekly stream of magazine and newspaper clippings, along with her usual ball-point notations in the margins. 'Sounds spicy! Too strange?'" (*Life Without a Recipe*, 58).

According to Marguerite Neveux, the unconscious has its role to play in the writing of food literature, just as the imagination operates in eating, extending both acts beyond one's immediate conscience: "[…] l'inconscient investit dans l'écriture de la nourriture, ce que l'imaginaire fait jouer dans l'acte de manger, et le lien qui unit la démarche de l'ingestion à la démarche de l'écriture." (Neveux, 83). Neveux explains that writing is a way of nourishing oneself, not just with the salutary act of writing one's story

[337] The metaphor for the indigestible, immutable, silent stone, a surrogate food, arising from folk tales of stone soup as an allegory of sharing to nourish the community, is recurrent in culinary memoirs, in a mythical relation to food.

and exploring one's past and present identity but in the very act of choosing vocabulary. A word may be crunchy, crisp, crumbly, liquid, creamy, chewy, bitter,[338] tasty or flavourless. The act of writing in and of itself is as transformational as writing one's culinary past as well as the food which inhabits that space. David Bevan describes a metaphoric and essential relationship between food and literature which sees them as transformational and generative processes: "In both instances the world is endlessly assimilated, transformed and remade" (Bevan, 3).

Kate Christensen also frequently uses the crossed metaphor of eating and writing: "I began with eating and moved on to cooking just as I began with reading and moved on to writing [...] Eating a good meal, like reading a satisfying novel, has returned me to myself during times when this disconnect was a profound internal chasm." (*Blue Plate Special*, 3). In Christensen's memoir, links between eating and writing are indissociable; while writing her novel she confesses: "While I ate, I looked down at my journal and wrote. I wrote and wrote; I was so lonely and hungry, and writing was an excellent outlet for the voice in my head that ran on and on like a stream in the dark. I wrote about how lonely I was and instantly felt less so." (138). Alexia Moyer writes: "[foodbooks] carefully and deliberately express/explore/theorize the relationship between food and word. 'Language and food are a natural pairing' says Nathalie Cooke in her role as moderator for *The Taste of Words/ Le goût des mots* panel discussion." (Moyer, 164).[339]

Words and food meld together and become synonymous with intake and expression with eating and writing. As we suggested early, memoirs invite us to compose meals from the array of recipes, a reflection of their hybrid nature, drawing from various genres to create a new form of metaphysical travel memoir, wherein lies food. Eagleton describes the mutual exchange between food and words, on a content and on a structural level:

> Words issue from the lips as food enters them, though one can always take one's words back by eating them. And writing is a processing of raw speech just as cooking is a transformation of raw materials [...] just as a diner selects one item each from the "paradigmatic axes" of starters, entrees and desserts, and then combines them along a "syntagmatic axis" in the actual process of eating, so a literary work chooses items from

[338] "craquant, croquant, croustillant, liquide, souple, rugueux, amer. Il a du goût, de la saveur ou n'en a pas ". (Audiberti, 102). My translation.
[339] <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/cuizine/1900-v1-n1-cuizine1807820/1004732ar/>.

> various repertoires (genres, formal devices, narrative forms) and then goes on to string them together. (Eagleton, 1998, 203-204).

Each of Abu-Jaber's recipes is as personal as an invented story, putting aside replication or duplication. Her recipe for "Trust Me Stuffing" is inspired by recollections of her grandmother's preparation and sentimental memories: "I'm a little obsessed with stuffing, everything about it is ritual [...]" (*Life Without a Recipe*, Recipe Appendix). This pattern is reflected in her writing. Abu-Jaber's second memoir, while retracing some of her previous narrative, is a new departure, examining doubts and fears more closely, plunging into the psychology of grief and its expression in cooking,[340] consumption and the capacity to make clear decisions as they relate to one's identity. She refers to making similar mistakes to her grandmother. Her inspiration to write lies within a memory process: "The minute action of slipping skin from garlic, washing lettuce, and stirring a roux or risotto steady the mind, release the imagination. I jot book notes on the back of recipe cards—details, plot points, fragments of metaphors, images." (177). The symbolism of book notes on recipe cards articulates the power of food to inspire the imagination and makes the elements of the books themselves recipes. Writing and eating are inextricable: "I type and cut and rewrite and give up. Go into the kitchen. Return with a slice of cardamom cake. [...] You imagine the story you will write [...] but then you begin and the words turn dense and cumbersome and it's like hacking through a forest with a butter knife." (241). One might also say that food and drink accompanied Hemingway's writing, as he sat with his notebook. He would linger over a single drink as long as the muse inspired him, his stark style, reflecting the simplicity of his consumption, basic fare, both food and writing. However, he hated the idea of leading a writing hand to mouth existence: "I was damned if I would write [a novel] because it was what I should do if we were to eat regularly". However, a few lines later, he symbolically contradicts himself; we discover an illustrative image: "The waiter brought me a café crème and I drank half of it when it was cooled and left it on the table while I wrote." (*Moveable* Feast, 76).

Close to the spirit of Hemingway's creativity is the idea that food has a cathartic effect in the writing process. Luisa Weiss' cake failure unleashes her writing "when I sat

[340] This analogy reminds us of Laura Esquivel *Like Water for Chocolate: A Novel in Monthly Installments with Recipes, Romances, and Home Remedies* (1992).

down to write about the cake disaster, the words fairly flew onto the page. And after that, it was like a dam breaking. All the words that had been so hard to summon before started to come to me, and slowly, page by page, I started to get things right again. For the first time in my life, it was writing that made me feel strong enough to cook, instead of the other way around." (*Berlin Kitchen*, 203-204).

Narratives are journeys and journeys compose narratives though rarely during the displacement itself. They evoke reconstruction and a reminiscent. Michel Butor begins his essay on travel and writing with a personal statement about the desire to travel, an inverse but as poignant pull as nostalgia, and the need to digest travel at home, to write about journeys to be able to go off again. He makes his journeys travel: "J'ai besoin de faire voyager mes voyages." (Butor, 17), expressing the same necessity as those who must talk about food ; "voyager [...] c'est écrire [...] et qu'écrire c'est voyager" (4); "ils voyagent pour écrire et voyagent en écrivant mais c'est parce que pour eux le voyage est écriture." (17). Diana Abu-Jaber makes that clear association between food writing and travel at a young age. At seven years old she wrote: "When I grow up, I want to be a writer [...] and tell stories like everyone in the family, and people will listen like nobody in the family. Also, I want to be constantly on an airplane, because nothing fills the air with more exciting feelings, nothing lights my parents up more than when we're on a plane pointed either to Jordan or back to the States. When we get to either place, the lovely feelings go away, but in the air, things are very good." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 52). As a child, the journeys were full of hopeful portent, but the destinations were more complicated, to which one can draw the analogy of pleasure and therapeutic cooking as more satisfying than the sometimes-disappointing end result or the motivation to get started.

Food as language and imprint[341]

Hemingway associates food with written language at a fundamental level—just as we have suggested in early sections that, for certain diasporic authors, food from the past gives them back a lost verbal language, and thus language, in terms of recipe names and terms can become a nourishing food. For Leslie Li, the symbolism of the New Year food tray represents togetherness, prosperity, family and children. "Little did we know we were also ingesting Chinese cultural concepts and values. Eating our words if you like." (*Daughter of Heaven*, 25). Chinese food is a form of communication, in which the act of eating is "one of intense yet subtly nonverbal communication" (186). The symbolism of the body as an articulate space as Katrak describes it, persists: "From that space of wholeness there is a language that is similar to the language of food – the language that speaks and the tongue that tastes." (Katrak, 273).

Claudia Roden's desire for completeness and authenticity in her anthropological approach to memory was equally strong in the creation of a narrative. Writing was a form of dialogue with the past wherein the transcribing of recipes served as a step in the imprint of memory which nourished the narrator and reader. Roden evokes a "language of food" (*Middle Eastern Food*, 33) which also denotes an etiquette of eating. We have talked about the articulation of food previously. Here we discuss the instrumentalization of this quality by the author to create a connection of nourishment with the reader. As well as a formal set of rules about shared meals however, there is an informal conversation that accompanies Roden's cuisine and which 'feeds' the women, whether in Egypt as they sit around chatting as they prepare small dishes while the servants take care of the substantial dishes, or in England, where they found themselves, by necessity, in the kitchen making their own food. Writing of the people she interviewed for her book, *Middle Eastern Food*, Roden says "It gave them, I think, as much pleasure to describe the dishes as it gave me to record the recipes." (*Middle Eastern Food*, 5). There is pleasure in talking about food, which she also associates with aesthetics, frequently

[341] Some of the ideas elaborated in this section on Claudia Roden's works are drawn from an article to be published by the Centre D'Études sur les Littératures Etrangères et Comparées (CELEC) EA 3069, Université Jean Monnet, Saint-Etienne, France, following a colloquium held at the University of St. Etienne on *Memories, Traces and Imprint* (20-21 November, 2017). The title of the article is "From Memory to Impression, Recipe to Embodiment, in The Auto-Ethnographic Cookbooks of Claudia Roden".

evoking taste, smell, colour, using the word mosaic, with its aesthetic as well as cultural connotations, describing the Jewish people as "a mosaic of people of different origins" within a "mosaic of minorities" in Egypt (*Jewish Food*, 4). There is a relationship or orality, associated with the pleasures of the mouth, between the cook, the text and food of the past and present. The translation of an oral form into a written discourse results in a form and style that reflects orality. (McDougall, 109). Certain culinary memoirs are more oral in style than others, notably those authors who also have blogs, such as Wizenberg and Weiss completing it rather than giving it expression. The translation of the transient spoken word into permanent written, stabilizes, anchors, and the trope of food gives it additional weight.

Middle Eastern Food, the book itself is a mosaic of recipes, each carefully preserving their unique characteristics, and inherent beauty, which contribute, by the nature of their diversity, to the monument that she creates. "I just got so interested in the history of food, and I was making all those medieval dishes, and it blew my mind—the idea that through food you could describe or reconstruct a world" (Kramer, n.pag.), she says. She ended up reconstructing several worlds—eight hundred recipes, and a trove of folk tales, proverbs, stories, poetry, and local history, in effect a monument, a rich and nourishing fare. The mosaic evokes hybridity which gives everyone a place to a multifaceted culture where everyone can find a dish that will satisfy their hunger.

As we discussed in section A, Roden's works can be considered monuments to the foodways, culture and culinary traditions of the Middle East and the Jewish peoples. Monuments are by nature fixed, reflecting Roden's desire to anchor her roots. Does a monument leave a lasting mark or imprint beyond the paper of its publication, which would serve the people about and for whom it was written? The organization of Roden's narratives, part recipe book and part history book, the two interwoven, testifies to a flexibility and openness, reflecting the fluid formations to which Bardenstein has referred, which suggests that Roden fully understood the movement between culture and cuisines. She comes to the important realisation that food assumes an identity and an affiliation only when it is displaced. In asking herself the question as to whether there was such a thing as Jewish food, given the paradoxical porosity and diversity of some communities, and the closed nature of others, she notes: "Local regional food becomes Jewish when it travels with Jews to new homelands" (*Jewish Food,* 9). In other words, she

claims that food assumes its heritage when it is displaced, it is more mobile than a monument, which suggests that foodways assume migrant or nomadic qualities with a rhizomatic capacity to adapt and evolve.

The role of Roden's books are then twofold, to create a memory, and to displace culinary traditions from memory into the kitchen of her readers. She recognizes that "[a]lthough cooking is fragile because it lives in human activity, it isn't easily destroyed" (*Jewish Food,* 11). Foodways become then a trope for displacement and for memory in the form of a monument that leaves a mark or imprint. The books become an active memory when the reader uses the recipes that leave a physical trace, an embodiment of sensations and memories. As Maurice Halbwachs explains, we call witnesses to help us recall events from the past (Halbwachs, 51), and recipes serve that purpose; they leave an impression on the body and the memory, as well as evocative names, familiar terms and repeated instructions. When the reader has made and consumed the recipes, one can consider that the memory has left a durable mark, wherein sensorial perception overrides the intellectual framework that the books represent.

The authentic recipe was a central concern of Roden's: "What is this supposed to taste like?" was her compelling question, seemingly antithetically opposed to the academic act of writing itself. What is authentic to some, is, inversely, novelty to others, leading us to reflect that what is memory for some is simply story, with no memory trace, for others. She admits to being inspired by the "brilliance and integrity" of David's cookbook memoir *The Book of Mediterranean Food*. Like David, whose literary texts infused her book with vicarious Mediterranean travel experiences, storytelling is at the heart of Roden's works; she too used intertextuality in the form of food-related moral tales, proverbs and literary quotes. Recipes and traditions, personal and collective, are woven, with intertextual elements, into literary narratives, at the service of memory, the connection between culture and cooking leaving the trace of a story: a narrative is both written and revealed. Frédéric Regard describes the influence of existing narratives that shapes the relationship to self, to the other, and to memory, "individual field experience and personal (re)inscription": "[t]he Self's relation to the Other is always, so to speak, 'predicted' by a narrative mediation [...] whose relevance is either validated or invalidated by individual field experience and personal (re)inscription. To a certain

extent, every explorer-writer may be said to produce him or herself as the effect of an 'anxiety of influence'." (Regard, 10).

A monument is the materialized intellectual idea of memory but it does not leave an imprint unless one displaces it and one sees the trace it has left behind, even though Roden is unable to erect her exilic monument on the site of origin of her community's memories. Reenacting the past is not only repetition but also interpretation, for transmission, the antidote to nostalgia, takes the present into consideration when looking to the past. There must be a commitment to the present moment, "the ephemeral", represented by recipes in culinary memoirs, "is able to recover that which is ephemeral" in the past (Nora 963).[342] Terry Eagleton reminds us of what Roden's works demonstrate, that "[…] food is what makes up our bodies, just as words are what constitute our minds" (Eagleton, 1998, 207).

Roden insists that cooking in the Middle East is "deeply traditional and nonintellectual" (*Middle Eastern Food*, 34), just as the need for nourishment is also non-intellectual, as her sensuous descriptions reveal. The argument that her works are non-scholarly is supported by her use of text boxes equally for historical and literary content, as for tips and comments on cooking. The immediate experience of preparing food is of equal importance to its history. One can extrapolate that memory is transmitted equally by the senses as by the intellect. Her description of the eating of *mezze* encapsulates the sensual, mystical experience that ultimately transcends all intellectual and memory construction and written narrative: "The pleasure of savouring the food in convivial company and beautiful surroundings is accompanied by feelings of peace and serenity, and sometimes deep meditation. You only have to witness the look of delight, approaching ecstasy, part sensual, part mystical, in men sitting at cafes to see that" (*Middle Eastern Food*, 53).

In the context of Roden's food books, the past is brought into the present through cooking, fostering an eternal discussion around food that Roden evokes so often amongst women in her family, and which she encourages through her personable writing style with regard to the reader. She is encouraging and suggestive: "[…] but you may like to try marinating […] (*Middle Eastern Food*, 179), "[…] but if you have a good

[342] "Seul l'éphémère peut sauver l'éphémère". (My translation).

butcher [...]" (262), "[...] I urge you to add the amount of flour slowly" (*Jewish Food,* 280). Roden proposes a validation, through tasting, that her suggestions are right concerning the choice of recipe and ingredients. Movement and flux, the fluid formations around food, are perceptible in her works. This brings us back to the question of authenticity, made precarious by trying, testing, reflecting, what Rushdie warns us about: "if we do look back, we must also do so in the knowledge [...] that we will not be capable of reclaiming precisely the thing that was lost" (Rushdie, 1991, 10) in his repeated theme of acquiring sensorial knowledge in order to understand. Rushdie's process of chutnification has a double role of preserving memories, but also reveals truths, like culinary memoirs, offering an indelible imprint of what is at the heart of ingredients, what matters:

> What is required for chutnification? Raw materials, obviously—fruit, vegetables, fish, vinegar, spices [...] But also: eyes, blue as ice, which are undeceived by the superficial blandishments of fruit—which can see corruption beneath citrus-skin; fingers which, with featheriest touch, can probe the secret inconstant hearts of green tomatoes; and above all a nose capable of discerning the hidden languages of what-must-be-pickled, its humours and messages and emotions [...] I am able to include memories, dreams, ideas, so that once they enter mass-production all who consume them what pepperpots achieved in Pakistan [...] Thirty jars stand upon a shelf, waiting to be unleashed upon the amnesiac nation. (Rushdie, 1981, 458-459).

Roden's works exemplify the dilemma of finding a locus for memories. The books are witness to much more than food, or even culture, but to a multitude of stories both personal and collective. Her monumental works become an act of discourse, and a channel of communication in which memories are constructed through language, and remembering, imprinted through the embodiment of dishes, prepared and consumed. The form is as important as the content in memory recall. However, only the writer's poetic intention and the reader's interaction with the content can bring the memory alive. There is an inherent paradox in her works in which her monumental studies are encouraged to incite a sensual response: "Our tradition has tended to privilege questions about the rationale, the unchanging and eternal, and the abstract and mental; and to denigrate questions about embodied concrete practical experience. (Curtin and Heldke, xiv), but her rigour is the ambiguous attempt to recapture the memory of taste as a sensual experience.

Addressing her grandmother, historian Luce Giard elucidates the role Roden's works play in memory retrieval, bringing to life, not just recipes, but the gestures and the nurturing intention that accompanied them, which, more than the flavour of the dish itself, is what Claudia Roden missed from her childhood in Egypt:

> I would like the slow remembrance of your gestures in the kitchen to prompt me with words that will remain faithful to you; I would like the poetry of words to translate that of gestures; I would like a writing of words and letters to correspond to your writing of recipes and tastes. As long as one of us preserves your nourishing knowledge, as long as the recipes of your tender patience are transmitted from hand to hand and from generation to generation, a fragmentary yet tenacious memory of your life itself will live on. (Certeau et al., 1998, 154).[343]

The recipe is more than words, it is all the emotion embodied in "nourishing knowledge", "tender patience" and a "tenacious memory", adjectives of nurturing and resilience. On Atlantic Avenue, where the ingredients for Zonana's father's *ful medammes* were purchased "'chez les Arabes'", the narrator encounters a timeless realm where the memory of a journey lingers as though a gentle embrace: "dreams of vastness, of ships carrying spices and preserves, of a realm of adventure and enterprise just beyond our horizon." (*Dream Homes*, 33). It is an inclusive journey, on Saturday, with her father, the shopkeeper extending his arm "in warm welcome", her parents were "relaxed", "joked", "talking quietly with one another", "they seemed to belong" (33). It was a realm where the food they bought spoke the language of her ancestors; when they shopped, her parents were no longer foreigners, as though at home, the visit, rich with sensual accents, and aromas brought peace: "For a moment I knew who I was." (35). Food and language are overtly intertwined, for in the same section, she talks about language, her desire to learn the language of her family and birthplace, wrestling with her Jewish, Sephardic, Egyptian origins. Food is always the identifier. Narayan's family validates a potential marriage candidate for their daughter by the fact that he both spoke and ate as they did. The argument for an arranged marriage with a Tamil Brahmin Iyer boy was:

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[343] Je voudrais que la lente mémoration de vos gestes en cuisine me soufflé les mots qui vous seront fidèles, que le poème des mots traduise celui des gestes, qu'a votre écriture de recettes et de saveurs corresponde une écriture de paroles et de lettres. Tant que l'une d'entre nous conservera vos savoirs nourriciers, tant que, de main en main et de génération en génération, se transmettront les recettes de votre tendre patience, subsistera une mémoire fragmentaire est tenace de votre vie même. (Certeau et al., 1994, 218).

"They speak our language, eat our foods [...]" (*Return to India*, 32). As vegetarian Brahmins, they were fundamentally different from other castes by nature of their foodways. (33). Ehrlich discovers that during her spiritual journey, language becomes more than symbolic of a lost culture as she makes her recipe of Yiddish and English names and recipes: "The language memory should speak, a language of secrecy, magical and profane." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 49) "I must learn an old language well. It is a lifelong process, and one never completes it." (339).

While Ehrlich approaches her ancestors' language with reverence and hesitation, David wrote with a certain arrogance, her recipes, an uncompromising language for the would-be initiated: "it was also largely in defiance that I wrote down those Mediterranean recipes" (*Mediterranean Food*, 4), while she retains what might be defined as a certain aristocratic arrogance, the words, 'those substances' implying distain: "I shrank from words like margarine and vegetable lard. I declined to use those substances in my own cooking, so why inflict them on my readers." (*Mediterranean Food*, 12). She is confident about the journey that she wants to take her readers on and above all about the destination that they will discover, convinced that the unconventionality of the dishes and even the narrative surrounding them, is no hindrance to their adoption.

Localising the culinary metaphor

We have discussed in part III how food is in itself a trope for travel, the consumer transported by taste and the overall sensual experience. The symbolic trait of displacement can also be perceived as inherent in food itself. Food takes the author and reader to unexpected places to discover nourishment: Martin, to the far corners of the globe, the early writers to the unexpected places in the Mediterranean, Christensen to Maine. Food may sometimes even replace travel. An example that travel writer Alain de Botton records, describes the protagonist from J. K. Huysman's *A Rebours*, who renounces the idea of a journey to London after eating in an English tavern in Paris, a sensual and gustatory experience of sufficient authenticity to eliminate the necessity for an uncomfortable and tiring physical journey to London itself, the food offering a trope for the authentic and exotic experience of travel (de Botton, 11).

In certain memoirs, we negotiate the idea of menus and restaurants in which one eats to restore oneself or to 'travel' to another place, to another level of consciousness, the restaurant becoming a metaphor for restoring life, just as we have discussed the idea of the memoir allowing one to compose a nourishing meal from the literary and culinary elements that it proposes. Adam Gopnik writes:

> [W]e construct from the brutal sensory necessities a shape and a history and a purpose to life; we sit down and choose from the menu [...] We seek for some kind of comfort and escape from that terror, and none is better than the apparent continuities and the small miracle of eating [...] the pleasure alone becomes the point and its accompaniments—family, an idea of France or Italy, the table of life—becomes too big to lose. It is not that God is in the details, but that our ability to grasp and discriminate the details gives us something to put in place of God; not that this dish is sacred but that an idea of the sacred remains somehow residual in the dish. (*Table Comes First*, 309, 311).

That sacred represents a form of otherness, something not quite touchable or reachable, another and better place to which we aspire.

The culinary idiom inherent in the memoirs shapes palatable narratives around alterity and travel, the memoir offering safe access to another culture, culinary, and social. Culinary memoirs are a form of commodity to be consumed by procuration, a vicarious form of eating. Food equated with home, but the instability of home in contemporary society, and the difficulty of locating home, 'translates' food and the act of eating evoked in culinary memoirs into the incarnation of displacement (encountering the other). "Such forms of novelistic discourse modulate the North American public's propensity to consume alterity and nonphysical activity, allowing for a guilt-free consumption of the other." (Mannur, 2007, 83). Mannur explains that "multiculturalism can also be about satisfying a kind of hunger to consume the other while being able to keep the multicultural body itself at a safe distance." (Mannur, 2010, 224).

Memoirs can be considered a safe way of consuming alterity, of becoming intimate with the other, leading to the idea of cross-cultural nourishment, while that eating can be performed without physical ingestion; the memoirs can be considered what Mannur describes as a form of postmodern hyperreal eating (84), in which the real and the simulation of real become indistinguishable. The forced intimacy that authors such as Wizenberg employ, are both an endearing desire to make the reader feel

personally invited into the author's kitchen, but also an extended fantasy need to imagine the reader following the exact steps and comments in a desire to emulate the author. One can deduce from this dual position and the popularity of culinary memoirs, that their readership market is keen to 'consume' difference. The desire to nourish oneself on the food of another encourages metaphors of displacement (inner and outer, as de Botton describes the antithetical forms) and the confrontation of self and others.

Eating creates cultural meaning and also draws boundaries between them and us, defining notions of here and there.[344] Indeed, as Döring explains, in its very materiality, food binds cultural identities locally (3). Food is a primary way in which the reader encounters other nations and other cultures. The palate functions as a primitive contact zone. According to Sidney Mintz, the techniques of preparation, the presentation, the tools, methods of cooking and local flavours are all endowed with an aura of expected and inherent order (2003, 24), aspects which in themselves generate loyalty: "Among the mysteries to which a particular food give rise [...] is the way that over time they nourish loyalty and even love among those who eat them" (Mintz, 2003, 20), but also the desire to transform them, to adapt their nourishment to a present need.

The cumulation of tropes—reading, writing, travel—make memoirs, like the food itself, a form of nourishment, perhaps going some way to justifying their feel-good quality. They are a series of imbricated tropes that spring from the many paradoxes that are at the heart of culinary memoirs. Elements unite to create a nourishing dish—recipes, anecdotes, memories, the variations of the dish are served up repeatedly, to provide regular, ongoing nourishment. There is a repetition of form, and quantity, in terms of the ever-growing corpus of culinary memoir publications. Nourishment provides not just sustenance but also creates a feel-good state which, as we have indicated, suggests superficiality—equated with tourism in the context of culinary memoirs. However, each author endeavours to make her story, her journey, as attractive and delectable as possible, such that despite trauma, origins are pursued, traditions are both respected and bypassed, identity is sought and honed. The dominant figure is that of a traveller, who has seen and learned, resided amongst others, crossed borders, questioned and texted boundaries. The reader, likewise, is free to use the recipes as a

[344] See Kunow, 2003.

path into another culture and foodways or, indeed, leave them aside and define one's own map.

The place and not the person is the ultimate nurturing source. It is a contemporary condition that is exemplified, for example, in the memoirs of Mayes and Gilbert; for Kamman it was people and terroir, now the place and situation and a confluence of conditions make for the expansion of healing foodways for which memoirists, cooks and food writers are the channels. Memoirs are about people who are shaped by a spirit of place and its foodways. The definition of authenticity is inseparable from location and what Amy Trubek defines as the "taste of place". (2008, 16)

We have focused in this section on the theme of nourishment as a central development in the appraisal of culinary memoirs that reflects the modernistic anxiety about the relationship between the past and the present. Kaplan writes that: "Having devoured the world, literature was dying for lack of nourishment." (1996, 44). Culinary memoirs appear to offer a form of moral and literary nourishment, coherent and generalized across the genre, in large quantities. The genre deserves to be studied as an evolving collection of works that, as we saw at the outset of our study, respect a certain narrative format and literary code.

C. An emerging literary genre

We shall not cease from exploration,
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
— T.S. Eliot, "Little Gidding", 1942.

T. S. Eliot reminds us that we are all travellers, explorers of our own lives, on a journey that we subconsciously hope will take us back to the place we do not know and for which we always have nostalgia, the place of our origins and the birth of our identity. Eliot recalls the mystery of birth, when we knew everything and subsequently lost all knowledge, the place of ultimate nourishment. This theme has been at the heart of our study and in this final section we will look at the way that the genre, like the narrator, strives to move forward while looking backwards, proposing a reading of the memoirs that looks to the future, while considering the current status of the genre and how it might evolve. We will consider the horizons that the genre is defining and evaluate what culinary memoirs conclude about the culinary and travel genre in constant progression.

Our final scrutiny of the genre is given momentum by the claims, of Julie Rak and others, that memoirs are forging a new creative path and in doing so are superseding autobiography as the progressive form of self-writing. Rak cites Jennifer Schuessler who considers memoir even to be "perhaps the dominant genre of contemporary literature" (Schuessler[345] quoted in Rak, 2013, loc. 264). She also refers to G. Thomas Couser's concordant claim that 'memoir' now replaces 'autobiography' (Rak, 2013, loc. 182), while Couser, himself, comments that Julie Rak's genealogy of the term memoir highlights its radical instability as used by writers, publishers, critics and scholars (Couser, 18). This ontological debate extends well beyond the scope of culinary memoirs but it serves to confirm that our "semi-or sub-literary genre" as Couser would want to define it, that we have brought under the spotlight, is part of a movement of intense transformation. I would defend calling it a genre in its own right because of its association with the equally

[345] Jennifer Schuessler. "Frank McCourt and the American Memoir". *New York Times*. New York Times, 25 July 2009. WK3.

mutating travel genre, as well as its filiation with traditional corpora including gastronomic writing and autobiography.

1. Current readings of memoirs: nourishment for the future

Throughout our study we have postulated many, often paradoxical, ideas about the role and function of culinary memoirs, for both the narrator—intimating a fictional narrative, immobility and movement, narrative flow and fragmentation, poetry and prose, tradition and innovation, an introspective and readerly focus. Culinary memoirs concentrate questions of identity, inherent in their interactional form, concurring with G. Thomas Couser's claim that the memoir does not just entail questions of identity but co-exists with such a quest (89). As we proceed, in light of the plethora of themes, we must ask the question whether culinary memoirs try, to their detriment perhaps, to be everything to everyone. Eagleton explains that, like the post-structuralist text, food is endlessly interpretable, as we have sought to demonstrate, "as gift, threat, poison, recompense, barter, seduction, solidarity, suffocation" (Eagleton, 1998, 204).

We have concluded that the genre is hybrid but what is the exact nature of that hybridity? Do these boundless interpretations comprise qualities in culinary memoirs, or invite criticism for dissipation? We have argued the case for a hybrid genre, while adhering to the specific nomenclature of 'culinary memoir', as most precisely representing the works. We have observed that the author as writer—introspectively—and the author as narrator—in her relationship with the reader—finds and offers nourishment in the writing of the memoir, where the self as narrative and the narrative as food, are both self-serving and altruistic in the postmodern tradition.

Moving forward, we consider which elements/aspects of culinary memoirs should be used to shape our future readings and our understanding of the evolution of the genre itself. We identify the notions of abundance with regard to foodways, the element of myth which often permeates their narrative characterization, as well as the metamorphosing of the genre into other parasite or alternative forms in the future. In terms of the journey itself, we observe the further, more, tangible connection, of story with place, in which tourist travel plays its part, circumscribed by the concepts of odyssey and pilgrimage in modern times.

Characterising narrative: personal stories and emotional development

At their most fundamental level, culinary memoirs are remarkable for the abundance of food that is described, proposed and presented with lush language and depictions, a leitmotif running through the entire, sometimes disparate, collection, a state of benediction as Gaston Bachelard would concede: "Il semble que dans ce paradis matériel, l'être baigne dans la nourriture, qu'il soit comblé de tous les biens essentiels" (Bachelard, 1957, 27). With this accumulation is associated an idea of generosity. Foremostly, there is a sense of a collective plenty, essential to counterweight the diasporic, immigrant and trauma discourses; there is also a sense of personal sharing and invitation. Elizabeth Ehrlich expresses the underlying moral message of the need for a sense of rich nourishment and the importance of living for the moment: seemingly in contradiction with Miriam's careful and thrifty spirit, she describes how: "Miriam pours oil straight from the jar. It is a luxurious gesture. For a moment we are in a land of peace and plenty. Time stops as we watch the oil flow." (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 43). Tomorrow it might change. Nothing is permanent. We are reminded of Babette's sense of wealth in the eponymous work by Isak Dinesen after the fabulous feast she prepares that leaves her poor. She chose to live for the moment: "'Poor?' said Babette. She smiled as if to herself. 'No, I shall never be poor. I told you that I am a great artist. A great artist, Mesdames, is never poor." (Dinesen, loc. 436). The rituals send a message of permanence but the fragility is ever present. In contrast with narratives of loss, Shoba Narayan describes a childhood of rich feasts to which nature contributed:

> It began, as always, with a feast. Several feasts in fact. The coming of the summer heralded many things in my paternal grandparents' life [...] and to celebrate all of these, a series of feasts, of *sadyas*, or feasts [...] The coconut trees in the backyard tripled their yield [...] Mangoes rained a harvest that littered the earth like golden globules. Prickly, bulbous jackfruit hung like engorged breasts from branches, begging for release [...] the forests of tender green beans, plantains, and ripe pumpkins [...] (*Monsoon Diary*, 83).

In this abundance we associate the luxuriant Mediterranean landscapes of Durrell, David and others, where in Cyprus "traditional sweet jam and spring water [...] welcomes the stranger to every Greek house" (*Bitter Lemons*, 71), and "plates loaded with gleaming tangerines and almonds" (82). The reader is caught up, perhaps even overwhelmed, by this bounty, to which are added the cumulated hundreds of recipes

that the corpus represents, that are, in themselves generous towards the reader, creating a spirit of giving and coming together in the face of postmodern individualism.

Abundance, however, may also imply indigestion. Is there too much talk of food, and too many recipes? Kate Christensen intended (perhaps before her publisher intervened) to call *Blue Plate Special* '*Another Fucking Food Book*'. Significantly, she did not use the term 'memoir' but 'book', I would like to suggest, out of respect for the genre. It is indeed a comment on the nature of the genre, that has been exploited for diverse forms of autobiographical and sensationalist project around the tempting topic of food, and is perhaps overloaded with variations on a similar theme.[346] The culinary memoir perhaps being stretched beyond its capacities, is ultimately required to associate the invisible with the tangible, spiritual quests with food, as if it could be a catch-all metaphor that, as the ultimate nourishment, can guide, transform and rebuild. Adam Gopnik wrote that: "[w]e have moved not from efficiency to waste but from famine to abundance" (*Table Comes First*, 180).[347] Lawrence Durrell captures the notion of natural balance that perhaps saves both the reader and the narrative. Speaking of the shepherd-priest, her writes: "combined with the luxuriance and efflorescence of Mediterranean culture went (together with the old classic sensuality and romantic reticence) a streak of self-abnegation, of asceticism. Licence and frugality were sisters under the skin - like poetry and mathematics." (*Caesar's Vast Ghost*, 21).

Within Durrell's observation lie the literary elements that shape food narrative and journeying, as we identified in part I, of myth, mystery, spirituality, and fiction. Indeed, Durrell sets the tone for an ultimate paradox with his Heraldic Universe in which both dimensions, the prose and the poetry of life and consumption are confronted and explored. Barbara Kingsolver's approach to eating is scientific, yet in the last lines of the book she talks of the "Beautiful Mystery". She celebrates Thanksgiving as

[346] Our corpus includes a variety of food self-writing forms that as we elaborated in part I reflect the affiliations and genealogy which allow us to include them within the same culinary memoir genre without limiting ourselves to one specific leaning.

[347] Steven L. Hopp, Barbara Kingsolver's husband and scientific consultant for her "Year of Seasonal Eating" in *Animal Vegetable, Miracle*, includes articles on topics related to mismanaged food resources such as: "Is Bigger Really Better?" (76-77), "Sustaining the Unsustainable" (206-207), and "Trading Fair and Square" (262-263). These ethical concerns about sustainability and locavorous eating relate to the abundance we note in culinary memoirs in terms of the promotion of a personal dialogue around foodways, with a community in Kingsolver's project and literary venture or with a sensitized readership in memoirs.

"creation's birthday party" with harvest and seeds, "a germ of promise to do the whole thing again, another time" (284), for as a household of "mixed spiritual backgrounds [...] we celebrate plenty" (285). The writer is drawn to the association of story and mystery to test whether the genre can resolve her own existential questions of origin. The personal development foregrounded in these memoirs suggests that food can reach the 'unfathomable' to which Sandra M. Gilbert refers. The title of Gilbert's book *The Culinary Imagination* is an indication that we should approach the mysteries of our personal histories through imaginative literary devices in relation to food.

The literary study of the condition of exile and displacement becomes both object and subject as the author comments her own narrative. The memoirist is critic and the critic also a memoirist, of which there are a number of examples including Arlene Voski Avakian, Adam Gopnik, and Sandra M. Gilbert herself, in whose critical works she slips her own incipient culinary memoir. In *The Culinary Imagination*, Gilbert surveys a vast panorama of books about food, describing her own attempt to write a culinary memoir, as though it was necessary for her to test the medium in order to understand its functioning, and maybe even its attraction, fascinated by the potential power of the theme of food. She uses the metaphor of taste to draw attention to the indigestible aspect of immigrant displacement that leaves a sense of loss and incomprehension, rather than nourishment and understanding:

> A few years ago I started to write a culinary memoir that I was going to call 'The Spices of Life,' and it was going to be full of contradictions—savory with celebration through salty, too, with some of the flavors that often flavors memories of menus past. What I found myself writing though was more elegiac that I'd expected it to be, not just salty but bitter with what I think I recognize as the alienating taste of loss that accompanies cultural displacement, the mouthful of bitter herbs that immigrants swallow as they journey from the known to the unfathomable, even from the table of the familiar to the walls of estrangement. (Gilbert, 168).

Her thirty-page culinary memoir chapter, subtitled "The Ambiguities of the Transnational Foodoir", is notable for several reasons. This intimate and touching chronicle is positioned at the halfway point in her critical work, as though needing to pause in her reflections and consider the nature of the genre from a personal perspective. In it she describes her parents, homelife and her culinary heritage—with reference to other culinary memoirs, including those of Abu-Jaber, Furiya and Ehrlich—as well as

questioning her culinary identity that left her with a strong sense of rootlessness and displacement despite her mother's admonition that her childhood had been a happy and stable one. She also anticipates contradictions which are, as we have seen, at the heart of many memoirs. She identified herself with the immigrant dilemma, the displacement and estrangement that her mother no doubt carried with her. This testimony is a witness to the centrality of the personal story in culinary memoirs that touch the reader, and the potential of such stories tracing origins from individual culinary identity. She even includes some recipe descriptions evocative of her heritage, and examples of the herbs that served as landmarks on her journey and testify to the authenticity of her family's culinary traditions.

Sandra M. Gilbert's is an example of how culinary memoirs are developing parasite forms that exist outside of an informally defined corpus. Gilbert's and other diverse narratives show that recipes are included in unexpected places, as though necessary to justify the place of the personal discourse: a short collection appears after the paratexts at the end of Abu-Jaber's *Life Without a Recipe*, following the Reading Group Guide and an interview, as though the title itself was defiance enough and the author had to confirm the credibility of her reputation as a food writer; a scattering of recipes intersperse the questions and answers in a blog interview with Kate Christiansen (Doll, 2013). There are also quasi-memoir works that imitate and recall aspects of culinary memoirs in their hybridity and in their desire to nourish. Paul Theroux's *The Tao of Travel* is a fragmented text of quotes and comments, a form of metaphysical recipe book for travellers. Abu-Jaber's novel *Crescent*, reads not simply like an autobiographical novel, but one that resembles the blueprint for *The Language of Baklava*; in it she explores the themes of immigrant displacement and loneliness, the place of food within the diasporic condition and personal trauma. Like Abu-Jaber, Sirine's mother was American and her father an immigrant, like her also, she negotiates a path through the stories of her immigrant uncle's story-telling. Sirine bakes the recipes of Abu-Jaber's memoir, *knaffea*, *baklava*, and stuffed grape leaves, to recreate a semblance of home for her immigrant customers because "[t]hey don't know how to carry their homes inside them" (*Crescent*, 94); she speaks to them through her food, as Abu-Jaber speaks to her readers through her recipes: "Anyone who can make these cookies understands me" says her uncle's friend, Aziz (*Crescent*, 105). Memoirs are rooted in the real world whereas

novels are more writerly, claims G. Thomas Couser, though he adds that the genres are complementary, both imaginative rather than conflicting or competing (Couser, 48).

As Durrell's most stylistically enigmatic travel book, and in that respect worthy of comparison with the hybrid nature of culinary memoirs, *Caesar's Vast Ghost* elucidates the construction of the culinary memoirs with its spirit of past, of place, and of journey. It takes the form of fragmented morsels, a guide for travellers and (im)migrants, people of the edges of society. Isabelle Keller-Privat describes it as a constant interplay between prose and poetry, myth, biography and historical narrative. The endotic journey, this pursuit of the inner soul through the intimacy and mundanity of everyday eating, is both poetic and spiritual. "A compendium of poetic inklings—all that the Ideal Traveller should know!" (*Caesar's Vast Ghost*, 3), implying that with such poetic inklings, the reader can know not only everything essential about the destination, but also about how to undertake his own inner journey. What remains is "the work of selection" (*Caesar's Vast Ghost*, 7) and not the "*A Complete Provence* (6), as his publishers would have had Durrell's work entitled, for it was his personal *Aspects of Provence*, which he describes as "partial and personal" in the first line, and "Constrained by history" in the title of the introductory poem. A partial response to loss and deracination lies in the personal stories of exotic endotic journeys in pursuit of foreign homelands. Durrell writes of Provence, a mysterious place of secrets that he has researched, like an inner landscape, that he has discovered through its fruits, wine and honey, where the sacred and the profane are intertwined. Self-discovery is made through taste and exploration according to Durrell's formula:

> I have experienced the country with my feet as well as his tongue: long walks and long potations have characterized my innocent researches, the ideal way to gain access to a landscape so full of ambiguities and secrets. Yes, secrets black with wine and gold with honey, landscapes of an almost brutal serenity, piled one upon another with almost quixotic profusion, as if to provide the historic confrontations which have made them significant, muddling up the sacred and the profane, the trivial and the grandiose with operatic richness, mesmerizing one! (*Caesar's Vast Ghost*, 6).

In whichever form, food-related memoirs convey moral messages which define the narrative. Adam Gopnik writes: "Moral taste is often an expanded metaphor rising from mouth taste." (*Table Comes First*, 97). Diana Abu-Jaber warns: "I'm told to be brave

and free, to live fearlessly, live independently. But then again, be careful, careful, careful. Advice is offered like food from the hand—a loving, unwanted gift." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 31). Durrell provides numerous examples in which food is the essence of his relationship with the local people on the islands where he settled. It is the nerve that connects people with each other and with their past: Ehrlich with her mother-in-law, Furiya with her parents, Martin as a mechanism for healing her past, Narayan with her roots, Roden with her homeland, Zonana with her heritage. Memoirs integrate food as a vector for personal communion and understanding to reconnect with origins and wholeness.

Characterising the journey: connecting story and place

Reading memoirs is an exercise in connecting story and place. The reader must detect the synchronicity of the work and the individual view point that are interwoven into the elements of the landscape. This is achieved by a harmony created between anecdotes and recipes, levels of emotional engagement and intimacy, people and landscape. In the months that follow her brother's suicide, Sasha Martin finds herself in Paris, and shares a recipe for the French staple of French bread, a preparation that is slow and delicate producing a simple and deeply symbolic nourishing food. After the traumatic chapter, "White Flag of Surrender", the following chapter is concluded with a recipe for all-comforting, simple French bread. When she sets up home in Oklahoma, and her mother's apple pie fails to live up to her childhood memory, she proceeds to share her own modified recipe, adapted to the humid climate and her need to nourish her new independence: "a desert that gets made, in the face of—and perhaps because of—all odds" (*Life from Scratch*, 188). When she visits her future in-laws in an arid forgotten Bible Belt town in Oklahoma, she assimilates their philosophy of compliance: "Acceptance is the Geronimo way [...] There's a waiting in Geronimo, a settled acceptance that all things bear fruit with time" (220), sharing her father-in-law's simple catfish bake with creole dressing, like the landscape, with no fresh produce in sight, bar the fish. The recipes are the introduction to the landscape, its people and her growing acceptance of her place in it. Banerjee-Dube explains that the sensory landscape that Roden portrays suggests a depth of connection between food and place (202): "In

summer, the riverside [in Baghdad] was dotted with the flames of brushwood fires against which were silhouetted the fish roasted upright" (*Jewish Food,* 349), or her experience of catching sea urchins: "It was a great joy to swim out to the rocks, and dive into the sea to discover hosts of dark-purple-and-black spiky, jewel-like balls clinging fast to the rocks" (*Middle Eastern Food,* 200).

We can, similarly, highlight key themes that underpin the journey metaphor in the narrative, drawing into the analysis the perspective of tourism, another form of travel more universal and less contentious or emotionally charged than diaspora or trauma displacements, which has the potential to become, in postmodern times, the means of access for personal odysseys or pilgrimages. Robinson and Andersen claim that true experience begins when we break out of our routines (2002, 50), a condition accessible even to the tourist, the traveller not merely driven to displacement as a consequence of exile or loss. Jerome Garcin claims that the search for roots and the proliferation of museums and eco-museums reflect a cult for heritage. The pursuit of both narrator and reader is for the authentic: "[l]'immémorial contre l'impermanence : les deux mouvements, bien sûr, se nourrissent, la poussée du frivole favorisant celle de l'authenticité [...] Le culte de l'authenticité apparait comme la nouvelle manière de rêver [...]" (106, 107). However, the culinary memoir has allowed travel to also locate a human motivation rather than what Garcin and Roland Barthes have identified as the cultural drive, or in Barthes terms, the cultural alibi: "Le voyage est devenu (ou redevenu) une voie d'approche humaine et non pas culturel." (Barthes, 1957, 135).

Although we have circumnavigated the culinary tourist memoirs to a large extent, they have a consideration in the study as examples of mono-focused regional travels, sometimes associated with romantic relationships that find resolve in culinary contexts such as that of Kathleen Flinn or Matthew Fort. Indeed, Dean MacCannell promotes the idea of tourism as a personal journey of discovery (49); in his study of the tourist, he considered himself a voyager in the semantic representations that could be delivered in various mediums. Culinary tourism involves the act of writing about one's deliberate and engaged efforts to travel to places to document culinary particularities of non-normative subjects says Anita Mannur (170). Despite the superficiality of this genre, Vasiliki Galani-Moutafi suggests that travel, in general, creates 'passages' into the 'openness' of our world, fostering self-reflection. Interaction unlocks the potential for

dialogue between host and guest. In return, we 'see' another different realm of diversity that may not be encountered within our own domestic arena. As Galani-Moutafi points out "the interlocking dimensions of time and space make the journey a potent metaphor that symbolizes the simultaneous discovery of self and the Other" (205). The very nature of experience, as MacCannell stipulates, is "self-discovery through a complex and sometimes arduous search for an Absolute Other, a basic theme of our civilization, a theme supporting an enormous literature: Odysseus, Aeneas, the Diaspora, Chaucer [...]" (MacCannell, 5). Seeking an Absolute Other may be translated in culinary memoirs into the search for one's absolute self, one's identity before the 'fall', the journey, the displacement, the trauma. Understanding the other may be as important as understanding how one's parents' identity shapes their own, in the case of Abu-Jaber, Li and Martin.

Although the association of tourist literature with an odyssey is questionable, the confrontation of the other is equally as real as in culinary memoirs. The odyssey symbol also describes the reader's journey of self-discovery too, in which places are as nourishing as the journey itself, and a metaphor for life's epic dimensions with its adventures and misfortunes. Joyce Zonana makes the portentous correlation between the class she is teaching on the *Odyssey* at the University of New Orleans at the time of Hurricane Katrina, and specifically the concept of guest-friendship, *xenia*, and the events that follow, which would reveal all its symbolic and real significance in the days after the cataclysm:

> For in those tumultuous days that followed the storm, when I wasn't watching TV in horror or driving in panic, I was, in fact, thinking about the *Odyssey*, thinking that now I understood, now I knew what is was to lose your companions, what is was to be at the mercy of Poseidon and Zeus, gods of sea and storms; now I knew what it was to need to tell my story, to listen to those of others [...] (*Dream Homes*, 196).

Journeys, that begin as odysseys often turn into pilgrimages, in the return to the homeland in which the journey itself incites us to seek a reason, an objective, an answer. Butor has described the pilgrimage as a journey to a place of apparition in the hope of a response to a question, to healing for body and soul. This transforms into a journey to a

place that speaks to the traveller about his past and his self.[348] (Butor, 11). Abraham Maslow explains that we speak of the journey through symbolic representations that we have created or attained along the way. In the end, we could create our own mythology or reinforce tradition through continual self-actualisation (Campbell and Moyers, 1991), we enforce the power of myth in our lives, where each individual is on a personal journey of discovery with particular agendas. (49). While finding one's birthplace and creating personal myths are part of the self-contained memoir narrative, the notion of a pilgrimage opens the door to hybridity, by relating the meaning of one's personal story to the environment. Entering the convent for the first time Rossant describes her homeland return experience: "I had lost a mother then, but at least I had had Cairo, a city and a family that nurtured me and that gave me a strong identity" (*Apricots on the Nile*, 177). The city is like a mother to her – the one she had lost. It gave her her identity as well as a family that had cared for her there. Narayan in her second memoir *Return to India: an immigrant memoir*, defines for her daughter the importance of one's roots: "I think sometimes you need to go back to where you come from in order to find out who you are." (*Return to India*, 224). She explains that New York is her love, but India is her home. New York has allowed her to grow into a more complete person: "this lovely, fragile city that nurtured me" (226).

While Luisa Weiss finds comfort and creativity in her kitchen, part of her memoir is devoted to the choice of a home city, as well as an apartment. She expressed homesickness for the Berlin of her childhood, but above all returned to a city that corresponded to her nature and story, unbustling, cultural, home- and season-focused: "In Berlin things were more languid and simple" (*Berlin Kitchen*, 182). Far from her transatlantic childhood, her bookish, homemaking personality found nourishment in baking, especially for holidays—Thanksgiving, Christmas—that evolved with the seasons: "The days grew shorter and the streets filled, once again, with children toting their huge square backpacks […] Dead leaves from the trees […] clustered in the gutters […] the salad and simple sandwiches of late summer gave way to long-cooked beans and beef stew. I spent hours in the kitchen roasting apples for applesauce or caramelizing

[348] "le pèlerinage devient voyage aux lieux qui parlent, qui nous parlent de notre histoire et de nous-mêmes. Ce sont les pèlerinages romains de renaissants. » (My translation).

onions for soup." (247). Once she returns finally to Berlin, almost every chapter begins with an observation about her environment, including "a cold dark place in winter" (chapter 26), "a warm Sunday morning" (chapter 28), a comparison with New York sidewalks (chapter 30), the heat of summer (chapter 31), Berlin markets (chapter 32), late summer (chapter 33), unreliable August (chapter 34). Her environment offers the long hours she needs to cook and make her home, her moods reflecting those of her city's climate, her own myth emerging, that she will pass on to her children. Far from being confining, these landmarks underwrite her story of displacement.

2. What culinary memoirs say about themselves and the genre

> [Elizabeth David] convinced us that is was all right to care about cooking as a serious thing because she herself did so with a discrimination as fine and a passionate as any we ourselves had just been learning to make over such things as *The Waste Land* or *The Wings of the Dove*. (John Thorne, *Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 6).

John Thorne in his foreword to Elizabeth David's book of essays insists again on the delicate literary endeavour of her food writing, as worthy of study as T. S. Eliot of Henry James: "She makes the act of cooking a very special sort of bliss, at once logical and sensual, like composing a sonnet or framing a syllogism." (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 6). However, not all writers have the same determination of literary endeavour. What do we make, then, of the relative lack of sophistication or two-dimensionality of some culinary narratives, even as they purport to offer universal messages, and existential answers to questions of self and identity? Also, how does the culinary memoir, as a genre, align with contemporary literary theory? We will consider the new directions that cooking is taking under the auspices of the culinary memoir in terms of uprooting, globalization and therapeutic functions.

Popular reads or classroom literature?

We return to Barbara Waxman, whose early research into culinary memoirs, posed the question whether the genre was worthy of serious academic study. Her question is legitimate, for we have observed that the works present themselves as a form

of feel-good literature. They appear to keep company with less scholarly forms of literature such as culinary tourism and cookbooks. In this respect we might ask whether the concept of hybridity does the genre a disservice? Jean-Marie Schaeffer points out that with the tendency to democratization since the nineteenth century, there has been a blurring of high and vernacular culture (11).[349] Culinary memoirs do not fall within the category of high culture, not because their narratives lack the quality of literariness, or they are structurally and generically lacking, but because that category is based on a hierarchy (14) in the form of an esteemed and researched corpus, to which we have revealed these memoirs to have an essentially rhizomatic affiliation. Schaeffer argues in favour of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of literature (30) which transcends the rigid codes that define genres. This approach respects the diversity and hybridity of culinary memoirs.

Having said much about its versatility, it is important to re-evaluate the essential functions of the culinary memoir. As a form of feel-good literature, the works are not simply axed around food as a single cultural identity, but also the exploration of other cultures, the nature of travel, nomadic or itinerant lives and fragmented identities. The literary genre demonstrates an openness to other cultures by the act of putting one's own culture on display. Durrell talked of words as being inadequate for an oblique approach to the essence of life is necessary: "'Art' then is only the smoked glass through which we can look at the dangerous sun" (Gifford and Durrell, 103-104), recalling the Biblical reference of "looking through a glass darkly" to detect the truth. The narrative approach is an artistic one, defended by Adam Gopnik's argument that cooking is art and therefore these stories are those of 'art history': "It is as if in the history of culture everyone in every city in every age were painting three pictures a day: separating common history from 'art history' would then become very hard." (*Table Comes First*, 38). Indeed, Anita Mannur asserts that the culinary must be a governing aesthetic (222).

For all its apparent transparency and singleness of purpose, food is an indirect and discreet way of looking at the world, the truth, one's identity. Just as ingredients, instructions and the kneading influence of traditions shape our foodways, our identity

[349] "[L]a dynamique de démocratisation, qui caractérise nos sociétés depuis le XIX siècle, n'a cessé de reconfigurer les relations entre haute culture et culture vernaculaire [...] Culture savante et culture vernaculaire ne cessent de se nourrir l'une et l'autre." (11-12).

and our relationships especially with family, to guide us to our roots, so the semantics of culinary memoirs, shape our memory recall. The treatment of origins and identity is a central question in today's globalized, fragmented society. Traditional foodways compare favourably with postmodern fusion food philosophy, as we have observed in Shoba Narayan's failed attempt to nourish her guests with fusion food rather than the simple, wholesome dishes of her family traditions (*Monsoon Diary*, 140-147), or Joyce Zonana's Christmas celebration with spiced cookies and a decorated tree that felt "very, very wrong" [...] I suddenly saw myself as an Egyptian Jew immigrant, playacting at being American" (151). Ethnographic studies claim that food in not simply another topic that 'symbolizes' identity but one that challenges us to rethink our methods, assumptions and theories in new and productive ways (Sutton, 170). Ehrlich demonstrates that a spiritual journey through foodways is possible; Wizenberg invites us to return unconditionally to the kitchen;[350] Christensen suggests that one can choose to move to a place that offers nurturing foodways to heal one's past.

Memoirs are narratives about making choices, not simply in terms of the sort of journey that will be undertaken, but also of the type of personality that will emerge from it. Shoba Narayan in her second memoir *Return to India* draws the conclusion from questioning her own identity that one must ultimately make a choice—in her case of a nationality and a country—give up the idea of being all things to all people, and renounce the idea of a multi-faceted personality. Narayan's decision to return to her roots was, as she describes it, motivated by limited psychological knowledge and, above all, maternal instinct (180), in other words, emotional instinct. In encouraging the idea of the memoir as an identity-shaping force, a further consideration is the malleability and chameleon character of the genre as a tool and channel in pursuing identity. A nostalgic tone is common, a longing to revisit archaic pleasures in tasting and preparing food, the rituals of the kitchen and the complicity with those who mentored them in that domain. However, we have seen that rituals may represent ties and a lack of freedom. Narayan and her husband debate their undoubtedly over-idealised expectations of Indian society that represents constraints and a shift away from an

[350] Ironically, Wizenberg's second book is about the restaurant that she opens with her then husband, *Delancey: A Man, a Woman, a Restaurant, a Marriage* (2014).

identity of culturally multi-layered global citizen. The sanctity of age-old rituals and traditions is debateable and therefore puts into question a binary reading of these texts.

David Sutton writes that cookbooks undertake a textual analysis of symbolism (164), while culinary memoirs also offer the possibility of embodiment. How much of the phenomenon of a nostalgia cookery book is apodemialgia,[351] a longing to get away from one's home, part of a tourist desire for commodified 'experiences'? (Sutton, 164-5). Adam Gopnik's description of culture, sums up the essence of many cookbooks: "Civilization is mostly about the story of how seeds, meats, and ways to cook them travel from place to place", and are subject to various manipulations (*Table Comes First*, 9). In contemporary food memoirs, the displacement of the narrator/cook/consumer becomes as equally important as the provenance of the food and its preparation. Despite their focus on traditions, culinary memoirs are also aligned with postmodern definitions, notably in terms of the creative malleability of their form, that same creativity used to circumnavigate traditions without overturning them, as in Narayan's determined and ingenious efforts to go to America. Taking a rhizomatic rather than deep-rooted approach, they draw lessons and seize opportunities from the past to create a functional, opportunistic present, at the same time as preserving their literary readerly and writerly qualities (Barthes, 1970), telling short, personal stories rather than long narratives with 'grande histoire'. These recent memoirs are, for the most part, unfinished works concluding an early phase of life, and often followed by second memoirs. They manifest a proximity to their readers who they invite to participate in their journey, seeking origins that emerge finally in the form of tentative traces.[352]

The examination of an extensive corpus, as has been our intention, enables us to make an objective study of contemporary culinary memoirs for themselves[353] as well as in relation to other works, and allows them to offer a new reading of earlier works that do not fall conveniently into the cookbook genre or completely within the scope of twentieth century travel literature. Inversely, the reading of early works casts an

[351] *Apodemialgia* is a Greek term meaning the opposite of nostalgia; it can also be described as wanderlust, the languor for foreign lands, or the pull of alterity as we have described it here.
[352] Refer to the comparative list compiled by Hassan, 267–8.
[353] The large number of works that fall within both are relatively narrow definition of a culinary memoir with recipes, and even the broader scope of memoirs about food is alone an indication of the importance of asking the question about the influence it has on other literary genres.

interesting light on more recent ones that we endeavour to categorize. This approach alone invites a reconsideration of writing about food and the designation of a new genre, whether we accept the ties to travel writing or not. In juxtaposing diverse works, we find common threads such as that of fulfilling hunger in Fisher and Christensen, and more unexpected threads such as a discourse of itinerance in Martin and Weiss. Culinary memoirs are self-referencing,[354] self-imitating in form and style, and above all repetitive in terms of the codified formula, like the recipes themselves.

Cooking untethered

The paradox that ties food memoirs and travel is the realization that one symbolically leaves the kitchen to travel and so to encounter others. These works have invited comparison with travel literature for the omnipresence of the journeying theme. Travel discourses encroach upon the realm of culinary writing, and culinary writing seeps into that of travel literature as a pervasive form of human experience that is fundamental as that of eating and cooking. Genre boundaries are dissolved:

> Dwelling was understood to be the local ground of collective life, travel a supplement; roots always precede routes. 'But what would happen,' I began to ask, 'if travel were untethered, seen as a complex of pervasive spectrum of human experiences?' Practices of displacement might emerge as constitutive of cultural meaning rather than as their simple transfer or extension. (Clifford quoted in Döring et al., 4).

Foodways and 'roadways' are the primary, interlocked preoccupations of man. Importantly, they endorse James Clifford's idea that travel has become 'untethered', just as, in much the same way, foodways have become untethered. They have an air of the hearth—homespun—but are, in essence, displaced, offering a multitude of tropes focused on self-writing, as well as access to self-understanding. Their values remain constant, but they also reflect the current social condition, in which displacement has become a norm, and diasporas proliferate. Culinary memoirs both reflect and respond to that need, providing multiple cameos of displaced lives and comforting scenarios that pose questions and propose solutions to narrator and reader, while, for the most part, avoiding platitudes and truisms.

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[354] Many of the memoirs make textual or stylistic references to previous food writers, including M.F.K. Fisher, Elizabeth David, Julia Child, Toklas, Elizabeth Pennell and even Hemingway.

Culinary memoirs evoke displacement in a period of uprooting and globalization to confront questions of our fundamental needs, including those of home, nourishment and love represented by food. Another significant quality emerges from culinary memoirs—that of desire—be it for food, particularly dishes, tastes, memories, exoticism or simply otherness, which corresponds to a fundamental need to understand the past, its pain and pleasures, and to dream the future. Desire is communicated through multiple devices, such as nostalgia, sensuality, gourmet pleasure, and not simply hunger associated with loss. Desire is also gluttonous, and culinary memoirs are foremostly a celebration of eating, indulgence, pleasure, not as a cookery book, but in a personal narrative, commending the act of eating, taking pleasure, indulging, recollecting, and even culinary travel.

The recipe they offer, of authenticity and integrity must adapt to a globalised world. Despite current attempts to move away from such an interventionist form of farming, Elizabeth David's quotation from a cookery book writer of the 1890s still has validity: "'Cookery,' says [Philéas] Gilbert, 'is as old as the world, but it must also remain, always, as modern as fashion.'" (*Omelette and a Glass of Wine*, 287). The subject is repeatedly broached in questions of authenticity of ingredients, taste and foodways. Jerome Bruner, in defining autobiography, insists on the importance of lived experience, with our lives as the narrative: "In the end we become the autobiographical narratives by which we "tell about" our lives" (Bruner and Feldman, 40). Sandra M. Gilbert wrote: "Our recipes are histories of who we are, transmitting the taste of the past through precept and example, even as we can sometimes revise our lives by adjusting the menu." (Gilbert, 8). Recipes contain something of oneself, history and mystery, because a recipe involves alchemy, chance, transformational properties that we do not always control. Recipes are also a signature, a guarantee of the reputation of the writer, a cultural and ethnical statement.[355] The narrator exists through the recipes, while all the rest of the narrative is memory, recollection, imaginings and 'fiction': the invisible. The kitchen becomes a place of memory in an act that Jane Kramer calls a kind of domestication of memory (Kramer, n.pag.), for the Jewish people, even a sacred place: "the ritualization

[355] We discussed in part I the idea that the recipe gave credibility to the identity quest.

of the gastronomic act transforms the kitchen into a sanctuary" (*Jewish Food,* 25), a sanctuary where its readers find nourishment.

While these works are objectively literary, the writing of memoirs and autobiographies has an undeniably restorative quality that we have discussed in our presentation of the autobiographical aspects of culinary memoirs. In its therapeutic dimension, the memoir genre proposes a written form that is accessible to many. In practical terms, the memoir-recipe book format has qualities that align it with narrative therapy, indicative of the importance of the travel element. It demonstrates how 'travel' writing can reveal its autobiographical, literary and therapeutic facets. In narrative therapy, the dominant story is a journey that is sustained by family, community and lived experiences, while unique outcomes emerge in the course of analytical narration of the journey, as moments of enlightenment concerning one's identity.

While the story is constantly being revised and updated,[356] it also has a stable element that reveals a commonality, the shared experience of a journey towards a point of understanding. Memory processes are organized in brief linear timelines, making it more accessible and structured than short-term, orally-recalled memory. As a narrative practice the narrator is able to impose a new interpretation on her own personal history after she has journeyed to a new place, both literally and figuratively.[357] For David Rubin, writing necessarily implies rewriting (292), be it in terms of the narrative story or the text itself. Fivush, Haden and Reese explain that recounting means sharing the experience again, even embellishing the early narrative, and finding new ways of structuring and understanding experiences. The process helps us to organize personal memories as canonical narratives (Fivush et al., 343). We learn the culturally appropriate narrative form for recounting the past to an audience, and in writing culinary narratives, one is driven, by nature of the nourishing dimension of culinary memoirs, to find redemptive sequences in one's past which create a narrative that is structuring and healing.

[356] See Jarrett, 2019.
[357] Key works on narrative therapy include Michael White, *Maps of Narrative Practices* (2007), and Michael White and David Epston, *Narrative Means to Therapeutic Ends* (1990).

Julie Rak cites Leigh Gilmore who identifies in memoirs a culture of confession and therapy (2013, loc. 361). The act of cooking is summarized in a gesture that expresses emotion and subconscious memories. Elizabeth Kamarck Minnich writes: "Cooking, […] became to me a kind of yoga" (*Through the Kitchen Window*, 138-9), a sort of meditation, or therapy. "Cooking was rather like being part of the mystery of being grown up" (140), whereas producing meals is a different and disassociated experience than cooking. (143). For Ruth Reichl, healing from the loss of her job, cooking was meditation: "[she] watches and waits as chicken steams, drinks tea. She practices mindfulness as she cleans rice aware of the sensations of water and the grains: "I'd been concentrating completely, which rewarded me twice." (*My Kitchen Year*, 147). Cooking was for her a "lifeline" (169) and an affirmation: "I finally understood why cooking means so much to me. In a world filled with no, it is my yes." As such it is also a healing reminder of her damaging childhood (225).

We have observed that culinary memoirs take us back to the hearth, in order, from there, to take us beyond the home to new horizons. Food writing takes us beyond food, to the root of appetite itself, to a universality of human need: "When Liebling and Fisher wrote, they gestured from plate and glass to something bigger outside the dining room—to France, or to appetite itself […] the old twin circles (the family around the table, the cosmos beyond) have been supplemented by so many circles of attitude that the writer points from the plate to – another writer." (*Table Comes First*, 233). Culinary memoirs represent a multitude of short stories, offshoots of a larger story around food and appetite. A sensitivity, that is transcended by food and nourishment, evolves in, and then emerges from the kitchen. Angela Carter writes of the memoir form:

> Above all, it is a book about a particular sensibility—a unique and pungent one—that manifests itself most characteristically in the kitchen. That is what the genre is all about. M.F.K. Fisher had pioneered the culinary autobiographical novel in the US years before the Penguin school of cookery writers found its greatest star in Elizabeth David in the late Fifties and early Sixties. (Carter, n.pag.).

3. Evolutions and new horizons

> I seemed beautiful, witty, truly loved [...] the most fortunate of all women, past sea change and with her hungers fed. (*Gastronomical Me*, 517).

New culinary memoirs are appearing, as well as secondary (or more) memoirs by authors who have already explored their childhood and early adulthood some twenty years earlier. These second memoirs confront the challenges of a complex and ambiguous identity in adulthood and mature choices about directions, boundaries and belonging. These new publications are perhaps more politically sensitive for the climate of immigration and social culture has changed. Diasporas are more diverse, multi-cultural and less easily classifiable, allowing modern culinary myths to emerge. One can cite Alice Waters, who championed an alternate culinary and environmental awareness, originally inspired by French cuisine that focused on the goodness of simple foods acquired in one's immediate environment. We find correlations in some of the recent articles on the developments and transformations in travel writing with the dominant characteristics of culinary memoir writing.

As we indicated earlier in our discussion on characterizing the journey, travel has assumed a humanistic rather than cultural face (Barthes, 1957, 135). The emotional development of the traveller has become a prerequisite of contemporary travel. As we look beyond the immediate horizon, we are aware of the rapidity with which memoirs in general and the culinary memoir in particular are evolving. We consider the idea of inheritance which solicits questions about the generational discourse, the assumption of responsibilities, both in terms of tradition, foodways and transmission as, well as the evolution of the literary genre in itself.

Redrawing the boundaries of travel literature

In establishing a connection between the story and environment, the boundaries of travel literature are effectively redrawn pulling the personal 'home' story into a new domain which allows a space for the human adventure. The association of travel with nourishment occurs within slow, emotionally-aware processes, such as those journeys *in situ* undertaken by Ehrlich and Martin or a more real itinerant journey undertaken by

Zonana. Food networks associate food firstly with travel (Rebecca Swenson quoted in Counihan, 2013, 142). The focus is on eating, traveling, buying and selling food rather than meal planning and preparation techniques (2013, 148), the journey is ongoing. In this sense, some memoirs question the nature of the voyage in travel writing because although there is often a single, life-changing journey—often physical—in memoirs, the central journey is one of small repeated steps rather than one of giant leaps and land mark discoveries. It is an inner journey that is fuelled by the concept of nourishment.

One of the first online travel blog was posted by Jeff Greenwald on the 'Global Network Navigator' in 1993.[358] Greenwald described his journey around the world and later turned the pieces into a book, much as Sasha Martin's Global Table Adventure,[359] began as morsels and became a large, coherent and independently functioning event, that was presented in an accessible form to the local community as a free picnic, and for Martin as a source of reconstruction, guidance and healing, that is both specific to her needs and can be applied globally in her community and through her readership. It is symptomatic of the extensible quality of culinary memoirs that they can broach the specific and the universal, the recipe and the moral message, the comfort of cake and the trauma healing in one volume, hybrid in scope as well as in influence.

Closely aligned with de Botton's historical survey of travel writing and its causes, walker-writer of landscape, travel and nature writing, Robert Macfarlane correlates a surge of travel-writing excellence, with the rise of globalization and the democratization of air travel, in the late 1970s (Macfarlane, n.pag.), preceding the emergence of contemporary culinary memoirs. The pursuit of *terra incognita*, by authors such as Patrick Leigh Fermor and Bruce Chatwin can be translated in terms of memoirs as the exploration of personal internal uncharted territories. Writing of Nan (Anna) Shepherd's, *The Living Mountain*,[360] Macfarlane identities the presence of the specific and the universal, between matter and metaphysics:

> Shepherd describes what she calls 'the total mountain', a holistic account of the massif in which human presence, creaturely life, elements

[358] A Short History of Travel Writing – The Travel Tester. https://www.thetraveltester.com/a-short-history-of-travel-writing/.
[359] The similarity is sufficiently close between the titles that one can justifiably imagine Martin's culinary inspiration came from a travel blog in the close world of blogging.
[360] Nan Shepherd. *The Living Mountain: A Celebration of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland*. 1977. Edinburgh: Canongate, 2011.

> and weather are coextensive. She does so in prose that is deeply wise, avidly sensual and, we might say, committed to uncertainty. 'Slowly I have found my way in,' she writes of the Cairngorms, but 'if I had other senses there are other things I should know'. Always, in Shepherd, movement across landscape has its corresponding inward journey, and place is somewhere we are in and not on. (Macfarlane, n.pag.).

This example of travel literature that associates sensuality and wisdom, movement within a landscape with a corresponding inner journey finds its equivalence in the travel works of Durrell and the culinary memoirs of Abu-Jaber and Christensen. We recognize in Macfarlane's analysis the specific and universal, that of recipe and foodway details and the universality of cooking and communing with others through eating, the sensuality that marks her writing, as well as a commitment to uncertainty that corresponds to a respect for instinct and the humble self-searching of memoirists, and above all the movement across landscape that has "its corresponding inward journey, and place is somewhere we are in and not in", just as culinary memoirs dwell in both the past and the present, in places of memory and the present, the myth-making of *loci* that authors seek to recreate, but to which they can rarely return. Ehrlich's memoir is an example of this dichotomy of place, attention, and desire. It is this emotional development which distinguishes autobiographical travel literature—including culinary memoirs—from tourism literature.

Michael Jacobs wrote of this latter genre as indicating a diminishing respect for travel literature, further compounded by what he considers is by far the most flourishing subspecies of the genre today: the "Good Life Abroad Book". The problem about works such as Peter Mayle's *A Year in Provence* or Frances Mayes's *Under the Tuscan Sun*, he says, is not so much that they peddle Mediterranean dreams that can rarely be realised by others, but that "they encourage the idea that anyone can write books about their experiences abroad [...] I am [...] not surprised that the view of travel writing as a rarified pursuit of the privileged is being succeeded by one that diminishes the genre as banal, patronising and lightweight." (Jacobs, 2011, n.pag.). He goes on to explain that some critics argue for stricter distinctions within the genre, others, he adds somewhat dismissively "that a travel book today needed some form of emotional development on the author's part", a dimension that corresponds to personal development in culinary memoirs and that we recognize as missing in culinary tourist literature. Diana Abu-Jaber

writes: 'To me the truth of stories lies not in their factual precision, but in their emotional core [...] To be truthful to our own memories, no matter how flawed, private, embellished, idiosyncratic or improved they may be." (*Language of Baklava*, Foreword). However, Jacobs does focus on the notion of hybridity: "Part of the greatness of good travel literature lies perhaps in its mingling of genres, and in the scope it allows the writer to explore a wide range of subjects in a searching, non-academic manner."

Jacobs has perhaps captured this in his focus on the idea of magic[361] in works of travel literature: "The word "magical" is one of the most overused words in travel literature, but it is the travel writer's ability to transform the everyday world with a genuine sense of the magical that alone justifies the existence of the genre" for it is indeed the everyday, mundane, thrice-daily ritual that is the nexus of this journey. The use of 'fairy tale' endings, myths and allegories in works such as those of Li and Narayan make use of the magical as we have discussed earlier in our study to detach the culinary element from the mundane and ascend it to the realm of the extraordinary.

As we have seen throughout our study, that thrice-daily ritual is essentially organized and performed by women and indeed culinary memoirs contribute to the growing market of products aimed at a female readership. Maureen Mulligan in an article entitled "New directions or the end of the road? Women's travel writing at the millennium" analyses two travel books published in 1997 concurrent with the emergence of the culinary memoir genre, and is pertinent for its comment on the state of women's travel writing at the millennium. Mulligan's title is indicative of the importance of asking questions about the influence of culinary memoirs, whether they offer new directions or rather an end-of-the-road, fin de siècle ultra-fascination with food. The fascination is undeniable, but it is anchored in traditions, which are for the most part perceived positively and not from a fin de siècle perspective.

Two differing approaches to writing about the Other and oneself and one's culture in the process are proposed with *Desert Places* by Robyn Davidson (1996) who expresses a loss of conviction in travel writing, and *Terra Incognita* by Sara Wheeler (1996) who believed in travel as an interior imaginative adventure into a landscape of

[361] We have explored this idea in the identification of myth in culinary memoirs, of food and its traditions, of practices and family narratives.

myth and emptiness. (Mulligan, 61). Mulligan discerns in them a hybrid identity, and identifies travel writing as a series of re-writings and interconnected discursive codes. She echoes the spirit of culinary memoirs when she describes a literary tradition that is "still learning from its ancestors and redefining its contemporary codes through the interplay between individual writer/traveler and the intertextual nature of all written discourses" (62). There is a convergence of different strains of travel writing—the martyred heroic age, professional pragmatism of scientific research, trivial hedonism of tourism, an ideal postcolonial supra-national sharing of other places, and their idealism. (74). Both travel works that she discusses, promote, with varying degrees of bitterness, which culinary memoirs also articulate, the irrelevance of national boundaries. Referring to Nicola Walker (1998, 27), she talks rather of redrawing the boundaries of travel writing, that incorporate elements of personal description or self-reflection that would be traditionally found in autobiography or fiction. (73-74).

Beyond the horizon: inheritance, transformation and resolution

Culinary memoirs look backwards in self-reflection at the same time as they look towards the future and the development of the genre. As Zonana says at the end of her memoir: "The silver is not polished, but it shines nevertheless with the beauty of our past, the promise of our future" (*Dream Homes*, 203). This movement is captured in the sections of *Through the Kitchen Window: Women Explore the Intimate Meaning of Food and Cooking,* the intimacy repeated, in the section headings, "Inheritance", "Transformation" and "Resolution", echoing the intentions and narrative progression of culinary memoirs that promote personal development, ancestral teachings, inner reflections and women's journeys. The title of the work itself suggests a form of voyeurism, with the idea of looking through a window, emphasising the importance of intimacy in relation to food that explores the life changing dimension of foodways. It comprises a series of short culinary memoirs, or stories, many with recipes, created to paint a picture of women's experience and relationship to food. Women connect within the stories and also through the anthology as a whole, both as authors and readers. There is a diversity of origins and recipes, yet the whole carries a coherent message. It is interspersed with poems which, because of the way they punctuate the text, are echoes

of recipes. Women are connected in the story and connected through the book, both as authors and readers.

Culinary memoirs detect and amplify a movement and transformation in the travel writing genre. Robyn Davidson describes herself as also being 'homeless', or rootless (straddling three continents), describing a "tremendous restlessness" that made her lose a sense of a "gravitational center", but she alludes to a homogeneous western image while, at the same time, claiming to disassociate herself from it. She is unable to find lost roots or lost freedoms and experiences what would seem to be even greater ostracisation. The journey she invents and undertakes, highlights her own lack of direction and identity (Mulligan, 67). Sara Wheeler's, like Davidson's, destination is as much an exteriorization of a state of mind as a specific geographical place. Another hostile environment supposedly offering pristine emptiness reveals a story of self-conquering (or disillusionment) rather than self-discovery. The inner journey is the most important: your interpretation and not where you go is what is important. Wheeler quotes Alice Walker's words: "The most foreign country is within" (Mulligan, 73), an echo of the inner journey and the confrontation of otherness that marks the culinary journey. Mulligan concludes that these works are examples of a style that is unsure of its place as guidebooks, tourist documents, a mix of foreign and domestic. Somewhat like culinary memoirists, the writer is both a special envoy and a personal voice.

The essence of the journey may take an internal path, but when Michael Jacobs talks of magic and Maureen Mulligan of an imaginative adventure, one can assume that travel literature of varied kinds still inspire wanderlust. If we return to Michel Butor's claims made in 1972, before the explosion of modern travel writing described by Macfarlane in the late 1970s, we read that he saw a new form of narrative which embraced renewed potential for travel literature. Return to the home country is for Butor a journey into the history of one's family (Butor, 11), for it is there that the journey of exploration that he calls "l'errance primitive" is located, where one finds one's origins and one's identity. He adds that it is these journeys that reveal the most overt signs of markings and writing, as monuments, with the book—or memoir—as a sign of the journey (Butor, 13, 18). Culinary narratives describe returns to the home country that are perpetual, symbolic and literal. They comprise the primitive wanderings that Butor

predicted as the future of travel writing, and which culinary memoirs have adopted as a form of self-searching within the primal context of foodways.

The generational discourse is strong in memoirs, looking back to previous generations but also considering future ones. Abu-Jaber makes the decision to carry on, to keep the flame alive and take on her father's culinary and cultural heritage:

> It's my turn, not only to make dinner but also to lead a child into the kitchen, to guide her through her appetites—both at and beyond the table. Bud had trouble sharing the kitchen, though he searched for and encouraged any traces of his culture in his children—through music and language and religion and temperament—he didn't like to give up that one power, as if it might compromise some essence of his spirit, his gift to us. (*Life Without a Recipe*, 254).

This iterates Ehrlich's analogous intention:

> Someone, many someones, must keep the sources alive [...] Without commitment the sources will die. The forms we love to have the choice to return to will wither and disappear, or worse yet, become hollow shells, cultural theme parks [...] It is my turn now. (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 327).

Assuming responsibility for carrying on traditions, with the idea that 'it's our turn now' also invites the reader to consider her own position in the definition, protection and transmission of important cultural values and identity, through culinary traditions.

The several times repeated grape leaf ritual is the essence of several cultures and a pivotal act in the assumption of inherited cultural responsibilities. Joyce Zonana's initial effort is fraught with anger and frustration for the fastidious task that she suffers through at the beginning of her memoir (*Dream Homes*, 23). Zonana matures in her relation to her culinary heritage, describing a different experience of the same ritual later in the memoir, not simply the steps, but the intention to perform the traditional gestures with dedication and pleasure: "for the first time in my life, it seemed, I cooked alongside my mother. With the windows open and the sweet air wafting in, we chopped and mixed and rolled and simmered, We talked and reminisced." (*Dream Homes*, 185). Abu-Jaber evolves like Zonana in her relationship to tradition such that she is able to decide: "Next week, I will pull out the jar of grape leaves, unscrew the tight lid, inhale their delicate brine, place a mixture of rice, lamb, and garlic at the center of each leaf's outspread 'palm', and slowly and with real care, begin rolling them up." (*Life Without a Recipe*, 255). Preparing the stuffed vine leaves is a metaphor for constructing the memoir: the fragments are rolled into tight packages, stuffed with memories and simmered in the

juice of imagination, captured in the elements of fiction. Language, Abu-Jaber believes, will make her past present, but will have as much flavour as the dishes of her family's tradition: preparing a meal translates nature into nourishment.

There is a cyclic dimension in many memoirs that is symbolised in the repetition of preparing traditional foods and making timeless recipes, like the stuffed vine leaves, Miriam's cake baking, or Wizenberg's family recipes. The last chapter of Kingsolver's memoir, "Time begins", follows a chapter entitled "Hungry Month", concluding that the hunger was surmounted and life continues, and broaches "the creation story, a sort of quantifiable miracle". Kingsolver concludes her year's project with the ultimate truth that "we'd gone the whole circle [...] and time begins once more" (*Animal, Vegetable, Miracle*, 352). The memoir-sequels that are being published in recent years describe other life journeys, and consider future generations; they include some that we have presented in this study, those of Abu-Jaber, Furiya and Narayan. They consider questions of heritage, immigration, the meaning of home and belonging and the place of travel in their lives. Authors publish memoirs in a similar way that food writers do cookbooks, describing a multitude of journeys and further personal food experiences. In the case of Narayan's second memoir, a new horizon emerges after the journey out: there is the journey back. After seeking otherness in a desire to study and work in America, she feels the need, after seventeen years, to return to India to reconnect herself and her children with her Indian identity. Some authors publish multiple memoirs as in the case of Rossant, or Reichl, dividing their life-stories into appetizing bites—or meal-size pieces. Durrell's example is one of perpetuating the travel writing tradition, setting a standard for residence memoirs as well as memoirs of self-exploration that forefront nourishment in its manifold forms.

These cookbook-cum-memoirs-cum-travel books must assume a new responsibility—and perhaps even identity—in the twenty-first century age of immigration, in which diasporic conditions and dramas multiply and the pursuit of origins and traditions to understand one's identity as well as the routes to take one beyond one's present condition have amplified. That literary identity will undoubtedly be every more hybrid. In the years ahead, the publication of the culinary memoirs may be authored by a new diaspora, those of twenty-first century migrants, displaced throughout the world, many striving to attain English-speaking countries, yet perhaps

finding a voice in another second language. Will these countries still be the bastions of diasporic expressions of self-discovery and freedom? Perhaps the next 'generation' of culinary memoirists will not be English speaking, and will perhaps have another agenda than the one we have explored here of origins and identity. The defining Western dominance of Said's Orient is ceding place to other loci of cultural influence in immigrant discourses (Said, 1979, 7).[362] Vivian Halloran's research, that has been current during the preparation of this thesis, pinpoints the present immigrant discourse that is representative of the condition of first and second generation American immigrants: "The immigrant food memoir with recipes is necessarily a product of legal immigration precisely because the texts and the recipes included within them are just another way these writers *document* their journey and arrival within this country." (Halloran, Introduction). In applying a postcolonial reading, Halloran reminds us that, for many, America was a destination of choice because it represented the abundance the immigrant sought, and that Angelo Pellegrini describes in his memoir. The linkage between food and immigration, the hunger that crosses borders and disciplines is as valid at the end of twentieth century as it was earlier in the century (Diner, 2001, 10) when the early American cookbooks, discussed in part I, allowed an autobiographical food narrative to emerge.

Adam Gopnik proposed a window onto the future with the claim that "the end of food writing is to turn eating into a metaphor for wanting, of all kinds" (*Table Comes First*, 204). In this statement of desire, he draws together the early food writers who understand the delicate, and eternally present relationship between hunger and sensual pleasure, with the later memoirists who undertake personal journeys of self-discovery, with an open invitation to the reader to join them on their journey and at their table along the way.

[362] See also the discussion on Western cultural dominance in Frédéric Regard's work on *British Narratives of Exploration* (2).

Conclusion

> [T]he interpretation of attitudes and customs about food can be a shortcut to understanding the deepest or most hidden truths of people and groups. (Haber, 69).

> All travel is circular [...] After all, the grand tour is just the inspired man's way of heading home. (Paul Theroux. *The Great Railway Bazaar*).

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While Barbara Haber states that studying foodways can give us access to our inner being, Paul Theroux proposes that the inspiration behind all journeys is to take us home, by which we understand a place which is coherent with one's sense of self and origins. Foodways and travel are the pillars of our study of the culinary memoir genre.

A hybrid literary genre

The culinary memoir is a literary work that associates personal story with food tales, descriptions and recipes in a more or less equal balance. We have traced the literary roots of this genre firstly to food writing of both a prosaic, practical as well as a gastronomic strain, and secondly to literary sources that include memoir, autobiography, travel writing and even fiction. The historical evolution of the genre, and the early pioneers of gastronomic writing such as Elizabeth David in England and M.F.K. Fisher in America determined the direction of food writing, speaking, in particular, to the destiny of women, in the kitchen and at their desks, who have shaped cookbook and food memoir writing to the present day.

Culinary memoirs address contemporary issues weaving together traditional literary forms around questions of origins and identity. They draw primarily from two familiar genres, the recipe book and the memoir, and propose a new genre[363] which

[363] We have maintained the use of the term 'genre' to define culinary memoirs throughout this study. Their hybridity and their close proximity to other genres would make it pertinent to use the term 'sub-genre', but the question must then be raised, as to which genre. As food memoirs,

addresses journeys of exile and of redemption from personal trauma. They encapsulate the initial journey to the 'host land', in both a literal and abstract form, as well as the personal journey that will enable them to adapt and assimilate. The first questions that we addressed concerned the works' hybridity and their literary relevance as autobiographical narratives in the representation and construction of individual identity. These questions were motivated by a hypothesis that the genre had a close affinity with travel writing and could even be a new form of the same, and secondly by the non-mainstream nature of the genre, by little-known writers, associated with cookbooks, travel writing and culinary tourism, and outside the canons of fictional or autobiographical literature. Given the genre's rapid expansion, there was also a latent question concerning the perennial nature of the genre. Does the hybrid nature of the genre make the whole fragile and susceptible to corrupting influences and transformation? In relating stories to places in a dynamic of travel, the genre has found a way to establish a rhizomatic root system which anchors it in the very hybridity of genre sources which might ultimately destabilise it. The qualities of flexibility and creativity lead us to propose, in conclusion, that hybridity is a quality rather than a lack of generic maturity as we suggested initially.

We have determined an affiliation with travel memoirs that evoke foodways as representations of mythical landscapes, in which food generates spiritual, cultural, and interpersonal connections. Travel memoir writers, such as Hemingway and Durrell seek a primitive metaphysical continuity in their places of exile that they consider has been lost in their societies of origin, like memoirists who seek connections in foodway traditions.

The memoirs contain a number of unorthodox features. They are a web of paradoxes that nonetheless allow a meaningful discourse to emerge. They demonstrate novelistic tendencies towards poetic prose and myth in developing intimate stories supported by recipes, and narrative flows punctuated by fragmentation of recipes and anecdotes. They juxtapose tradition and innovation, ephemerality and permanence, displacement and immobility, and gender-related roles in relation to food. Rather than

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they are a sub-genre of cookbooks, as memoirs with food and travel, they are a sub-genre of autobiography and memoir, or else travel literature with food. Therefore, the use of the term 'genre' in our discussion of these multiple influences seems justified.

fracturing the genre, these paradoxes are symptomatic of its flexibility, and its ultimate resourcefulness in drawing from diverse elements to create a sustained an overarching food narrative that draws in displacement and the pursuit of origins through foodways, to which the primacy and universality of nourishment hold the key.

Are culinary memoirs an emerging and long-lasting, or a transitory genre? In analysing the discourse from the perspective of literary form, language and narrative structure, we discern a serious literary endeavour, an intimate memoir and a creative exploration of existential questions. The most well-written and self-searching memoirs, such as those of Ehrlich, Martin and Christensen, will perhaps find enduring recognition, although the perennity of the genre itself does not necessarily depend on individual works. The memoirs by writers with an already-established reputation as author, cook or food writer, such as Reichl, Jaffrey and Slater, mean that their memoirs are anticipated within the larger corpus of their works. It is however the pioneers in food writing, such as David, Fisher and Roden, rather than the memoirists, who will be remembered the longest, for their ground-breaking vision and exemplary literary style.

We have concluded that while stories are essentially unfinished by nature of their descriptions of young adult lives, the moral messages that they embody, bring the narratives to a satisfactory emotional turning point, or lead the way to a second memoir. The literary intimacy that the writer creates is symptomatic of her need for the reader to collaborate in the construction of the memoir's self-searching dynamic. This relationship necessitates a commitment of literary sincerity from the author, which does not exclude her from 'fictionalizing' aspects of her story, but which requires that it be true to herself, and that her journey be authentic too.

Exploring self and origins

We have questioned the role that food and foodways, play in the search for self in the context of problems of displacement and dislocation. This condition, present in most memoirs, arises from trauma, whether it is diasporic and communal, or domestic and personal. The consequences are a sense of uprootedness and unbelonging to which adheres a discourse of foodways that reaches back into the past to trace origins and establish a sense of continuity. While we claimed reading autobiographical writings

established a reassuring sense of order, a more concrete response to trauma is to define a discourse of transmission around stories of self-discovery, to make them enduring. We recognize autobiographical acts as "processes of self-knowledge" (Smith and Watson, 2010, 90), opening up culinary memoir writing to the possibility of processing trauma and loss in a creative way that leads to self-understanding. With regard to the homeland and host land, be they physical places or emotional homes, we discover narratively-constructed oppositions of distance and proximity, grounded and adrift, or negatively grounded and free, fluid connection and truncated communication, understanding and ignorance, the latter drawing us towards our concluding discussion on eating as nourishment and understanding, that has less to do with memory and more with hunger and the process of embodiment, for we have learned from Abu-Jaber, amongst others, that the strongest wisdom is the wisdom of the body (*Language of Baklava*, 170). Recipes themselves, as a form of embodied discourse, are both artefact and artifice. Their function as fragments and threads creates a series of tropes that themselves embody myriad paradoxes reflecting the exilic condition of communities and individuals and the provision to overcome it. As a literary artifice in a chasm of dislocation, they allow communities to bridge a gap between the loss of the past and absence in the presence.

The creation of narratives that associate trauma displacement with quotidian practices that food and landscape writers such as Gray, David and Durrell, elevate to the sublime, brings these existential dilemmas into a realm where creative outcomes are possible. Memoirs make tangible through food that which is intangible—nourishment, healing, wholeness related to origins and identity, an inner journey—in a dish of food, in a source of nourishment. Avoiding the trap of banality, culinary memoirs document the thrice-daily encounter with food, the intricacies of preparations, the exigences of ingredients and the communion of the meal table. As our study has showed, the 'insignificant' of daily life harbours the core of each individual's identity, and the itinerant displacement of these rituals throws their essentiality into relief and heightens awareness of vital truths.

Travel writing and foodways

Through this study, Elizabeth Ehrlich's leitmotif of the narrative as "a voyage of discontinuity and connection" (*Miriam's Kitchen*, 2) has served us as a means of considering the way forward for the contemporary exilic condition, using traditional forms of literary expression, and relating personal narratives to the spirit of place. These memoirs are about making adjustments, a metaphor for the making of a successful recipe: finding focus, defining stories and then connecting those stories to place. They transcribe foodways, memories, and traditions, writing places and landscapes, bringing these elements into being.

The journey itself is often uncharted or, indeed, invisible**:** an inner journey; a diasporic journey that was experienced by parents, and that one suffers vicariously through voyages between home and host land; an exodus that cannot be relived: a pain that has left one nomadic (Martin), or a crisis of identity that has left one itinerant (Zonana and Christensen), those for whom journeys and foreign residence are necessary to make sense of one's identity (Furiya and Narayan), a journey that one resists taking (Wizenberg), for fear perhaps, like Sirine in the novel, *Crescent*, of losing contact with a lost childhood and deceased parents.

We chose to focus in part III on the Mediterranean as an example of the source of a culturally-defined often repeated literary discourse on food and travel, as a well-delineated space of origins and identity, that resonates with the notion of travel. It would be equally justified to make a similar study of the Middle Eastern countries, on the 'wrong' side of the Mediterranean (*Alexandra Quartet*, *Justine*, 31), or Asia, for one senses a shift in the collective cultural imagination to other ethnic spaces in the twenty-first century, as *loci* of different culinary cultural identities, or even a more local perspective suggested by Christensen's Maine and Martin's Oklahoma. As our relationship shifts in relation to spaces, from places, to environments of memory, we fix on the importance of landscape as part of our perception and focus of travel.

Beyond food: the literary aesthetics of nourishment

Within the influence of the travel writing genre, these memoirs serve to highlight the central place of emotional development in journeying, that has been named by

recent travel writers themselves. It has become permissible for travel to be as much an encounter with oneself, as an encounter with the other. The multiple facets of home, as the crucible of nourishment but also of wanderings, its antithesis, oppose the theme of journeying. Home is a place, a value that is located in the narrative, in the written language, even in the recipe itself. As a concept, it is played out in opposition to travel and displacement, for it is in this distinction that the importance of origins emerges.

In the final section we questioned the necessity for recipes, having defended their presence as an integral part of the narrative intention. If we recall Kate Christensen's own expression of lassitude at the idea of publishing *yet* another food book, one can imagine that the culinary memoir formula might lose some of its momentum, and weary the reader too. For all the genre's creativity, we began by delimiting a formula—albeit loose, for our corpus is diverse—which in and of itself will rapidly evolve as do all genres whose success is influenced by commodification and fetishization. It is conceivable that the recipe will no longer be the *de facto* convention in food memoirs. However, we have argued at length that the use of foodway memoirs touches something archaic which sends both narrator and reader back to their childhood and journeys past. There is an equation between spirituality and self-understanding expressing physical and metaphysical needs at the heart of these works, defined by Max Milner as a movement centred around eating and understanding, nourishment and wisdom. Abu-Jaber's fictional healer-cook, Sirine, as her name might suggest, is a culinary 'siren', to which classical Greek Mediterranean culture associated hidden knowledge. The immigrants proclaim her: "'you've got the soul of a poet! Cooking and tasting is a metaphor for seeing. Your cooking reveals American to us non-Americans. And vice versa.'" (*Crescent*, 221).

Culinary memoirs are about eating as much as about cooking. Michael Pollan captures their learnings about eating as mediation, as freedom, as knowledge and of course as pleasure in his book, *In Defence of Food*:

> To eat slowly, then, also means to eat deliberately, in the original sense of that word: 'from freedom' instead of compulsion. Many food cultures [...] have rituals to encourage this sort of eating, such as offering a blessing over the food [...] and the knowledge and gratitude will inflect our pleasure at the table. (Pollan, 2008, 196).

Pollan goes on to quote Wendell Berry, who speaks of the pleasure of eating as a moral and spiritual obligation before the mystery of life itself, a sentiment we have previously heard Elizabeth Gilbert express (*Eat, Pray, Love*, 115):

> Eating with the fullest pleasure—pleasure that is, that does not depend on ignorance—is perhaps the profoundest enactment of our connection with the world. In this pleasure we experience and celebrate our dependence and our gratitude, for we are living from mystery, from creatures we did not make and powers we cannot comprehend. (Pollan, 2008, 196-197).

As we move away from the millennium, we can assume that the genre is not merely expressing an ephemeral *fin de siècle* vulnerability. However, it seems to reflect needs that are also expressed in other genres, such as travel writing and novels, that focus on emotional shortcomings, a search for origins and the possibility of moving towards temporarily satisfying, if inconclusive, outcomes. Food is so eminently common place and yet so unique, provoking strong sensorial and emotional response, that it can transport us to new realms of experience. The culinary memoir may shift towards the personal-story cookbook, if, as we have suggested, the chapter-plus-anecdotal recipe becomes a jaded formula.

Has the culinary memoir genre permeated the travel writing genre? Or has food, as a societal and literary preoccupation, cast its hegemonic influence over travel writing. Is it to be expected that travel literature will engage in evocations of local foodways, just as memoir and fiction are seeming to do? Culinary memoirs have revealed that food has become an inescapable part of the debate around questions of origin and identity, in a ubiquitous cross-cultural discourse. That discourse, as we have established is about emotional and spiritual development, which, whether or not associated with the trope of food, is becoming an inherent dimension in travel writing, as an acknowledgement of weakness, fallibility, even the fatal flaw of the heroic wanderer. Contemporary memoirs, travel or culinary—are expected to demonstrate transparency and humility, as the examples offered by the two Gilberts, Sandra M., the critic, and Elizabeth, the writer, from their different perspectives, the first as part of a larger critical work, the second as part of a larger spiritual journey, but with the same desire to share their introspections. It is likely, then, that travel literature will evolve towards more intimate, static journeys that will be enhanced by a sensual awareness that perhaps includes representations of

food, just as the memoirs' move towards travel literature corresponds to a greater search for authenticity, and the need to relate to, and understand, the spirit of place, the correspondence between the significance of home and terroir, and the personal evolution of the narrator. Knowledge is related to belonging, to a place and terroir, which is the force behind journeying. Places and traditions are the yearned-for places of memory and of origins that keeps all forms of displaced people forever seeking.

Does the genre, as we have defined it, fill a current need? In our final section we have highlighted the generosity inherent in these works offering an abundance of food through recipes and food descriptions. They may satiate or saturate their readership, but as long as culinary memoirs maintain the role of telling the overarching contemporary food narrative through poetic and prosaic narrative, writing the corpus of recipes that embodies a symbolic and universal truth relevant to a modern itinerant readership, there would seem to be a place for the genre. David Kamp cites Barbara Kafka writing on the superlatives that gastronomic icon James Beard used, and that readers yearned for: "One of the things I learned from him was not to be afraid of all the words we're taught to eschew as writers: 'wonderful,' 'fabulous,' 'divine,' 'sublime,' 'great,' extraordinary'—the hyperbole words. People wanted them about food, and they still do." (Kamp, 61). Indeed, wonderment at the descriptions of sensual abundance is an emotion constantly evoked from the earliest of cookbook-memoirs, notably those of David and Fisher, but also more recently, in the mysterious beauty of cooking memories in *Miriam's Kitchen*, or the dishes of gratitude in *My Berlin Kitchen* and *Life from Scratch*. Wonderment has spiritual connotations and is an essential ingredient in exploratory travel narratives. A sense of wonder expands one's awareness, and extends the possible while maintaining an element of the unfathomable.

The ultimate paradox lies in the reader's invitation to understand the undefinable, the indiscernible at the kitchen stove, while negotiating displacement and embracing the journey with the humility of a novice traveller. Defining elusive truth can be paralleled with detecting the personal story in the 'recipe' memoir that we discussed in part I. The outcomes of the journey are often unexpected, as Sasha Martin discovers at her Global Table Adventure event at which she realizes that, although she felt she had cooked the world to the exclusion of her own 'home', many of the culinary discoveries were linked to personal discoveries and development too, taking stock of the space and

time travelled, her own contribution, the German Tree Cake, timidly present behind the rosewater lemonade, the table so crowded that there is hardly room for the globes, symbol of the world, that Rushdie proposed, would have to be swallowed to achieve understanding. Martin's meal suggests that one can perhaps make a choice, and that is the way forward:

> The dozens of tables stretch on and on, like chatty postcards, flavor memories smiling back at me from the years of our cooking adventure [...] And the food, of it: a chafer of kabeli palau, a platter of beef-filled empanadas, a bowl of chilled cherry soup, and then the German Tree Cake beyond a dispenser of rosewater lemonade. With 90 percent of the world on display, each platter with a recipe card that reads like an encyclopedia, there's hardly room for all the globes. It's hard to believe we've cooked and eaten all of this food over the last four years—so much of it foreign to us, but so much dug up from my past as well. (*Life from Scratch*, 339-340).

The genre is sustained by the emergence of narrative and writing therapies, influenced by the autobiographical genre, as well as creative and therapeutic self-writing courses, in search of the nourishment that heals, a topic for study beyond the scope of this current study. Rewriting a new version of one's story from the perspective of food allows new outcomes to emerge, the recipe producing a new variation of a dish. To close, we share Brillat-Savarin's words that encapsulate the universality and comfort that food embodies. This aphorism might serve as the nourishment to sustain the culinary memoir genre into the future, for there will always be losses—and ensuing questions—requiring the intercession of food:

> Le plaisir de la table est de tous les âges, de toutes les conditions, de tous les pays et de tous les jours ; il peut s'associer à tous les autres plaisirs, et reste le dernier pour nous consoler de leur perte.
>
> — Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, Aphorismes, VII.[364]

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[364] (Brillat-Savarin, 1982, 19).

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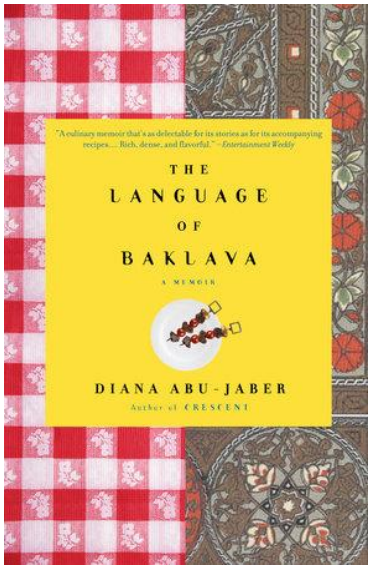
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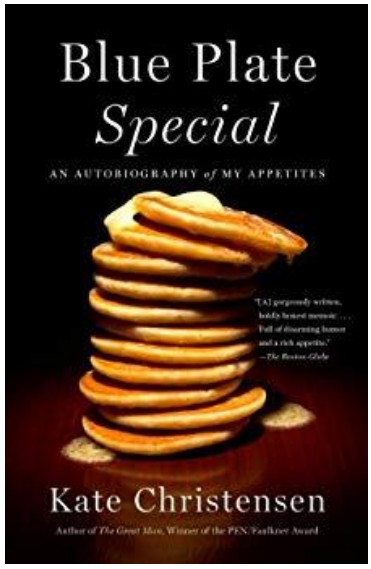
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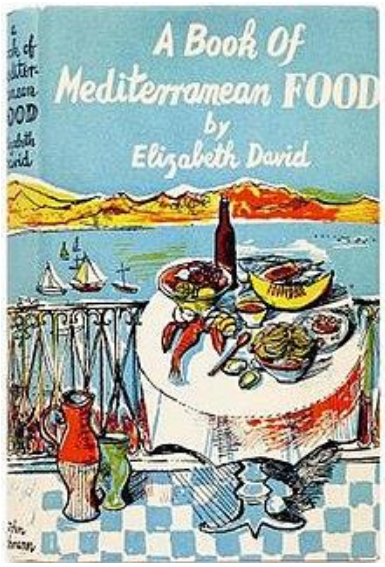
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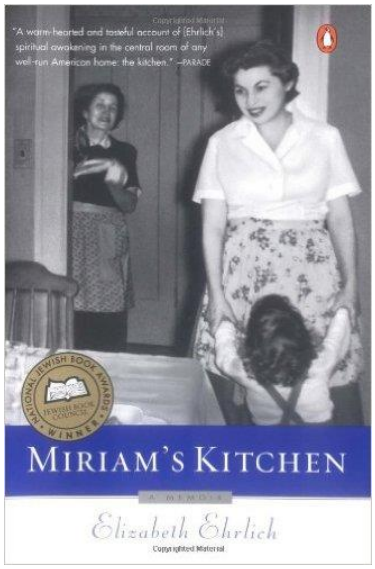
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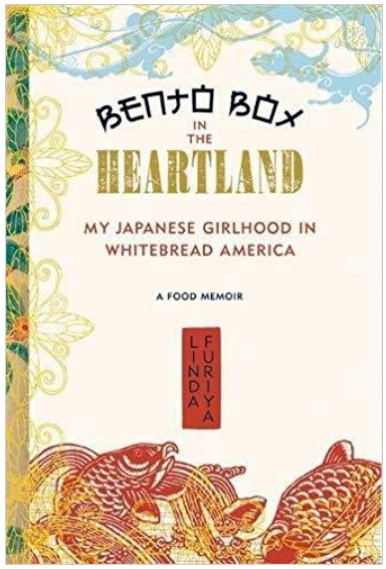


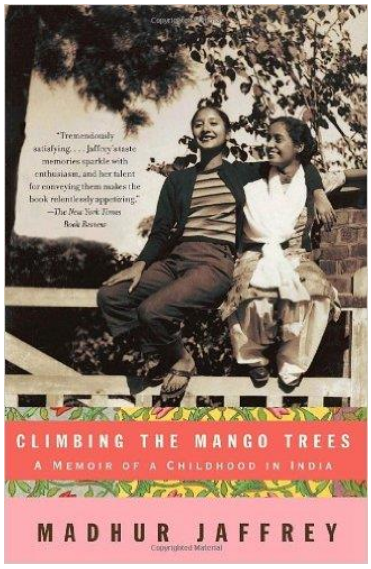


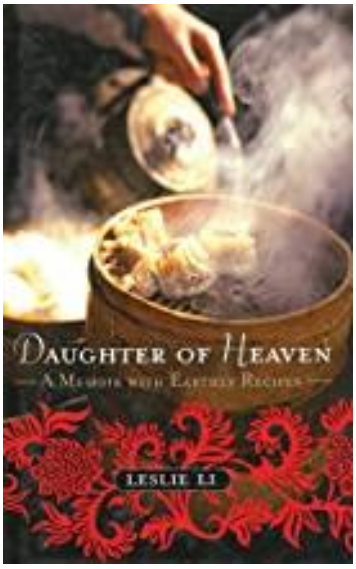


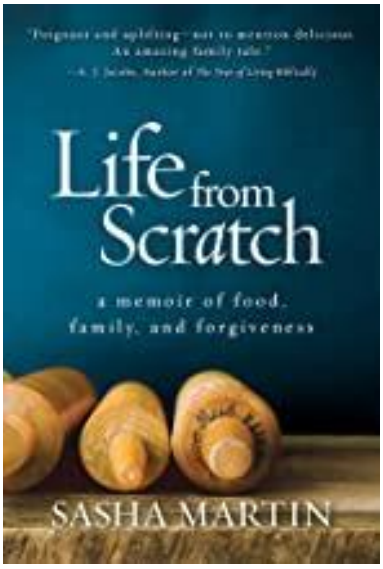


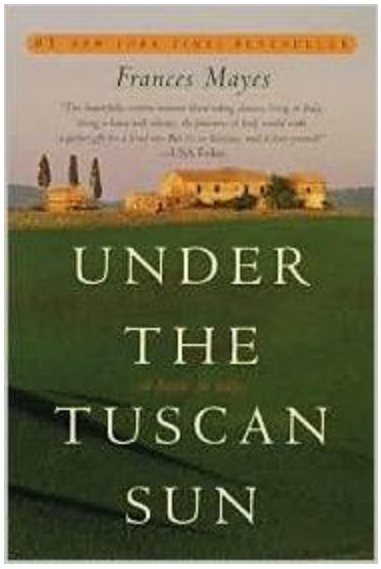


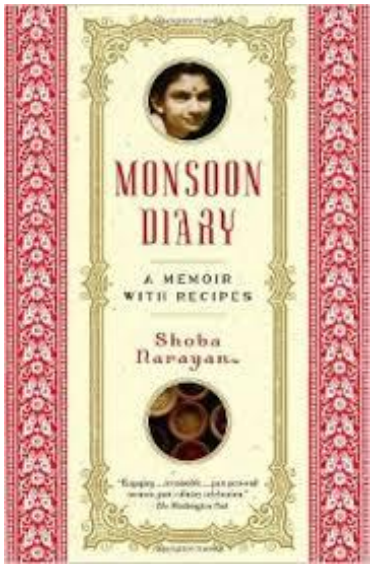




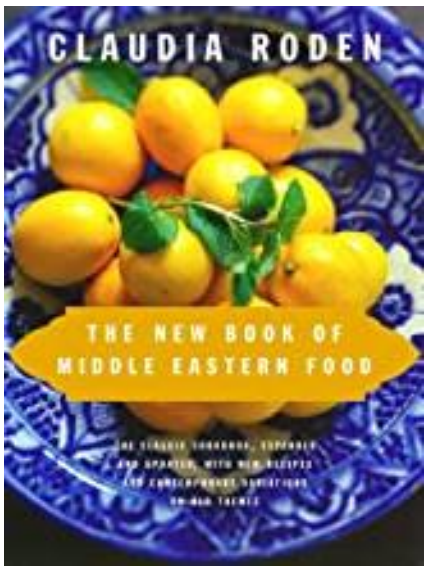


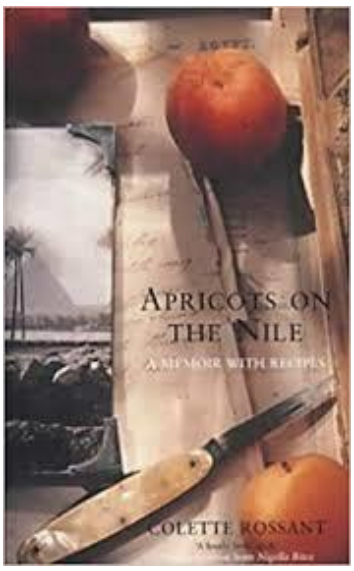


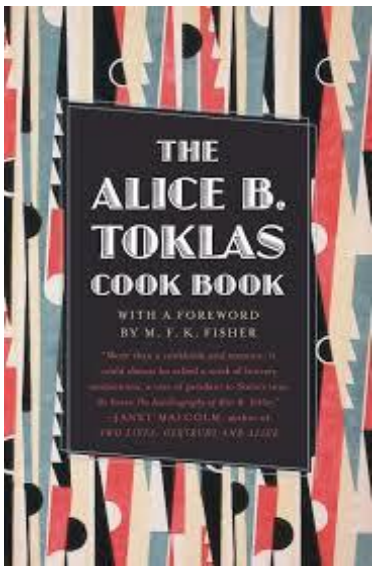

Frances Mayes
UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN


MONSOON DIARY
A MEMOIR WITH RECIPES
Shoba Narayan

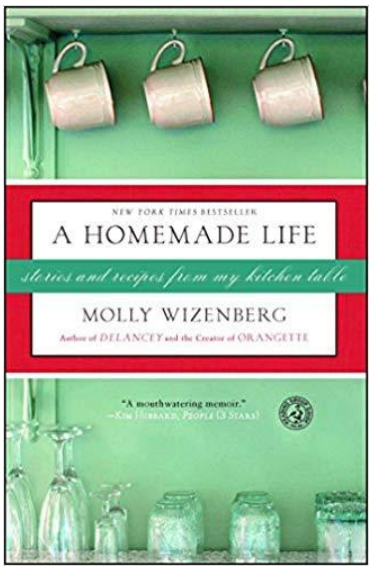

Tender at the Bone
Growing Up at the Table
RUTH REICHL

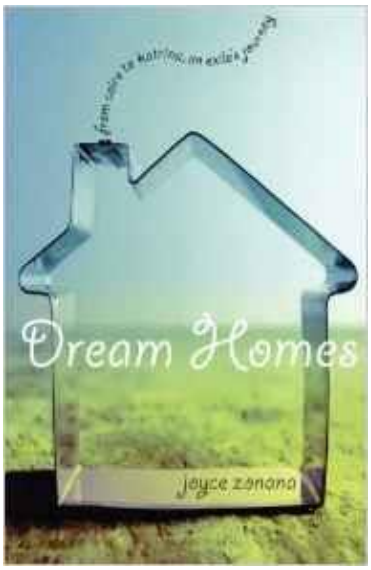

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MOLLY WIZENBERG


Dream Homes
joyce zonana

Diaspora et déplacement : L'évocation des traditions, des origines et de l'identité dans les mémoires culinaires, un genre littéraire émergent

Résumé: Les mémoires culinaires, qui empruntent des traits sémantiques aux mythes familiaux et au discours féminin, invitent à s'interroger sur leur pertinence littéraire en tant que genre contemporain. Cette étude considère leurs ambitions narratives, leur qualité poétique, le(s) genre(s) dont ils procèdent, mais aussi celui qu'ils constituent. L'examen d'un vaste corpus de mémoires permet d'en observer la diversité et l'intertextualité, et de dessiner une continuité historique avec les textes précurseurs dont l'approche est renouvelée.

Empruntant à l'autobiographie, à l'écriture culinaire, ainsi qu'à la littérature de voyage, les mémoires culinaires sont un genre hybride qui explore l'identité, dont la quête est souvent motivée par la perte diasporique d'une patrie ou par un traumatisme familial. Nous analysons les liens, dans le récit et le genre tout entier, entre la nourriture, l'écriture de soi et le voyage. Outre le tissage de traditions culinaires avec des recettes, les mémoires révèlent une dimension spirituelle, synonyme de voyage intérieur. Lire les mémoires culinaires dans la double perspective des habitudes alimentaires culturellement bien définies et de la littérature de voyage permet d'élucider les questions centrales de l'identité dans le contexte des déplacements intérieurs et extérieurs.

Les multiples paradoxes du genre sont symptomatiques de son ingéniosité, associant divers éléments pour créer une narration culinaire globale, en un corpus de recettes qui incarnent une vérité universelle, et proposent ainsi une nourriture à la fois physique et symbolique.

Mots clés: mémoires culinaires ; origines ; identité ; traditions ; diaspora ; nourriture ; littérature contemporaine anglophone.

Diaspora and displacement: The evocation of traditions, origins and identity in culinary memoirs, an emerging literary genre

Abstract: Bearing semantic elements of family myths and feminine discourse, culinary memoirs invite questions about their literary pertinence as a contemporary genre. This study considers their narrational ambitions, their poetic quality, the genre(s) from which they emerge, and also that which they define. We hypothesise that they have a literary relevance at the intersection of several genres. The examination of an extensive corpus allows us to observe its diversity and intertextuality, as well as the historical perspective of precursory texts, offering a new reading of earlier works.

Rooted in autobiography and food writing, with traits of travel literature, culinary memoirs are a hybrid genre that explores identity, the quest for which is often motivated by the diasporic loss of homelands, or family trauma. We analyse the narrative and the emerging genre to understand how it represents self-writing and food within the travel narrative genre. As well as weaving culinary traditions with recipes, memoirs reveal a spiritual dimension, synonymous with an inward journey. Appraising culinary memoirs from the perspective of foodways, as culturally-defined consumption, and travel literature, elucidates the central questions of identity and origins within the context of inner and outward displacement.

The genre's multiple paradoxes are symptomatic of its resourcefulness, drawing from diverse elements to create an overarching food narrative, as a corpus of recipes that embodies a universal truth, to which nourishment, both physical and symbolic, holds the key.

Key words: culinary memoirs; origins; identity; traditions; diaspora; food; contemporary Anglophone literature.

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RÉSUMÉ DE THÈSE EN FRANÇAIS

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Virginia ALLEN-TERRY SHERMAN

Thèse dirigée par **Catherine DELMAS**, Professeure Emérite, Université Grenoble Alpes

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Diaspora et déplacement : L'évocation des traditions, des origines et de l'identité dans les mémoires culinaires, un genre littéraire émergent

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Introduction

> If there is one sure thing about food, it is that it is never just about food.[1]

Cette thèse entreprend l'étude de récits centrés sur la nourriture, et plus particulièrement de mémoires culinaires écrits par des femmes, dont certains ont rencontré un large succès. Nous voulons questionner leurs ambitions narratives, leur qualité poétique et la nature du ou des genres dont ils émanent, ou qu'ils tentent de définir. L'approche est à la fois herméneutique et générique, concernant un genre émergent, afin de cerner ce qu'il représente en tant qu'écriture de soi ou récit de voyage, et d'évaluer la contribution qu'il apporte au genre du récit de voyage lui-même, en plaçant ainsi l'association de la nourriture et du voyage dans l'écriture de soi au centre de la scène.

Nous étudierons un échantillon large de mémoires, dont certains datent du milieu du XXe siècle, et concernent la cuisine et le voyage, comme ceux de M.F.K. Fisher ou de Lawrence Durrell, mais dont la majorité date des trente dernières années, et sont écrits essentiellement par des femmes d'origine diverse, telles que Diana Abu-Jaber, Elizabeth Ehrlich and Kate Christensen. Nous nous appuierons sur des mémoires d'inspiration touristique et aussi de ceux qui ont rencontré du succès dans le domaine culinaire.

Nous analysons la forme littéraire du genre à travers ses thèmes récurrents, notamment la remise en cause des origines et de l'identité dans le contexte du déplacement, souvent dans des conditions diasporiques, qui mettent au jour les valeurs déplacées ou oubliées du foyer et des racines familiales. Les mémoires culinaires sont également des manuels pratiques dans lesquels les souvenirs sont consciemment explorés à travers les habitudes alimentaires (*foodways*[2]) et sont au service d'un

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[1] « S'il y a une chose sûre à propos de la nourriture, c'est qu'elle n'est jamais qu'une question de nourriture. » Terry Eagleton. "Edible Ecriture". *Consuming Passions: Food in the Age of Anxiety*. Ed. Sian Griffiths and Jennifer Wallace. Manchester: Manchester UP, 1998. 203-208. Web. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/edible-ecriture/104281.article>. 204. Ma traduction.

[2] Le terme foodways est utilisé dans des études récentes sur la nourriture pour désigner ce qu'on mange, comment cela est aperçu, préparé et servi, ainsi que les règles et rituels qui l'entourent. Nous employons le terme dans cette étude pour évoquer la nourriture, sa préparation et ses traditions.

narrateur qui cherche à retrouver ses racines. Selon la définition de Traci Marie Kelly[3], nous nous concentrons principalement sur les mémoires culinaires et les livres de cuisine autobiographiques. Ce genre récent a adopté certaines conventions par lesquelles les récits exposent des souvenirs personnels qui évoquent, souvent sur un ton nostalgique, des mondes authentiques à forte signification personnelle et culturelle. Au cœur de ces évocations, les traditions culinaires sont insérées dans des récits à dimension fictive voire mythique, entrecoupés de recettes, qui incarnent une expérience sensorielle, à travers laquelle le narrateur (et le lecteur) peut susciter et accéder à des souvenirs.

La première partie est une étude de ce genre hybride et de sa pertinence littéraire en tant que récit autobiographique dans la représentation et la construction de l'identité individuelle. La partie II examine la préoccupation des auteurs des mémoires culinaires avec leur propre identité fragmentée et la nécessité de trouver une place au sein de la communauté étendue. Les thèmes du déplacement et de la dislocation, évoquant des voyages associés à l'exploration de souvenirs de traumatismes, sont au centre de la partie III. Dans la quatrième section, nous examinons l'esthétique de la nourriture qui est au cœur de ces œuvres, un symbole permanent qui nous invite à revisiter les notions mêmes de la nourriture et de manger.

Le corpus comprend des mémoires en tant que récits intimes qui proposent un fragment de vie, centré autour de la recherche des origines et de l'identité à travers l'exploration des traditions culinaires. Ils prennent la forme d'un *Bildungsroman* autobiographique, où l'histoire est centrée sur l'enfance, tournée vers l'avenir, ou centrée sur le présent avec des excursions dans le passé ; ou bien ce sont des livres de recettes à la charge mémorielle plus discrète ou des récits de voyage et d'auto-exploration.

Comme les mémoires culinaires eux-mêmes qui varient du récit à la recette, nous changeons de perspective au fur et à mesure de notre analyse, en commençant tout d'abord par l'analyse d'un genre fragmenté et hybride, en passant ensuite à l'analyse du narrateur comme sujet fragmenté, puis du narrateur comme objet dans un espace oscillant, pour finalement considérer, au-delà du narrateur et du récit, la notion de

[3] Traci Marie Kelly. "If I were a Voodoo Priestess: Women's Cultural Autobiography". *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender and Race*. Ed. Sherrie A. Inness. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. 251-270, 255.

nourriture incarnée dans les mémoires culinaires, comme un symbole poétique omniprésent.

I. Un genre littéraire hybride

A. Définir le genre

Nous partons du principe que les mémoires culinaires ont des intentions littéraires au-delà de leur désir de partager des traditions culinaires. Nous explorons le rôle des femmes auteurs, en tant que gardiennes des traditions culinaires et voyageuses engagées dans un périple à la découverte d'elles-mêmes. En utilisant la définition de la littérature par Terry Eagleton comme écriture réfléchie dont la valeur esthétique transcende la signification intellectuelle des textes, [4] nous posons l'hypothèse que les mémoires culinaires en tant que genre ont une valeur esthétique et une portée signifiante.

1. L'origine des narratives culinaires

Alors que les mémoires culinaires sont un phénomène essentiellement contemporain, nous pouvons retracer les origines du genre selon deux voies parallèles, associées, d'une part, au corpus des écrits sur la cuisine et la nourriture, et d'autre part, au large corpus littéraire qui comprend les autobiographies, les mémoires, la fiction et l'écriture de voyage. Nous retraçons l'histoire de la littérature culinaire, incluant les livres de cuisine et les écrits gastronomiques, qui constituent ensemble un patrimoine intellectuel, esthétique, artistique et même moral. Les mémoires contemporains sur la nourriture témoignent de l'évolution de l'écriture culinaire, des archives culinaires ethnographiques aux récits littéraires personnels. On y discerne des conventions littéraires plus formelles, en termes de caractéristiques narratives et de valeurs véhiculées. La cuisine devient un art et les livres de cuisine transmettent un message moral souvent lié au rôle des femmes qui sont devenues les gardiennes des traditions culinaires.

[4] Terry Eagleton. *Literary Theory. An Introduction*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.

Les premiers écrits culinaires américains ont cherché à faire taire les voix des femmes et à marginaliser les valeurs qu'elles se sont acharnées à exprimer, en propageant des idées de créativité et de continuité, en particulier au sein des communautés. Ces efforts répondaient à un besoin d'établir un équilibre, à la fois pour préserver les traditions et pour s'assimiler, car l'immigration du début du XXe siècle était un facteur de motivation dans la transcription des recettes. Les femmes ont été encouragées à se dissocier des apprentissages des grands-mères, et ensuite, par nécessité en temps de guerre, à les réapprendre, cette fois, à travers des livres. A cette époque, M.F.K. Fisher a réfuté l'image diversement manipulée de la femme au foyer comme pilier de la tradition culinaire américaine, articulant plutôt des espaces d'émotion, de faim avouée et de plaisir. Ses histoires étaient d'élégantes défenses poétiques du plaisir sensuel de la gastronomie, qui était au cœur de ses expériences de voyage.

En 1961, Julia Child publie son travail majeur [5] à la pointe du mouvement qui associait l'art gastronomique et la tradition à la liberté personnelle et culinaire, illustrant l'évolution non linéaire des pratiques et de la littérature culinaires. La gourmetisation de la culture alimentaire a coïncidé avec un nouveau discours du choix, qui, dans les œuvres contemporaines, a évolué vers la prise en compte d'un art qui, transcendant la simple subsistance, pouvait servir personnellement les écrivains. L'expression du plaisir dans l'écriture gastronomique s'est produite parallèlement à l'émergence d'une culture de la nourriture ethnique aux États-Unis, et les auteurs-cuisiniers sont devenus les garants d'un style de vie centré sur la maison et l'authenticité, une valeur centrale dans les mémoires culinaires.

Les premiers livres de cuisine anglais faisaient une association facile entre la nourriture humble et celle plus noble, symptomatique des formations fluides et des reconstructions qui proliféraient autour de la nourriture. Une fascination précoce pour la nourriture continentale, son esthétique et sa sensualité, ont été démontrées par Elizabeth Pennell (1896), préfigurant les œuvres du milieu du siècle d'Elizabeth David. Après la guerre, les écrivains culinaires britanniques ont également été confrontés à un déracinement qui fait écho dans les mémoires d'aujourd'hui. L'écriture de David

[5] Julia Child, Simone Beck, and Louisette Bertholle. *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. 1961. Rev. ed. London: Penguin Books, 2009.

exprimait des valeurs universelles qui ne se limitaient pas à la nourriture et à la consommation, mais comprenaient aussi le respect des traditions, de l'authenticité et de la simplicité. Sa contre-sophistication sous la forme de plats « paysans » authentiques a suscité une excitation culinaire pour la nourriture d'une autre culture, comme les livres de Madhur Jaffrey (dès 1973) devaient le faire plus tard. La voix personnelle et professionnelle de Claudia Roden, dans ses livres de cuisine ethniques (dès 1968), a rendu l'inconnu non seulement attrayant mais aussi désirable, en présentant les traditions culinaires comme une forme d'accès à la compréhension de soi, les rendant pertinentes pour tous et les inscrivant également dans une filiation littéraire.

Les mémoires culinaires se trouvent sur le même continuum que les mémoires de voyage. L'aphorisme de D. H. Lawrence « [si] on voyage on mange », [6] souligne leur proximité. La nourriture est au centre des expériences de voyage, et le voyage, qu'il se déroule à la maison ou à l'étranger, est au cœur de la nourriture, car on peut également dire à l'inverse, 'si l'on mange, on voyage'. Les œuvres évoquent les habitudes alimentaires comme des représentations de paysages mythiques, dans lesquels la nourriture joue un rôle essentiellement illustratif, ainsi qu'un lien spirituel, culturel et interpersonnel. Le narrateur s'auto-explore en se confrontant à l'altérité, en accédant à une culture étrangère et à ses peuples, et en partageant des aliments indigènes.

Lawrence Durrell, Ernest Hemingway et même D. H. Lawrence recherchent une continuité métaphysique première dans leurs lieux d'exil, un état qu'ils considèrent comme perdu dans leurs sociétés d'origine, comme les auteurs de mémoires qui recherchent des connexions dans les modes alimentaires traditionnels. Ils poursuivent un besoin d'appartenance, qui est au cœur de notre étude. Le vagabondage auto-imposé de Durrell a donné naissance à une collection d'œuvres sur ses résidences insulaires qui contribuent à la lignée des mémoires culinaires, à travers leur quête sensuelle de la nourriture. Ils représentent des paysages gustatifs mythiques qui anticipent les voix gastronomiques des écrivains méditerranéens du milieu du XXe siècle tels que David et Fisher, ancêtres littéraires des mémoires culinaires contemporains.

[6] D. H. Lawrence. *Sea and Sardinia*. 1921. New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1977. 131. Ma traduction.

2. Différentes formes d'auto-écriture avec nourriture

Les mémoires culinaires sont des formes composites d'origines et de styles divers. Certaines œuvres peuvent être identifiées comme des mémoires par la nature de leur structure narrative, leur style discursif et l'intention littéraire implicite ou explicite de l'auteur. Nous trouvons à la fois de l'innovation littéraire et un mélange d'autobiographie et d'auto-enquête. L'œuvre d'Alice B. Toklas est un livre de cuisine et un récit autobiographique discret, mélangeant syntaxiquement récit et recettes. Le travail de David nécessite également un 'saut imaginatif' pour déceler son histoire personnelle sus la dimension intertextuelle. Son œuvre, en tant qu'écriture de soi à dimension thérapeutique, est le manifeste des auteurs de mémoires contemporains. Ceux-ci ont la portée d'un voyage, où chaque ingrédient est présenté comme un souvenir, un lieu, une expérience, décrivant la progression vers une intimité suggérée, mêlée à une aventure culinaire exotique. D'autres types d'auto-écriture culinaire incluent les histoires diasporiques, les histoires de traumatismes et les odyssées gastronomiques, ainsi que celles, moins pertinentes pour cette étude, concernant les réussites des chefs et les aventures dans le tourisme culinaire.

Notre enquête historique révèle que les femmes se sont réappropriées le livre de cuisine, négociant une nouvelle relation avec la nourriture autour de connaissances sensuellement expérimentées. Les histoires et les recettes permettent aux femmes d'arrimer leur auto-exploration à un pilier de compétences féminines stéréotypées. Vecteurs de l'esthétique, les mémoires sont des expressions de la conscience féminine qui servent à entretenir des souvenirs, à créer des liens entre les communautés et à créer des liens invisibles avec des patries perdues. Le rapport des femmes auteurs à l'univers domestique pose la question de l'engagement littéraire et esthétique des hommes dans les écrits culinaires, et leur perception du rôle des femmes comme vecteur de connaissance culinaire. La dichotomie persistante entre un style féminin de la confession intime et un discours masculin plus assertif, offre aux femmes la possibilité de garder pour elles-mêmes le domaine de la nourriture domestique.

3. Autobiographie et mémoire

Les mémoires sont une forme en mutation qui s'appuie sur diverses pratiques textuelles. Si l'autobiographie est le discours traditionnel de la sphère publique, les

mémoires, selon Smith et Watson,[7] sont plus ciblés, pénétrants et personnels. Pour Julie Rak,[8] la dimension intérieure d'une histoire personnelle est également réévaluée en termes de questions existentielles. Les mémoires ont le ton de la confession, exprimant l'honnêteté et le doute dans la poursuite de l'intégrité. Ce genre récent, essentiellement porté par des écrivains anonymes, est considéré par les critiques contemporains comme un forum d'expression de soi qui n'existait pas avant les années 1990, et particulièrement pertinent pour les populations diasporiques. La forme oscille entre introspection et pragmatisme, accédant à des souvenirs archaïques et ignorant les formes linéaires. Autobiographiques dans leur intention, les mémoires culinaires partagent néanmoins des traits génériques avec les livres de cuisine, superposant sous forme de palimpseste le texte original - l'histoire autobiographique et culinaire - avec un sens et une expérience personnels. Ils constituent un tissage de soi et du monde dans ce que Helen Buss [9] décrit comme une « histoire significative », tout en créant une mémoire culturelle des habitudes alimentaires.

Les mémoires culinaires sont représentatifs d'un genre qui fait passer les récits féminins des marges littéraires à la pleine lumière. Ils célèbrent la féminité, créant une esthétique autour des rôles domestiques féminins traditionnels qui mêlent souvenirs et constructions narratives imaginatives. Ils sont avant tout un « voyage de la discontinuité et de la connexion »,[10] mode de construction narrative au cœur des mémoires culinaires. Il introduit l'idée d'une lutte discrète pour résister à une catégorisation réductionniste alors que les femmes cherchent une place dans le récit.

Francis Russell Hart a décrit les mémoires comme « l'autobiographie de la survie ».[11] En recherchant les origines et l'identité, les narrateurs cherchent des réponses à des questions existentielles, souvent pour dépasser un traumatisme. Les œuvres sont aussi des actes de conservation visant à préserver des objets du passé, à contrebalancer

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[7] Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson. *Reading Autobiographies: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. 2001. 2nd ed. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2010. 2-3.
[8] Julie Rak. *Boom! Manufacturing Memoir for the American Public*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2013.
[9] Helen M. Buss. *Repossessing the World – Reading Memoirs by Contemporary Women*. Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier UP, 2002.
[10] Elizabeth, Ehrlich. *Miriam's Kitchen. A Memoir*. New York: Penguin, 1997, xii. Ma traduction.
[11] Francis Russell Hart. "History Talking to Itself: Public Personality in Recent Memoir". *New Literary History* 11.1 (1979): 193-210. Web. <http://www.jstor.org.sid2nomade-1.grenet.fr/stable/pdf/468879.pdf>. 195. Ma traduction.

la nostalgie ou les regrets par de nouveaux plaisirs. Les mémoires décrivent les discontinuités, la mobilité et l'hybridité transculturelle de sujets en construction,[12] à travers des espaces hybrides tels que les frontières. Il y a un croisement entre les mémoires, l'écriture culinaire, et la préoccupation postmoderne pour le mouvement, la fluctuation et le changement social, qui se reflète dans la nature hybride du genre.

B. Analyse du discours

Nous explorons la visée littéraire et les caractéristiques du genre qui le distinguent de l'autobiographie et de l'écriture culinaire, notamment sa construction narrative en tant que véhicule de valeurs morales, qui entrent dans la fonction réparatrice associée à la lecture des mémoires. La généalogie des mémoires culinaires se traduit par une approche rhizomique dans le développement des éléments littéraires.

1. Formes littéraires

Les mémoires tentent de positionner un discours qui se définit lui-même dans un contexte culturel en mutation, mêlant histoire personnelle et réalités psychologiques et sociales dans un langage à la fois prosaïque et imaginatif. Les patries imaginaires de Salman Rushdie offrent une métaphore pour des expériences à moitié remémorées.[13] Elles inspirent la réinvention des pratiques familiales et renforcent les identités familiales et individuelles. Les récits utilisent une variété de reconstructions imaginatives, revisitant notamment le traumatisme précoce à travers la nourriture, souvent pour réconcilier les identités troublées des immigrants. Les narrateurs travaillent avec un mélange d'histoire réelle et d'histoire subjective, et de chroniques familiales relatées. Ils sélectionnent des souvenirs, des événements et des recettes pour créer une histoire personnelle à la vérité subjective, parfois légendaire, car la nourriture est par nature portée par un récit.

Les mémoires expriment des dilemmes éthiques ou existentiels, ou des messages de prudence et des conseils pour une meilleure compréhension de soi et la préservation de l'intégrité, les auteurs de mémoires agissant comme mentors pour le lecteur à travers

[12] Smith and Watson. *Reading Autobiographies: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. *op. cit.*, 125.
[13] Salman Rushdie. *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. London: Granta Books, 1991.

les expériences de la vie. Les thèmes incluent les traumatismes de guerre, les déplacements, les dysfonctionnements familiaux, la perte d'identité diasporique, auxquels des histoires autour de la nourriture, de sa préparation et de ses rituels, sont proposées comme ancrages de la tradition, de l'authenticité et des liens familiaux. Les traditions culinaires sont tissées dans les mythes familiaux. Le lecteur répond aux émotions agréables, à la sagesse familiale et aux aperçus des cultures, ainsi qu'à ce que Barbara Waxman décrit comme la « prose très descriptive, émotionnellement dramatique et souvent lyrique des mémoires culinaires ». [14] Nous rencontrons des scènes méditerranéennes romantiques, dessinées dans la prose immaculée de David, le paysage emblématique de Durrell ou les aventures des héros voyageurs romantiques de Fisher ou de Christensen.

2. Langage

La croyance d'Ernest Renan selon laquelle « ce que l'on dit de soi est toujours de la poésie » [15] s'applique aux mémoires proches de la poésie lyrique, car dans leur conception l'événement original se colore d'émotions, qui s'insèrent souvent harmonieusement dans la construction. Nous trouvons de la poésie dans les descriptions des aliments, ainsi que dans la forme et le langage des recettes elles-mêmes. En prose, les styles vont du formel au conversationnel, avec parfois des recettes syntaxiquement et sémantiquement indépendantes. Le langage articule l'identité diasporique perdue, rappelant la langue maternelle et la relation complexe entre les notions de mère et de patrie, tandis que les suggestions sensorielles transcendent le langage. La langue formule des origines, des lieux et des ingrédients ethniques et géographiques, comme une forme de déterritorialisation dans laquelle la langue est « hors sol ». [16] Cependant, les mémoires culinaires offrent des litanies d'ingrédients qui situent la nourriture dans le paysage comme lieu physique et symbolique de la découverte de soi et du plaisir.

[14] Barbara Frey Waxman. "Food memoirs: What they are, why they are popular, and why they belong in the literature classroom". *College English*, 70.4 (Mar. 2008): 363-383, 364. Ma traduction.
[15] Ernest Renan. *Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse*. Paris: Calman-Lévy, 1966, ii-iii.
[16] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. *Mille Plateaux : Capitalisme et schizophrénie 2*. 1980. Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 2013.

3. Structure narrative

En tant que source et aboutissement des histoires, point de départ et aussi conclusion, les recettes déterminent la structure narrative et la manière dont les descriptions des aliments sont utilisées comme artifices narratifs. La notion de recettes comme discours intégré, disposé pour la lecture, capte « une recommandation, un contexte, un point, une raison d'être ».[17] Elles représentent à la fois des objets matériels et culturels, vestiges d'une communauté, qui documentent non seulement la préparation d'un plat, mais aussi les souvenirs d'une vie antérieure, les témoignages d'une manière de manger, de vivre et de partager. Les recettes dispersées peuvent être considérées comme des symboles de la dislocation sociale moderne, offrant une façon unique de percevoir et d'articuler des valeurs morales, et créant à la fois une cohésion textuelle symbolique et une fragmentation tant au niveau culturel que poétique.

Les préparations alimentaires fragmentées sont finalement les grains allégoriques de créativité qui permettent au narrateur de construire quelque chose de nouveau tout en conservant des liens symboliques avec le passé. Les mémoires offrent des segments de temps incomplets, choisis et réunis, offrant la possibilité de mettre en ordre le passé et de donner du sens. Les mémoires montrent leur plasticité de forme en incluant des éléments narratifs présents dans les recettes ainsi qu'un récit qui est lui-même une recette pour orienter vers une forme d'intégrité personnelle et de bien-être. A la fois définie et ouverte à l'adaptation, la recette est un méta-commentaire du texte. Les mémoires offrent un sentiment d'achèvement psychologique qui rejoint la visée de mise en ordre dans l'écriture de soi.

C. Réception

Les mémoires culinaires sont des voyages personnels de découverte de soi, pourtant écrits avec l'intention déclarée de partager des apprentissages, ainsi que des recettes et des cultures culinaires. Le lecteur est sollicité à la fois par le récit et les recettes, tandis que le texte lui-même est une invitation implicite à venir à table, créant

[17] Susan J. Leonardi. "Recipes for reading: Summer pasta, lobster à la Riseholme, and key lime pie". *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 4.3 (May 1989): 340-347, 340. Ma traduction.

un espace imaginatif pour réfléchir à sa propre vie ou entendre des histoires partagées de traumatismes.

1. La performance du lecteur

Les mémoires culinaires réunissent lecture, écriture et dégustation dans une performance créative finalement partagée entre l'auteur et le lecteur, dans laquelle l'acte de lire est un trope pour l'acte de manger : le mémoire est consommé - dévoré ou savouré. [18] La narration et sa réception sont un acte performatif qui fait écho à l'auto-performance du mémoire lui-même, impliquant le lecteur dans le dévoilement de l'identité du narrateur. L'auto-reconstruction est une performance littéraire de l'écrivain et du lecteur, qui accepte un mélange de l'autobiographie et de la fiction, un brouillage entre le texte et la vie, et qui joue le rôle de témoin, à la fois pour confirmer l'existence de l'écrivain dans le temps et pour marquer la spécificité de ce qu'il a vécu, son caractère propre et son positionnement dans l'espace. [19] Les mémoires culinaires mettent ainsi en scène leur propre réception à travers le tissage de fragments autobiographiques autour de recettes, invitant le lecteur à participer à la création et à la consommation, double métaphore de la lecture.

2. Le souci d'authenticité

L'écrivain projette une perspective intimiste, décrivant l'authenticité à partir d'une source qui est le lieu d'origine, ou qui en porte les caractéristiques, associées au respect et à l'engagement. Les mémoires sont également des exemples de ce qui est désormais reconnu comme la fétichisation de l'authenticité, une marchandise qui est poursuivie sans discernement et qui est soumise à divers degrés de commercialisation. Ces préoccupations découlent d'un manque de cohérence qui signifie en fin de compte que les mémoires sur le tourisme culinaire sont plus difficiles à identifier, car la superficialité mine l'authenticité du genre. Une forme de loyauté envers les traditions familiales ou communautaires, ou au moins certaines habitudes alimentaires spécifiques, est maintenant considérée comme une référence requise pour les auteurs de récits de mémoires authentiques.

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[18] Voir Simone Vierne. "Ecrire, Lire, Déguster, Dévorer". *L'Imaginaires des Nourritures*. Ed. Simone Vierne. Grenoble: PU de Grenoble, 1989. 91-93.
[19] Smith and Watson, *Reading Autobiographies: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. *op. cit*.

II. L'exploration de soi et des origines

A. Traumatisme, perte, non-appartenance

L'écriture alimentaire est un lieu approprié pour accueillir les traumatismes car, comme l'a dit Claude Lévi-Strauss, quand tout le reste est parti, la nourriture est le seul élément humanisant qui reste. [20] Les mémoires décrivent les petits et grands traumatismes aux niveaux communautaire et individuel, en utilisant des formats narratifs similaires pour exposer les traumatismes visibles dans les migrations et l'exil, et les traumatismes discrets dûs aux pertes personnelles et aux dysfonctionnements familiaux.

1. Traumatisme diasporique, migration et exil

Les influences sociales, psychologiques et littéraires des traditions alimentaires peuvent être un moyen d'accéder à des traumatismes et de les comprendre, lorsque les autres formes de compréhension de soi et de connexion avec le passé sont inaccessibles. Les conséquences en sont visibles dans des récits non-linéaires. Le traumatisme exprime des souvenirs imprégnés de mythes de la patrie et un désir de retour, ainsi qu'une identité collective caractérisée par la cohésion du groupe, malgré sa dispersion et son aliénation dans le pays hôte. Le traumatisme peut être personnel ou hérité des générations précédentes. Son expression prend la forme d'un mouvement, soit métaphoriquement au fil du temps dans le voyage spirituel d'Elizabeth Ehrlich, soit littéralement dans le cas de l'exil itinérant auto-imposé d'Ernest Hemingway. Nous assistons à des tentatives précaires pour trouver du réconfort dans une forme de chez-soi.

Les mémoires culinaires représentent non seulement une expression de traumatismes mais aussi la possibilité de trouver un secours. Le chez-soi peut être un lieu d'implantation ou, par une « renaissance » culturelle, un nouveau lieu d'origine. Le partage des traditions culinaires crée un espace littéraire qui répond à la conviction de Robin Cohen selon laquelle les expériences partagées de la culture populaire remplacent le besoin d'une patrie. [21] Les mémoires culinaires suggèrent qu'un retour, le fait de se

[20] Voir Claude Lévi-Strauss. *Mythologiques 1 : Le Cru et le Cuit*. Paris: Plon, 1964.
[21] Robin Cohen. *Global Diasporas: An Introduction*. 1997. Oxford: Routledge, 2008.

tourner de manière répétée vers le concept de patrie à travers un récit inspiré par la mémoire, peut être orchestré de manière thérapeutique dans les textes, à travers une reconstitution des traditions culinaires. La réécriture d'histoires par l'appropriation de recettes permet l'émergence de versions alternatives.

2. Famille et dysfonctionnement

La séparation et la perte nécessitent de la résilience, de la force de caractère et souvent une rupture avec le passé ou une transition, souvent réalisée à travers la nourriture et la cuisine. La perte d'un foyer représente symboliquement la perte d'une patrie, de repères culturels, provoquant l'isolement et la déconnexion de ses racines. L'écriture est une forme de retour à la maison, de recherche de soi et de sa place dans le monde. Les mémoires monoculturels ou interculturels suivent un schéma dans lequel la privation émotionnelle et une famille dysfonctionnelle incitent les narrateurs à chercher un foyer émotionnel dans la nourriture, à raconter des leçons de vie et à écrire un autre 'foyer' dans la nourriture.

Les expériences culinaires peuvent aussi être négatives ou falsificatrices. Les femmes sont confrontées à la relation complexe avec les tâches ménagères et les obligations traditionnelles, en particulier en ce qui concerne la condition des femmes de la diaspora qui sont censées conserver la mémoire de la communauté. Les mémoires culinaires montrent que la nouvelle génération a une voix et une envie de changer ; si le rôle doit être adapté aux réalités modernes, il s'avère souvent être encore viable en tant que rôle culturel et ambition littéraire.

3. Rupture, déracinement, non-appartenance

Les mémoires culinaires enregistrent des conditions de déracinement irrémédiables et un sentiment profond de non-appartenance (*unbelonging)*, le terme que Sheila Collingwood-Whittick a utilisé pour décrire le fait d'être déraciné, le déplacement physique, la désorientation psychologique et la déconnexion que ressentent les sujets lorsqu'ils perdent le contact avec leur culture natale. [22] Découvrir un sentiment d'appartenance, c'est réconcilier le passé et le présent, par le rappel de la mémoire, par le fait de réaliser et de partager des recettes. Les communautés

[22] Sheila Collingwood-Whittick, ed. The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australasian Literature. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007.

d'immigrants établissent un système rhizomique qui évolue organiquement au fil du temps et des générations, s'adaptant au nouveau terrain et trouvant des compromis, de nouvelles recettes symboliques dans les anciennes traditions. Les habitudes alimentaires sont à la fois un élément rassembleur et la manifestation visible de l'altérité. Celle-ci peut dans de nombreux cas mettre en danger, comme on le voit dans les traumatismes infantiles liés aux préjugés et aux différences, reflétant l'héritage de leurs parents. L'immigrant diasporique est pris entre la nécessité de s'assimiler et la nécessité de conserver une identité indépendante. Le maintien de la marginalité sociale place le narrateur dans le rôle d'éternel étranger.

B. Identité, origines, transmission

Les mémoires sont un moyen de construire publiquement une identité. Ils peuvent même transformer les identités en marchandises, alors que les écrivains reviennent à la mémoire avec une identité en formation. Leur nature fluctuante et fluide interagit avec les notions d'espace et de territoire. Des éléments mythiques émergent autour des origines, ce qui pose la question de la transmission, tant au sein de l'histoire racontée que de la structure narrative.

1. Identités ambiguës ou perdues

Nous abordons des questions d'intégrité émotionnelle liées aux origines et à la culture. Les identités fragmentées trouvent une cohérence dans ce que Homi Bhabha a appelé les espaces interstitiels,[23] introduisant l'idée que le chez-soi n'est pas nécessairement là où l'on naît. De nouvelles perspectives, différentes de celles définies par le récit originel, peuvent émerger s'il existe une forme d'intégrité culturelle. Les mémoires offrent une forme unique de narration qui interroge la façon dont la terre d'accueil peut être reterritorialisée pour permettre l'intégrité culturelle des immigrants.

L'altérité ressentie par le narrateur est née de l'attitude de ses parents vis-à-vis de leurs propres origines et de leurs expériences d'enfants. Pour de nombreux narrateurs, tels que Diana Abu-Jaber et Joyce Zonana, l'espace narratif permet de démystifier la confusion et de former de fragiles compromis identitaires. Pour d'autres, c'est moins une

[23] Homi K. Bhabha. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.

lutte intérieure qu'une croissance vers une maturité face à l'adversité. L'identité est souvent forgée dans les conflits familiaux autour de la nourriture lors de la confrontation avec la nourriture « indigeste ». Le processus de croissance personnelle est une auto-évaluation constante, réalisée dans l'acte d'écrire. L'acte de manger lui-même devient une mesure de l'identité, une leçon morale, voire une source de pièges éthiques à négocier. On se mesure comme les ingrédients d'une recette, ou en termes de voyage, comme Fisher qui entremêle son récit avec des chapitres à plusieurs reprises intitulés « La mesure de mes pouvoirs », qui suivent son autonomie et son indépendance croissantes, plus particulièrement dans le domaine de l'alimentation, surtout quand il s'agit de manger seul.

2. Transmission

On se mesure par rapport à un sentiment de continuité que, historiquement, les écrivains culinaires ont cherché à transmettre. Sa perte incarne ce que De Certeau et al. ont décrit comme une « [r]upture avec d'anciens équilibres ». [24] Dans la recherche de la compréhension de soi, il y a le besoin de partager et de transmettre des connaissances, une expérience et des traditions. La nourriture joue un rôle dans l'établissement, ou le rétablissement, de liens dans le contexte du déplacement et du déracinement. Les mémoires culinaires ont assumé le rôle de transmission des traditions, qui représente la « connaissance » de l'identité féminine, dans une fraternité implicite de valeurs partagées, centrée sur le besoin de se comprendre. Ces femmes revendiquent l'archive informelle des souvenirs alimentaires, les mémoires, considérés par certains comme en marge du canon littéraire, [25] servent à légitimer la transmission culinaire.

Les récits expriment une nécessité répétée de remonter au début, à la figure maternelle qui est le point de départ de la découverte de l'identité. Connexion et transfert se font généralement à travers une préparation et des conversations partagées sur la nourriture, qui sont capturées dans un récit intimiste. La relation matriarcale omniprésente est l'histoire principale qui sous-tend de nombreux récits, à la fois la

[24] Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, and Pierre Mayol. *L'invention du quotidien, II, habiter, cuisiner*. Paris: Gallimard, 1994. 300.
[25] Voir Patience Gray. *Honey from a Weed: Fasting and Feasting in Tuscany, Catalonia, The Cyclades and Apulia*. 1986. London: Prospect Books, 2009. 11. Gray se réfère aux écrivains comme elle qui vivent dans la nature, tels que Lawrence Durrell et Elizabeth David.

relation mère-fille et la relation entre sœurs, représentées comme les principales gardiennes des traditions culinaires. Son absence est souvent exprimée comme un traumatisme infligé, ou, pour Fisher, qui assume le rôle d'un vecteur non matriarcal de la culture culinaire, comme un espace de liberté d'expression. Les mémoires démontrent que des modèles inadéquats, sous la forme de figures maternelles déficientes, rendent les enfants dysfonctionnels et créent une faille dans l'unité familiale.

3. A la recherche des racines

En tant que récits marginaux par rapport aux formes narratives habituelles, les traditions culinaires écrivent un récit où, d'après James Clifford, les racines et les itinéraires se confondent. [26] La recherche des racines mène aux origines, tandis que celle des routes révèle une structure rhizomatique. *The Language of Baklava* est un exemple essentiel de ces dichotomies et de l'ambivalence entre la patrie et la terre d'accueil, les États-Unis et la Jordanie.

Alors que certains peinent à trouver et à préserver leurs racines, d'autres, comme Ruth Reichl, cherchent à se dissocier de leurs origines ethniques ou culinaires. L'histoire de Shoba Narayan, au contraire, est rythmée par des moments-clés où la cuisine lui permet de repousser les limites, tout en respectant les traditions, qui lui permettent d'atteindre de nouveaux degrés d'émancipation. L'ancrage, à la fois enracinement et contrainte, peut être temporaire, durant aussi longtemps que la période de résidence comme le montrent les œuvres de Durrell, et réalisé grâce à des attachements au paysage et aux habitudes alimentaires. D'autres formes de liberté proviennent du récit lui-même, de l'érudition alimentaire de David et Roden, ou du discours esthétique et moral de Fisher, bien que sa demande de liberté se déroule essentiellement dans un espace marin déterritorialisé.

Dans cette quête des racines se trouve un discours romantique à la fois littéraire, avec l'évocation de mythes d'origine évoquant l'Ancien Monde et la fascination pour le voyage, et moral, avec une attirance pour ce que Roger Bromley a appelé la fiction diasporique de l'hybridité sans fin [27] qui représente la flexibilité. En plus des fables

[26] James Clifford. *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1997. 253. Ma traduction.
[27] Roger Bromley. *Narratives for a New Belonging*. Edinburgh: U of Edinburgh Press, 2000. 168. Ma traduction.

écrites pour les enfants qui sont maintenant les narrateurs, nous rencontrons également la figure de l'héroïne qui fait une maison idéalisée dans un monde moins qu'idéal.

C. Le rôle de la mémoire

La nature de la transmission implique que le rappel et l'enregistrement des souvenirs sont une responsabilité collective dans un voyage partagé. Les souvenirs sont des artefacts pour certains et même des artifices pour d'autres, un processus de rappel ou un lieu de l'oubli, en particulier pour les diasporas et les victimes de traumatismes pour qui la nostalgie est à la fois une force positive et négative.

1. Mémoire, souvenirs : artefact et artifice

La recherche de sa propre identité implique la perpétuation d'une mémoire transgénérationnelle qui rassemble la mémoire individuelle, collective et historique. Les auteurs se chargent d'exposer les zones de chevauchement et même l'écriture-palimpseste de la mémoire. Le retour physique est souvent impossible, mais il y a un revirement, un retournement répété vers le concept de la patrie et de la parenté diasporique à travers la mémoire et la nourriture dans les récits des mémoires. Les gestes commémoratifs symboliques dans l'écriture et le partage de recettes enjambent la distance entre la patrie et la terre d'accueil. Les pratiques de routine sont à la fois un témoignage d'une mémoire collective et une commémoration du passé, un acte continu pour reprendre possession de la mémoire dans le présent. Ces actes sont peut-être une transmission de mémoire plus fiable que le langage, comme le suggère Luce Giard. [28]

Les traditions culinaires du pays natal sont des vestiges ou des objets tangibles qui revêtent une qualité sacrée. Ils servent d'objets de témoignage qui transportent des traces de mémoire dans le présent. Marianne Hirsch et Leo Spitzer, faisant référence aux objets-livres de recettes de l'Holocauste, appellent à une approche élargie du témoignage en utilisant la notion de Roland Barthes de *punctum* dans *Camera Lucida*,[29] où certains éléments photographiés servent de points de mémoire personnelle et culturelle, ce qui contribue à conférer une place légitime aux mémoires culinaires dans

[28] De Certeau et al., *L'invention du quotidien, II, habiter, cuisiner*. *op. cit*., 218.
[29] Roland Barthes. *Camera lucida: Reflections on photography*. Trans. Richard Howard. New York: Hill and Wang, 1981. Web. Nov. 2019. <https://monoskop.org/images/c/c5/Barthes_Roland_Camera_Lucida_Reflections_on_Photography.pdf>.

le corpus littéraire des écritures du souvenir. De petits détails traduisent la nature fragmentée des vestiges dont nous héritons, comme les éléments des recettes dispersées, par exemple, un ingrédient. Les auteurs utilisent la forme livre de recettes-mémoires comme un artifice pour préserver les souvenirs et articuler un discours didactique axé sur la sensualité et la sensibilité gastronomique.

2. Se souvenir et oublier

La plupart des récits remontent à l'enfance, et décrivent des habitudes alimentaires familiales qui servent d'agents de mémoire, dont les pouvoirs de réminiscence sont mentaux et sensoriels. L'acte répétitif de cuisiner, réunissant passé et présent, avec chaque sens en éveil, contribue au rappel holistique. La recette interagit avec les processus de mémoire grâce à l'intégration physique de la langue, des traditions et de la culture dans la préparation des plats, permettant d'accéder à des souvenirs cachés à travers l'incarnation. Les mémoires culinaires sont eux-mêmes un médium dynamique dans lequel les actes de mémoire par la préparation des aliments et les rituels conduisent paradoxalement à la déconnexion ou à l'oubli, offrant des espaces intimes pour créer de nouvelles identités, par de nouveaux souvenirs. Le processus de déconnexion et d'oubli permet aux narrateurs d'abandonner des souvenirs, perçus comme éléments du voyage de la diaspora, mais aussi d'en créer de nouveaux également authentiques.

Les récits créent un espace autonome où le passé n'existe que par la modification par la mémoire de notre perception des événements. [30] Cette modification se produit à travers des actions dans le présent : la consommation de la madeleine proverbiale de Proust ou la fabrication d'une recette patrimoniale. La mémoire est une force dynamique, activée par la transmission de recettes, dont la forme structurée et répétitive incarne une qualité intemporelle. Les mémoires sont des paradoxes de chronologie et d'intemporalité, des moments atemporels qui existent dans une temporalité précise de cycles et de saisons répétées.

[30] Voir Rita Olivieri-Godet. *Ecriture et identités dans la nouvelle fiction romanesque*. Rennes: PU de Rennes, 2010, 62. "[L]a fragilité des liens avec le passé tient à la façon dont le récit se fait le relais de la mémoire. En effet, le récit jouit d'un espace autonome qui impose au lecteur l'épaisseur d'un lieu où le passé ne revit que grâce au truchement du souvenir qui modifie la perception des évènements."

3. Nostalgie - idéalisation et oppression

La nostalgie est un artifice qui rend supportable l'impossibilité du retour diasporique. C'est, en premier lieu, un outil qui permet la conservation historique mais qui cache également d'autres agendas et émotions complexes. Elle écrit des histoires intimes, comme dans l'œuvre d'Elizabeth David, mais se nourrit d'une imagination collective. La force de la nostalgie n'est pas toujours une expérience immortalisante. La nostalgie peut être un artifice fallacieux qui cache de réelles souffrances, comme peut-être celle de David pour la Méditerranée, de Roden pour l'Égypte ou d'Hemingway pour son Paris bien-aimé, où il a perdu ses premières œuvres. Les traditions qui aident le narrateur à trouver son identité peuvent également devenir oppressantes. La nostalgie des habitudes alimentaires obsessionnelles des immigrants de première génération, comme les parents de Diana Abu-Jaber et Linda Furiya, peut être envahissante. Elles provoquent un mélange de respect et d'incompréhension où les narrateurs ont un pied dans chaque monde, symbolisé par la dimension bi-genres des mémoires, en partie livre de cuisine, en partie auto-écriture.

Le rôle de l'imagination dans la nostalgie s'étend au-delà de la simple patrie. Il s'étend également à des lieux jamais visités, qui saisissent l'imagination du narrateur : les images ou les émotions générées par des contes familiaux mythiques ou des aperçus indéfinissables de soi. Cela est généré par une nostalgie qui, selon Raphaël Samuel, ne concerne : « notoirement pas le passé mais les absences ou des vides ressentis dans le présent ». [31] Claudia Roden a déplacé son propre désir de l'Égypte, celui de sa famille et de l'ensemble d'une communauté, dans un ouvrage monumental sur la cuisine du Moyen-Orient. Le récit se déplace de son histoire personnelle à une vaste histoire culinaire multiculturelle, pour conserver la mémoire d'un monde en voie de disparition.

D. Effets de déplacement

Un état de déplacement peut être perpétué par l'incapacité des immigrants à s'assimiler. Quel que soit l'ordre retrouvé dans une identité troublée grâce au choix de souvenirs, d'histoires et de recettes, il reste des traces de la dispersion due au

[31] Raphael Samuel. Theatres of Memory, Vol. 1 Past and Present in Contemporary Culture. London: Verso, 1994. 356. Ma traduction.

déplacement, des traces des identités ambiguës et parfois de l'intégrité compromise. Dans l'écriture de voyage, l'attachement au lieu peut ne plus sembler indispensable, même si le besoin principal demeure. Les espaces globaux sont occupés par des discours multiculturels dans lesquels le déplacement peut également devenir quelque chose de souhaitable, voire de recherché.

1. Dislocation

Les diasporas doivent créer de nouvelles cartes, notamment d'attachement au lieu et au groupe. Tracer une carte implique également de définir la route à prendre, ainsi que le point de départ d'où l'on vient. Le langage devient une forme de positionnement et de réarticulation. En utilisant des idiomes de voyage, un certain ordre est imposé et une carte rudimentaire est dessinée. Les métaphores de chemins et de ponts dans de multiples mémoires façonnent l'évolution de l'identité du narrateur lors de son voyage. Avec l'éloignement et le détachement comme condition préalable à la créativité, l'aliénation comme état d'esprit devient un rite de passage pour un artiste ou un écrivain moderne sérieusement engagé dans son art, à la recherche d'une condition « d'apatride ».

Le discours culinaire rétablit une forme de proto-langage, un rappel de la langue vernaculaire du pays d'origine, lui permettant de traverser les frontières et même d'occuper des espaces sans frontières. Les principales caractéristiques de la langue « déplacée » sont définies par opposition à l'écriture canonique, situées dans des « sous-genres » tels que les mémoires culinaires. Le langage nous permet de donner un sens à des lieux désormais compris comme foyer, communauté, et nouveau lieu de mémoire.

2. Questionnement existentiel

La reconstruction de l'identité nécessite un déplacement de l'endroit où l'on se trouve, au-delà du seuil, à la recherche de soi, et aussi, de l'autre. Le dilemme personnel primordial auquel sont confrontés les narrateurs est d'atteindre un certain degré d'assimilation fonctionnelle, voire émotionnelle, tout en protégeant son identité ethnique et culturelle. La présence d'une patrie effective, comme la Jordanie d'Abu-Jaber, rend l'éloignement physique d'autant plus pesant émotionnellement. Les mémoires invitent à se déconnecter, à abandonner certains souvenirs et attentes dans le cadre du voyage de diaspora vers une nouvelle identité.

Des modèles communs créent une esthétique de l'exil, qui peuvent le transformer lui-même en ce que Svetlana Boym décrit comme une « fiction habilitante »[32], une forme de survie existentielle, qui concentre des métaphores de l'aliénation et de l'exil. Les récits d'exil cherchent à remplir un espace, abritant des connotations de solitude individuelle et de spiritualité romancée. Les voyages que les narrateurs entreprennent vers les pays d'origine de leurs parents remettent en question leur état d'exil et sont une tentative pour clore des histoires inachevées.

3. Ambivalence et oscillation

La confusion de la dislocation repose sur un continuum entre les états paradoxaux d'immobilité et de mouvement. Les termes adjectivaux associés suggérant le mouvement renvoient à la frontière, la diaspora, le nomadisme, et la migration ; ces termes synthétisent l'état d'entre-deux, l'oscillation des sujets déracinés. Il existe un mouvement de bascule physique et émotionnelle entre la « patrie » et la « terre hôte » pour la diaspora, qui vit un voyage perpétuel.

La relation confuse entre ces deux terres met en évidence le désir ambivalent d'embrasser simultanément ce qui reste d'un passé, dont on est éloigné spatialement et temporellement, et ce que le présent offre comme identité assimilée. Les lieux fluctuants sont la scène sur laquelle se déploient la mémoire et la création d'une nouvelle identité. Privées d'accès aux 'paysages-patries', les diasporas créent leurs propres paysages dans des intérieurs domestiques, qui cherchent à harmoniser la propension à l'oscillation, le désir de créer quelque chose des deux côtés.

La capacité de s'établir, de s'ancrer dans un espace ou dans une identité culturelle et spirituelle, offre un point d'attache qui donne également la liberté de mouvement. Paradoxalement, ce sont les traditions, notamment culinaires, qui offrent cet attachement. Les recettes et les descriptions des aliments servent d'ancrage au présent ainsi qu'aux rituels séculaires qui permettent d'explorer le passé en toute sécurité.

[32] Svetlana Boym. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001. 256. Ma traduction.

III. Récit de voyages et habitudes alimentaires

Nous examinons les connotations du voyage en relation avec le déplacement physique et émotionnel telles qu'elles sont exposées dans les mémoires culinaires. Elles peuvent être cartographiées comme une réponse aux problèmes personnels et identitaires liés aux questions de traumatisme, d'appartenance, de racines déplacées et d'incertitude existentielle. Les voyages culinaires, qui relatent les modes alimentaires et leurs enjeux, sont proches de la littérature de voyage, en termes de perceptions du temps et de l'espace. Les métaphores et symboles culinaires, profondes racines culturelles, imprègnent les lieux, influençant l'esthétique du voyage.

A. Mémoires-récits de voyage et de résidence

Les mémoires culinaires, en tant que récits de voyage, peuvent se situer sur la même lignée que les récits consacrés à un lieu de résidence, un genre illustré par Durrell et Hemingway et, plus récemment, par Elizabeth Gilbert. Nous examinons la question du genre du point de vue des dilemmes diasporiques de la déconnexion et de la perte, à la fois littéraux et figuratifs, avant d'examiner comment les mémoires en tant que littérature de voyage représentent simultanément le lieu et le repositionnement, proposant une nouvelle forme de voyage qui nous emmène vers des espaces privés statiques en quête de soi, ainsi que vers des espaces étrangers où la nourriture et le repas servent de forme de transcription. Enfin, nous explorons le rôle de la nourriture dans les récits de voyage, comme condition d'authenticité, et les mutations inévitables inhérentes à sa nature nomade ou itinérante.

1. Mémoires de voyage culinaires : réponse à la perte

Dans la diversité des mémoires culinaires, on découvre une dichotomie entre ce que Jean Viviès décrit comme un voyage endotique, dans lequel le protagoniste part à la recherche de soi, et un voyage exotique, dans lequel le protagoniste part à la recherche de l'autre. [33] Ces deux formes de voyage résument un mouvement à travers l'espace et le temps, le long des routes et des racines, dans des lieux et des souvenirs. Les mémoires

[33] Jean Viviès, ed. *Lignes de Fuite : Littérature de voyage du monde anglophone*. Aix-en-Provence: Publications de l'Université de Provence, 2003. Introduction.

culinaires nous emmènent vers des 'patries' étrangères, réelles et imaginaires, apportant souvent des réponses peu concluantes ou compromises aux questions d'exil et d'appartenance. L'exotisme devient un canal de compréhension de soi car de nombreux pays d'origine sont des lieux exotiques, étrangers, littéralement et émotionnellement, et le voyage de retour et de découverte de soi devient un chemin inexploré menant à des endroits inconnus.

Le voyage endotique, malgré sa familiarité apparente, est souvent une aventure émotionnelle décrite comme une quête littéraire. Ces voyages qui transforment emmènent les narrateurs d'un lieu à un autre, ou d'une condition à une autre, souvent de l'Ancien Monde au Nouveau. De nombreux voyages incarnent l'idiome romantique ou tragique des traversées, avec des connotations d'immensité, qu'il s'agisse de voyages unidirectionnels ou de voyages à double sens troublés. Les auteurs sont à la fois perdus et retrouvés dans les voyages culinaires, qui confrontent les traditions, croisent les cultures et redéfinissent les genres.

Les frontières réelles, et celles de l'expérience personnelle, ont la possibilité de devenir des zones d'espoir et de désespoir, où s'expriment les attentes d'une nouvelle vie ou d'un retour à l'ancienne. Les auteurs qui choisissent de vivre entre la patrie et la terre d'accueil occupent des zones frontalières de leur propre création, ni pleinement dans un monde ni pleinement dans l'autre. Les mémoires culinaires, en tant que genre émergent, traversent les frontières littéraires, créant leur propre espace frontalier, situé entre les livres de cuisine et la littérature de voyage, incarné par les paysages naturels définis sémiotiquement dans les descriptions des lieux et des aliments. Ces paysages sont représentés comme idylliques, infinis et universels, et l'accent est mis sur leur générosité, ce qui les rend de fait sans frontières, offrant au « voyageur » déraciné un espoir d'assimilation.

Alors que les seuils frontaliers suggèrent la possibilité d'un franchissement, les exilés doivent souvent faire face à la réalité du non-retour. William Safran appelle cet élément de l'état diasporique, le « mythe du retour », [34] un retour impossible et un état d'esprit diasporique lié à la façon dont le passé est rappelé. Les recettes créent de petits

[34] William Safran. "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return". *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 1.1 (1991): 83-99. Ma traduction.

espaces de contact interculturel servant d'intermédiaire entre deux mondes, dissipant temporairement l'angoisse diasporique quant à l'incapacité de revenir. La nourriture offre un chemin d'espoir, pas toujours transplanté avec succès, mais en consacrant néanmoins l'intention.

2. Récit de mémoires du lieu et de l'emplacement

Les voyages statiques explorent le lieu et le soi, tout en incarnant une impression d'instabilité au sein d'un sentiment de stabilité, l'impression d'être au bord du changement ou de la perturbation. Plusieurs récits racontent des périodes de résidence qui, tout en décrivant de nouveaux lieux et traditions, sont avant tout des voyages endotiques de découverte de soi. La cuisine est un lieu de voyage statique, un voyage de découverte de soi, représentant l'immobilité, mais aussi le déplacement. Il offre un espace créatif où aborder les besoins existentiels et émotionnels.

Alors qu'Estelle Jelinek estime que l'autobiographie n'est pas connue pour son utilisation de la métaphore ou du symbole, [35] ces actes d'auto-écriture contiennent la métaphore de l'odyssée. La forme du mémoire construit une concentration d'errances et de déplacements qui mettent en avant les traumatismes et les interrogations douloureuses : Kate Christensen écrit sur le terroir, créant une terre littéraire pour l'odyssée de sa propre écriture ; Barbara Kingsolver décrit un voyage à la découverte d'une alimentation autre ; les livres de cuisine de David constituent une bibliothèque de voyages.

Le processus d'acculturation et d'assimilation est un acte de traduction du monde, en particulier pour les familles immigrées, qui permet la consommation réelle et métaphorique de la culture de la terre d'accueil. Mary Douglas affirme que la nourriture est une métonymie, chaque repas portant le sens d'un autre repas, qui peut être interprété comme la construction d'un pont ou l'établissement d'un lien entre les habitudes alimentaires. De nouvelles formes d'écriture de voyage reflètent l'influence du genre culinaire, explorant le plaisir culinaire ainsi que le paysage. Le voyage n'est plus une mise en cause, mais un droit personnel et un moment structurant. Il offre une nouvelle perspective sur le voyageur en tant que résident et touriste. Les histoires sont

[35] Estelle C Jelinek. The Tradition of Women's Autobiography: From Antiquity to the Present. Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1986. 181.

segmentées, comme le récit de la recette, à l'exemple du récit de voyage d'Elizabeth Gilbert dans lequel elle affirme que le repas est la seule vraie monnaie, dans un monde où tout est négocié, ou à l'exemple des 'petites histoires' d'Adam Gopnik sur la vie quotidienne d'un Américain à Paris.

3. La nourriture qui voyage

Les modes alimentaires incluent les aliments en tant qu'éléments matériels, symboles d'identité, et histoire d'un groupe qui s'étend au-delà d'une exploration de la cuisine et de la consommation. La nourriture et l'acte de manger sont un voyage au cœur d'une communauté. Les récits de voyage reflètent également les efforts postmodernes des mémoires culinaires pour trouver sa place dans le monde. Les auteurs entreprennent des voyages de découverte de soi, dans le contexte d'un environnement inconnu. Si les modes alimentaires idéalisés et les valeurs exemplaires suggèrent une possible banalisation du genre des mémoires, la dimension du voyage sert à distinguer les œuvres.

Symboliquement, la nourriture sert de médiatrice aux voyages entre le passé et le présent. Le voyage est inhérent à la nourriture qui est littéralement et métaphoriquement en transit, reflet de la condition du voyageur elle-même. Chacun de ces voyages intérieurs ou extérieurs sont des exemples des petits voyages multiples au cœur du voyage principal, le fil narratif qui mène de l'exil de la diaspora au voyage de découverte de soi.

Le nomadisme implique une absence de domicile fixe et de destination ultime, et peut sembler contraire à l'effort des mémoires culinaires pour trouver son domicile. L'écriture nomade cartographie le déplacement en réponse à des problèmes d'identité. La nourriture elle-même, comme les migrants et les groupes diasporiques, peut également évoluer séparément de sa source ethnique, elle-même sous la forme d'un voyage nomade, avec la confrontation à des cultures culinaires nouvelles ou transformées, à des noms étrangers créant des troubles linguistiques dans le texte, avec des recettes comme des interruptions narratives. L'itinérance incarne l'idée de recherche de soi, de recherche d'identité au travers d'un parcours sans but et sans destination. La nourriture nous emmène ailleurs et nous confronte à l'altérité, laissant de côté la sécurité de nos propres traditions. L'apparente insignifiance de la vie ordinaire abrite le

cœur de l'identité individuelle, et le déplacement itinérant met en relief ces rituels domestiques dans ce qu'ils ont de plus essentiel.

B. Lieux d'origine et de destination

Nous examinons la possibilité que la dimension du voyage—que ce soit le voyage entrepris ou le déplacement subi—puisse extrapoler les traditions de l'environnement intime du foyer et du four, dans des espaces plus larges aux identités culturelles distinctes. Nous nous concentrons sur l'esthétique du voyage culinaire dans lequel le paysage, l'esprit déterminant du lieu et l'imaginaire se concentrent sur un espace culturellement distinct qui représente le terroir.

1. L'esthétique des récits de voyage culinaire

Comment expliquer le paradoxe selon lequel la nourriture, telle qu'elle est représentée dans les mémoires culinaires, incarne la notion de voyage, tout en incarnant intrinsèquement le foyer et le message éthique selon lequel les aliments qui soignent sont liés au chez-soi ? Il y a une insistance sur la variété des perspectives, et la prise en considération d'un double aspect, celui de l'appréciation sensorielle au sein du vaste récit du voyage. Les lieux, ainsi que les rôles narratifs, sont réinventés comme des espaces de découverte, des lieux métaphysiques dans lesquels les narrateurs projettent un sentiment d'appartenance.

Les mémoires offrent à la fois proximité et distance, un recentrage constant, du déplacement global et des larges balayages de l'histoire personnelle à la recette détaillée, des souvenirs flous à moitié oubliés aux aperçus précis sur la vie. La présence du paysage élargit l'approche à une vue panoramique qui englobe les besoins personnels dans un horizon étendu, un passage de la cuisine à la patrie, de la nourriture aux paysages naturels. Les mémoires culinaires sont des récits qui mettent en jeu l'esthétique du mouvement et de l'habitation. C'est dans cette confluence de la narrativité que le récit de voyage diasporique trouve son esthétique dans les histoires qui vont au-delà du four ou de la table du repas.

Les perceptions des paysages sont à comparer à des 'cartes profondes', subtiles, détaillées, à plusieurs couches de sens intégrées dans le récit et l'artifice, cette analogie aide à comprendre le paysage des mémoires culinaires. Les mémoires deviennent des

palimpsestes, avec des descriptions de paysages et de modes alimentaires superposées à des histoires personnelles, mettant l'accent sur le point focal, la perspective, les détails visuels et l'observation. Le déplacement est essentiel à la formation de la perception, car il permet un changement de compréhension de soi-même et de sa place dans le monde. Écrire sur le paysage est à la fois une vision du territoire et une exploration de l'esprit, une appropriation intellectuelle et sensorielle. Le paysage est écrit par le narrateur et le narrateur est écrit par le paysage.

Le voyage, comme l'auto-écriture et malgré son caractère imprévisible, est aussi paradoxalement motivé par un désir d'ordre, générant une esthétique de rationalisation. Les mémoires culinaires proposent des histoires allégoriques comme lignes directrices pour se retrouver soi-même et retrouver une certaine harmonie à travers des recettes pour bien vivre, en suivant la rhétorique prescriptive des guides de voyage qui offrent au lecteur la possibilité de découvrir les coins cachés du monde, alors que les mémoires culinaires recherchent les coins cachés de soi-même.

2. L'esprit du lieu

Les écrits autobiographiques créent de l'ordre pour éloigner l'inconnu, mais l'« étranger » exerce également une attraction complexe. Les mémoires sont imprégnées de ce que Durrell a appelé « l'esprit du lieu ». Cela concerne moins l'attachement des diasporas à leur patrie, que la perception du voyageur. La notion de « réenchantement » suggère qu'un lieu peut être investi d'une signification mythique qui suscite un sentiment d'identité et d'appartenance. L'étranger, en tant qu'inconnu, peut générer de l'excitation. Le lecteur, à la recherche de récits de voyage, fait également l'expérience de l'attirance des lieux étrangers en tant que témoin par procuration. Dans des mémoires récents, nous sommes confrontés au phénomène moderne de vouloir adopter un lieu étranger comme foyer. L'attraction de lieux inconnus peut paradoxalement apaiser le sentiment de dislocation, car l'état d'altérité parle de la propre condition du narrateur ainsi que de celle de l'étranger.

L'articulation du désir dans les mémoires culinaires est l'expression d'une esthétique du voyage, de la faim pour les lieux et les goûts inconnus. Les mémoires témoignent du rôle de l'imagination dans la fascination pour l'autre, d'une nostalgie de la liberté, de l'aventure et du mystère, et d'un regret pour le passé. Les patries sont tenues

dans l'imaginaire diasporique comme des terres étrangères, tandis que les lieux locaux ont le potentiel de devenir le nouvel exotique.

Les mémoires-recettes de M.F.K. Fisher et Elizabeth David ont introduit l'idée du respect du terroir. Ils expriment un sentiment d'appartenance qui évoque la nostalgie d'une époque antérieure à la modernité. Le goût du lieu est l'essence même du *foodway* dans les mémoires culinaires. Goûts et senteurs, englobant l'esprit du lieu, se croisent avec les définitions de l'authenticité. [36] La question du caractère unique du lieu, de sa culture et de son goût est au cœur du parcours de chaque auteur et de la rencontre avec l'autre. La centralité du terroir dans les mémoires culinaires renvoie à la fois au voyage qui découvre une cuisine et un terroir autre, et à l'identité culinaire héritée.

3. La Méditerranée : terroir de ressources infinies

La Méditerranée, emblématique des racines, des origines et de l'identité, a une résonance universelle. La région, souvent considérée, mythiquement et anthropologiquement, comme le berceau de l'humanité, aux ressources infinies, tant alimentaires que spirituelles, se présente comme un lieu où abondent les nourritures essentielles. Il se révèle, à travers une multitude de facettes littéraires, dont des allégories, des mythes et des fables, comme un territoire de rêves. Les longues litanies d'ingrédients méditerranéens se lisent comme un inventaire de ses nombreux peuples et de ses richesses, un terroir aux composantes fragmentées et réfractées. De nombreuses œuvres de notre corpus sont entrecoupées de voyages vers, depuis, ou à l'intérieur de la Méditerranée, comme si son multiculturalisme incitait à l'agitation et à la nervosité autour des origines et de la destination. Les écrivains ont cherché un ancrage dans les traditions gastronomiques, ainsi qu'un réconfort sensoriel pour exorciser les traumatismes.

L'hédonisme peut être considéré comme une forme de régression vers un état plus primitif où le plaisir de manger, de solliciter des instincts archaïques et des souvenirs déclenchés par les sens, est central. Le voyage vers la Méditerranée est un retour spirituel, émotionnel, voire culturel, comme vers le berceau d'une langue, d'une religion, d'une littérature. Il représente un retour primordial au corps, à la naissance

[36] Amy B. Trubek. *The Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey into Terroir*. Berkeley: U of California Press, 2008.

associée à la mère emblématique de l'humanité, et à la mer. Symbole de l'abondance, la Méditerranée représente un monde spirituel, aux connotations du Jardin d'Éden, un monde perdu en harmonie avec lui-même, offrant une vérité universelle. Les récits sont un espace pour créer une métaphore de la Méditerranée, notamment de l'alimentation, à la fois spécifique et universelle, incarnant le sensoriel et la métaphysique.

L'expérience sensorielle et la spiritualité se mêlent à des expériences initiatiques épiphaniques qui servent de rites de passage, souvent lors de voyages liminaux qui révèlent des vérités absolues à travers des expériences gustatives. Il y a ceux pour qui la rencontre avec la gastronomie altère le rapport à la nourriture et la compréhension de soi. Pour d'autres, c'est un réveil personnel, souvent sensuel, un moment de découverte de soi à un moment-clé de leur vie. Le paysage façonne un paysage intérieur à travers l'observation et la consommation.

IV. Au-delà de la nourriture : l'esthétique de l'alimentation

A. Testaments culinaires dédiés à la mémoire et l'esthésie

En explorant la notion de nourriture comme quelque chose qui va au-delà des aliments et de l'acte de manger, nous nous confrontons au paradoxe de la nourriture trouvée dans la préservation des souvenirs du passé, étudiée dans des récits à résonance sensorielle, ainsi qu'à l'anthropologie de la cuisine, où la notion de nourriture préservée du passé s'associe à celle de la nourriture goûtée au présent. La nourriture et les voyages—en tant qu'alimentation et besoin métaphysique—peuvent être définis comme manger et comprendre, nourrir et connaître. Max Milner explique que nourrir signifie alimenter mais aussi éduquer, en effet, la sagesse (*sapientia*) a la même racine latine que le goût (*sapere*, avoir du goût),[37] l'idée de goût mettant en évidence l'importance de l'expérience incarnée.

1. Des récits qui dérivent des sens

La perception sensorielle offre une forme unique de connaissance de soi. La perception visuelle dominante engendre une forme d'iconographie méditative autour de

[37] Max Milner. "Entrée". *L'Imaginaires des Nourritures*. Ed. Simone Vierne. Grenoble: PU de Grenoble, 1989. 10.

la nourriture. Le sens du goût est également omniprésent, utilisé au figuré comme une forme d'appréciation panthéiste de la nature. Les goûts spécifiques peuvent être complexes et archaïques, évoquant des origines antiques, tandis que l'alimentation qui nourrit associe la mémoire archaïque et la réaction sensorielle spontanée. Un aspect sacré des retours aux origines archaïques suscite des instincts premiers et des réactions primitives, quand nos sens nous donnent la capacité d'évoquer des souvenirs et des émotions qui vont au-delà de la conscience.

L'incorporation, suscitant une perception immédiate, dépasse la compréhension intellectuelle, nourrissant l'esprit ainsi que le corps. Au niveau primitif, les expériences sensorielles procurent un plaisir fondamental et satisfont les désirs. Le corps sert de patrie, un lieu où la connaissance prend la forme d'un panorama perceptif qui nourrit doublement à travers la transcription littéraire, correspondant à une manière de rétablir une relation de plaisir avec le corps féminin comme l'explique Hélène Cixous dans sa vision de l'écriture féminine. [38] Nous sommes entrainés par la sensualité des textes descriptifs, tels ceux de Christensen, dans lesquels des descriptions nourries se succèdent au fil des pages, d'autant plus vives et riches par leur ponctuation parfois arbitraire, et qui véhiculent un hédonisme et une abondance sensuelle somptueuse, que rien ne semble devoir arrêter.

Les recettes sont des éléments-clés pour la construction d'une identité en exil rassemblant des fragments, littéralement et symboliquement. S'ils peuvent être éphémères, poétiques et apaisants, ces fragments ancrent également le récit dans la sensualité sûre et nourrissante de l'instant présent, permettant au narrateur de retourner revisiter le passé à partir d'un point d'observation assuré, établissant un lien sûr et tangible avec un tradition insaisissable.

L'omniprésence de la faim, au cœur de nombreux récits d'immigrants, est une donnée qui positionne la nourriture comme réponse au centre du récit des mémoires, le voyage lui-même offrant l'accès à la nourriture, comme passage nécessaire vers la guérison émotionnelle et la gratification spirituelle. La faim, en tant que situation omniprésente, colore et même nourrit une partie de l'identité immigrée. Le besoin et le désir sont décrits en termes de sensation et de compréhension. Selon Fisher, préparer

[38] Hélène Cixous. *Le rire de la Méduse : et autres ironies*. Paris: Galilée, 2010.

un repas pour les autres, c'est aussi préparer une histoire chère qui soutient ses invités contre la faim universelle du monde.

2. Dimension symbolique : la sustentation et le sacré

La nourriture invite également à examiner des thèmes, plus larges que ceux de l'identité et des origines personnelles, qui renvoient au contexte culturel, à l'évolution des différents groupes ethniques et à la pertinence de questions spirituelles et existentielles.

La nature symbolique de la nourriture apparait dans les interdictions et tabous qui indiquent les frontières sociales, l'intégrité religieuse, le statut et la différence entre les genres. Dans de nombreuses cultures, la nourriture joue un rôle central dans la médiation entre les personnes et dans l'expression de sa propre place dans le monde. Des messages sont transmis lorsque la nourriture est transformée du cru en produit comestible. [39] L'alimentation devient un symbole éloquent plutôt qu'un processus de fabrication ; cela est évident dans le fait de mettre en conserve, de conserver de manière incarnée, rendant les souvenirs du passé tangibles et durables. Le symbolisme de la nourriture, ou de son absence, est aussi évident dans les repas, qui dans de nombreux cas sont plus des scènes d'un drame complexe que des communions sociales, qui prennent une dimension allégorique, dans laquelle les parties recréent le tout comme un paysage (*mealscape*), et le tout rappelle les parties. [40]

Pour les voyages qui marquent des passages traumatisants, il y a parfois un effort pour réhabiliter l'identité perdue et préserver la mémoire de la communauté, mené par un individu inspiré. Les œuvres de Claudia Roden sont de telle sorte, conçues pour entretenir la mémoire, en tant que livres de cuisine auto-ethnographiques, collection—et remémoration—culinaire, ils sont une présentation complète des peuples et des ingrédients, des traditions culinaires complexes et des goûts hybrides, une source définitive de connaissance, ce qui rejoint l'idée de Max Milner de la connaissance devenant nourriture.

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[39] Voir Lévi-Strauss. *Mythologiques 1 : Le Cru et le Cuit*. *op. cit*.
[40] Voir David E. Sutton. Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory. New York: Berg, 2001. 104, 109.

Le récit ne représente pas un passé, mais un chez-soi au présent, qui peut être consommé, construit à partir de souvenirs qui ont été activés dans le présent par le biais des recettes, des expériences actuelles et de la nouvelle identité affinée à partir de cette expérience. Le texte lui-même devient un objet d'appartenance, offrant la sécurité, une histoire qui nomme les origines et les traditions. Les narrateurs s'installent dans l'histoire unique qu'ils racontent d'eux-mêmes, poursuivant une dynamique d'auto-unification.

B. Récits nourrissants

Les récits sont en eux-mêmes une forme de voyage contenant des richesses qui transcendent les attentes. L'idée de nourriture en tant que dynamique symbolique et littéraire englobe des discours sur la capacité des aliments à guérir aussi bien que blesser, qui font usage de nombreux tropes littéraires renvoyant à la nourriture et à l'altérité.

1. L'acte de manger : une esthétique réinventée

Nous poursuivons l'esthétique que Fisher perçoit dans « la chaleur, la richesse et la belle réalité », revisitée et réinventée par les auteurs contemporains, l'aventure esthétique qui ravit Lawrence Durrell. Le carnaval sensoriel des descriptions et des recettes alimentaires, ainsi que la présence réconfortante des recettes elles-mêmes, font de celles-ci des contes bienveillants, une littérature de « bien-être » qui suscite l'optimisme de par son message et son dénouement. Le défaut dans le récit de bien-être, comme le suggère Abu-Jaber, réside dans le récit léger et sans profondeur, d'une seule 'couche', dont la simplification excessive contraste avec les plats multicouches chargés symboliquement. La couche unique—sans référence au foyer, à la communauté ou au contexte culturel—est trop mince pour fournir un soutien, se brisant facilement comme les feuilles de *baklava* de la préparation dans *Crescent*.

Tout au long de notre étude, nous avons présenté la nourriture comme le vecteur de messages divers, nous invitant à percevoir l'esthétique de la nourriture comme symptomatique d'une communication expansive et englobante, qui canalise principalement notre désir de nourriture, mais aussi notre désir d'appartenance, notre désir de sens, de racines et d'avenir. Les histoires de nourriture ont une grande portée ; elles traduisent le questionnement aussi bien que la complétude, et la curiosité comme

la satisfaction. La nourriture, sous la forme d'anecdotes et de recettes insérées dans les mémoires culinaires, est très complexe, et fait le lien entre différents supports et différents genres, héritant d'influences multiples. La nourriture remplace les mots, mais les mots peuvent également remplacer la nourriture, au cœur des récits nourrissants. Écrire sur la nourriture est un moyen de changer la façon dont est perçue la nourriture.

Comme la poésie, les recettes invitent le lecteur à réaliser la combinaison alchimique des ingrédients dans les étapes de la préparation, et dans l'interprétation ou le résultat, après avoir suivi les étapes procédurales jusqu'à la conclusion. Dans la découpe, l'épluchage et la préparation, se trouve un symbole de l'acte de compréhension du lecteur qui va au cœur de l'histoire du narrateur, qui en comprend la vérité derrière la façade de bien-être. La cuisine et les recettes investissent le lecteur-cuisinier d'un rôle interprétatif, tandis que l'écriture a une qualité révélatrice qui divulgue lentement sa nature au fur et à mesure de son processus. La variété des formes syntaxiques remet en question la nature pseudo-normative et documentaire des recettes. Elles ralentissent le récit, nécessitant une pause, une réflexion et, dans le schéma narratif, le temps de faire le plat. Notre réflexion pose également la question de la nécessité de recettes dans le schéma narratif. Elles peuvent être perçues comme de simples pièges de la mémoire, contraignants et limitants, même lorsqu'elles sont réinventées. L'absence de recettes implique moins une perte de créativité qu'une absence de contrôle, un scénario de résultats imprévisibles et inattendus, semblable à la dimension inconnue du voyage.

2. L'art de nourrir

La nourriture est présentée comme un dispositif à multiples facettes offrant une subsistance spirituelle et émotionnelle. Elle se situe entre le sacré et le profane, entre le subjectif et le fonctionnel. Claude Lévi-Strauss a en effet souligné l'importance de la cuisine qui unifie et guérit, génère équilibre et harmonie, car la préservation et la réinvention des histoires familiales se réalisent autant par la préparation des aliments que par les aliments eux-mêmes. Des exemples de dégustation, associant la préparation et la prière, indiquent non pas un seul acte de guérison, mais une action répétée avec un effet cumulatif qui est l'essence de la nourriture. Nous rencontrons l'idée de la répétition qui associe l'acte de cuisiner et de manger, actes combinés dans la nourriture, comme se combinent les étapes d'un voyage.

Cependant, les traditions alimentaires peuvent à la fois guérir et nuire, par des forces externes ou par la main-même qui nourrit, comme dans les mémoires de Ruth Reichl et de Colette Rossant. Elles ont également le pouvoir d'unir ou de diviser les communautés et de délimiter les frontières dans les situations d'immigration ou de migration. Surmonter les dangers que présente la nourriture permet à la métaphore de la réconciliation d'émerger, de sorte que quelque chose de potentiellement menaçant peut se transformer en quelque chose de stimulant si l'instinct humain est autorisé à dominer. Simon Schama attire notre attention sur la relation entre les dilemmes moraux et l'environnement. [41] La nourriture comme sagesse et compréhension transcrit les leçons morales. La nature humaine et le paysage naturel se croisent sur des questions d'authenticité et d'intégrité, de terroir et d'enracinement. L'utilisation de la répétition associe le récit aux rythmes de la nature, capturés dans la notion de cycles et de saisons. Préparer un repas, c'est d'abord traduire la nature en culture en lui donnant les contours de la langue, puis en nourriture, comme nous le rappellent Lévi-Strauss et Schama.

3. La nourriture comme trope omniprésent

La notion de nourriture occupe l'espace de la littérature de voyage comme une forme de récompense et de réconfort. Avec des textes qui peuvent être dévorés ou savourés, [42] les mémoires incitent le lecteur à explorer des métaphores telles que goûter, apprécier, assimiler, à travers l'affinité entre la nourriture et le langage. La langue elle-même est source d'inspiration et de transformation comme la nourriture. Les mots et la nourriture se confondent, manger et écrire deviennent synonymes. Le récit de Leslie Li est analogue à la production de riz, avec ses rituels de croissance, de préparation, de cuisson et de consommation. La cuisine est comparée à une activité qui, comme l'écriture, doit être pratiquée au quotidien, une nourriture qui doit être renouvelée régulièrement.

La nourriture, en tant que langue de l'ailleurs perdue, peut devenir une nourriture qui sustente véritablement. L'écriture de Claudia Roden est une forme de dialogue avec le passé où la transcription des recettes sert d'étape dans le façonnage d'une mémoire qui nourrit le narrateur et le lecteur. La traduction de la parole éphémère

[41] Simon Schama. *Landscape and Memory*. London: Harper Collins, 1995.
[42] Voir Simone Vierne. "Ecrire, Lire, Déguster, Dévorer". *L'Imaginaires des Nourritures*. *op. cit*.

en texte écrit permanent permet la stabilisation et l'ancrage. Le rôle des livres de Roden est double : créer une mémoire, et déplacer les traditions culinaires de la mémoire vers la cuisine de ses lecteurs. La façon de se nourrir devient métaphore du déplacement, et fait du récit commémoratif une forme de monument qui laisse une marque. Ses œuvres deviennent un canal de communication dans lequel les souvenirs se construisent à travers le langage et le souvenir se façonne à travers la matérialisation des plats, préparés et consommés.

L'idiome culinaire façonne des récits appétissants autour de l'altérité et du voyage. Les mémoires sont un moyen sûr de consommer l'altérité, de devenir intime avec l'autre, conduisant à l'idée d'une alimentation interculturelle. Manger crée du sens sur le plan culturel et dessine également des frontières, entre les autres et nous, entre ici et là-bas. L'assemblage des tropes de la lecture, de l'écriture et du voyage, fait des mémoires eux-mêmes une forme de nourriture qui explique leur capacité à conférer le bien-être. Les éléments s'unissent pour créer un plat nourrissant : recettes, anecdotes, souvenirs, les variations du plat sont servies à plusieurs reprises, pour fournir une nourriture régulière et continue.

C. Un genre littéraire émergent

Nous faisons converger les approches pour comprendre le corpus comme représentatif d'un nouveau genre littéraire qui interpelle à la fois le lecteur et les genres existants, notamment ceux de l'autobiographie et de la littérature de voyage. Les mémoires culinaires dessinent une nouvelle voie dans la création littéraire et, ce faisant, supplantent l'autobiographie comme forme progressive de l'écriture de soi. Les voyageurs espèrent retourner dans le lieu inconnu dont ils ont la nostalgie, le lieu où est née leur identité.

1. Comment lire ces mémoires

Les mémoires culinaires peuvent-ils finalement tout signifier, car, comme le dit Eagleton, la nourriture est interprétable à l'infini ? [43] Le moi comme récit et le récit comme nourriture sont à la fois perçus comme égoïstes ou altruistes dans une approche

[43] Terry Eagleton. "Edible Ecriture". *Consuming Passions: Food in the Age of Anxiety*. *op. cit*.

postmoderne. Le lecteur est sensible à la dimension thérapeutique de la part autobiographique, évoluant autour d'histoires personnelles émotionnellement riches avec une intrigue morale forte, ou bien à la forme hybride et éclectique et au lien entre histoire personnelle et environnement nourricier, qui répond à un besoin d'évasion.

La lecture des mémoires est un exercice pour relier une histoire à un lieu. Le lecteur doit détecter les éléments de convergence de l'œuvre et le point de vue individuel qui sont entrelacés dans les éléments du paysage. Le voyage touristique, forme de voyage plus universelle et moins problématique que les déplacements associés à un traumatisme, contribue à ces rapprochements, avec les notions d'odyssée et de pèlerinage, qui embrassent aussi l'idée d'un voyage personnel de découverte, mais aussi de confrontation avec l'autre. La notion de pèlerinage relie le sens de l'histoire personnelle à l'environnement.

L'abondance de la nourriture, qui traverse tout le corpus, quelque divers qu'il soit, est présentée comme une bénédiction. Cependant, cela peut également provoquer une indigestion. Parle-t-on trop de nourriture ? Y-a-t-il trop de recettes ? Les mémoires culinaires, au-delà peut-être de leur intention, sont avant tout sollicités pour traduire l'invisible ; cependant le développement personnel mis en avant dans ces mémoires suggère bien que la nourriture peut atteindre 'l'insondable" auquel Sandra M. Gilbert fait référence. [44]

2. Ce que les mémoires culinaires disent d'eux-mêmes et du genre

Le thème de la cuisine sort des frontières traditionnellement définies, offrant de nouvelles perspectives dans l'écriture de soi, qui correspondent à la réinterprétation de l'histoire personnelle. Nous mettons en évidence les thèmes qui soutiennent la métaphore de l'évolution et du voyage dans le récit. L'effacement des limites entre la haute culture et de la culture vernaculaire [45] rend possible les mémoires culinaires, qui ne sont plus soumis à la perspective très hiérarchique de la haute culture. L'argument

[44] Sandra M. Gilbert. *The Culinary Imagination: From Myth to Modernity*. New York: Norton, 2014.

[45] Jean-Marie Schaeffer. *Petite écologie des études littéraires : pourquoi et comment étudier la littérature*. Vincennes: Éditions Thierry Marchaisse, 2012. "[L]a dynamique de démocratisation, qui caractérise nos sociétés depuis le XIXe siècle, n'a cessé de reconfigurer les relations entre haute culture et culture vernaculaire [...] Culture savante et culture vernaculaire ne cessent de se nourrir l'une et l'autre." (11-12).

de Schaeffer en faveur d'une approche interdisciplinaire dans l'étude de la littérature, [46] qui transcende les codes génériques rigides, rend mieux compte de la diversité et de l'hybridité des mémoires culinaires.

Quels éléments des mémoires culinaires devraient façonner nos lectures futures et notre compréhension de l'évolution du genre lui-même ? Malgré leur focalisation sur les traditions, les mémoires culinaires sont également en phase avec les définitions postmodernes, notamment en ce qui concerne la malléabilité créative de leur forme. Ils tirent les leçons du passé pour créer un présent fonctionnel et pragmatique, tout en préservant leurs qualités littéraires de lecture et d'écriture, [47] en racontant des histoires courtes et personnelles plutôt que de longs récits historiques. L'examen d'un vaste corpus nous permet de faire une étude objective des mémoires culinaires contemporains en eux-mêmes ainsi qu'en relation avec d'autres œuvres, et en tant qu'ensemble, ils permettent également de proposer une nouvelle lecture d'œuvres antérieures et d'autres genres également.

Le paradoxe qui lie les mémoires culinaires et le voyage est la prise de conscience que l'on quitte symboliquement la cuisine pour voyager, et donc pour rencontrer les autres. Ces œuvres invitent à la comparaison avec la littérature de voyage car dans l'omniprésence du voyage, les habitudes alimentaires sont devenues mobiles. Elles ont un air du foyer, mais sont, par essence, déplacées, offrant une multitude de tropes axés sur l'écriture de soi, ainsi que l'accès à la compréhension de soi. Dans sa visée thérapeutique, le genre des mémoires propose une forme d'écriture accessible au plus grand nombre. En termes pratiques, le format livre de recettes-mémoires a des qualités qui l'associent avec une thérapie narrative, dans laquelle l'histoire dominante est un voyage accompli par la famille, la communauté, avec l'ensemble des expériences vécues, tandis que des résultats uniques émergent au cours de la narration analytique du voyage, qui sont comme des moments d'illumination sur l'identité propre. Alors que l'histoire est constamment révisée et mise à jour, elle a également un élément stable, dans la communauté d'un voyage partagé motivé par le désir de comprendre.

[46] Ibid., 30.
[47] Roland Barthes. *S/Z*. Paris: Seuil, 1970.

3. Évolutions et nouveaux horizons

En tant que réécriture du genre du récit de voyage moderne, les mémoires culinaires ont la capacité d'explorer des voyages intérieurs réels, ainsi qu'une perspective microcosmique et macrocosmique, spécifique et globale. Ils offrent non seulement des vérités universelles mais des fragments de voyages émotionnels détournés, qui donnent autant de place à l'imagination qu'à l'intrigue véridique. En établissant un lien entre l'histoire et l'environnement, les frontières de la littérature de voyage sont effectivement redessinées, déplaçant l'histoire personnelle du chez-soi vers un nouveau domaine qui permet un espace pour l'aventure humaine. Il y a une acceptation de l'incertitude qui correspond au respect de l'humble recherche de soi. C'est ce développement émotionnel, utilisant la transformation du quotidien, qui distingue la littérature de voyage autobiographique—y compris les mémoires culinaires—de la littérature touristique. La littérature de voyage des femmes, en particulier, fait écho à l'esprit des mémoires culinaires dans son respect des connaissances ancestrales et l'interaction d'autres discours textuels, notamment la tradition de l'écriture culinaire.

Les mémoires culinaires détectent et amplifient un mouvement et une transformation dans le genre de l'écriture du voyage, qui implique un retour au pays d'origine comme une forme de recherche de soi dans le contexte primaire des modes alimentaires. Les auteurs publient des mémoires successifs de la même manière que les écrivains culinaires écrivant des livres de cuisine, décrivant une multitude de voyages et d'autres expériences culinaires personnelles. En assumant un rôle de transmission pour les générations futures, il y a un discours multigénérationnel fort, tourné vers l'avenir et vers l'arrière aussi. L'idée que « c'est à notre tour maintenant » invite également le lecteur à réfléchir à sa propre position dans la définition, la protection et la transmission de valeurs et d'une identité culturelles importantes, à travers les traditions culinaires. Ces livres de cuisine-mémoires-récits de voyages doivent ainsi assumer une nouvelle responsabilité—et peut-être même une nouvelle identité en tant que genre à part entière—au XXIe siècle, avec l'évolution des conditions de diaspora et d'immigration, et les drames personnels qui en découlent.

Conclusion

Notre objectif a été de démontrer le lien intime entre les deux piliers des mémoires culinaires, la gastronomie et l'écriture de voyage. En analysant la forme littéraire, le langage et la structure narrative, nous discernons une entreprise littéraire sérieuse, un récit intime et une exploration créative de questions existentielles. Les mémoires culinaires abordent des questions contemporaines, associant des formes littéraires traditionnelles à des questions d'origine et d'identité. Ils puisent principalement dans deux genres familiers, le livre de recettes et les mémoires, et proposent un nouveau genre qui aborde les voyages d'exil et de rédemption d'un traumatisme personnel. Ils englobent le voyage initial vers la « terre hôte », sous une forme à la fois littérale et abstraite, ainsi que le voyage personnel qui permettra de s'adapter et de s'assimiler. En reliant les histoires à des lieux dans une dynamique de voyage, le genre a trouvé un moyen d'établir un système rhizomique d'enracinement qui l'ancre dans cette hybridité générique qui aurait pu le déstabiliser.

Sans avoir nécessairement de fin, les mémoires sont « un voyage de la discontinuité et de la connexion »,[48] dont l'évocation nous a servi de perspective sur le développement des formes contemporaines de l'exil, qui s'expriment en recourant à des formes traditionnelles d'expression littéraire et en reliant les récits personnels à l'esprit du lieu. Les mémoires consistent à faire des ajustements, qui sont la métaphore d'une recette réussie : trouver le focus, définir les histoires et ensuite relier ces histoires aux lieux. Nous avons défendu la présence de recettes en tant que partie intégrante de l'intention narrative, en faisant valoir que le recours aux habitudes alimentaires touche quelque chose d'archaïque qui renvoie à la fois le narrateur et le lecteur aux voyages passés. Il y a une équation entre spiritualité et compréhension de soi, l'expression des besoins physiques et métaphysiques est au cœur de ces œuvres, en un mouvement centré sur l'alimentation et la compréhension, la nourriture et la connaissance.

A l'instar du récit de voyage, ces mémoires montrent le rôle central du développement émotionnel dans le voyage, ce que les écrivains voyageurs récents ont eux-mêmes souligné. Ces mémoires partagent une préoccupation postmoderne avec d'autres genres, y compris le récit de voyage et le roman, qui concerne les manques

[48] Ehrlich. *Miriam's Kitchen. A Memoir. op. cit*., xii.

émotionnels, la recherche des origines et la possibilité de progresser vers des résultats temporairement satisfaisants. La nourriture est banale et pourtant unique, elle suscite une forte réponse sensorielle et émotionnelle qui peut nous transporter vers de nouveaux domaines d'expérience. Les mémoires culinaires ont révélé que la nourriture est devenue un incontournable du débat autour des questions d'origine et d'identité, dans un discours interculturel omniprésent.

Au niveau collectif, les mémoires culinaires ont pour rôle de dire l'histoire contemporaine globale de l'alimentation, à travers un récit poétique et prosaïque, et en constituant un corpus de recettes qui incarne une vérité symbolique et universelle, pertinente pour un lectorat moderne itinérant. Ce rôle leur vient des livres de cuisine ; de l'autobiographie, le genre des mémoires culinaires a retenu l'apport thérapeutique d'une forme de pratique narrative, et il permet de réécrire sa propre histoire du point de vue de la nourriture pour rendre possible l'émergence de nouveaux dénouements, dont les recettes sont l'ultime trope, une nouvelle recette produisant une nouvelle variation d'un plat.

Corpus principal

Mémoires culinaires

Abu-Jaber, Diana. *The Language of Baklava. A Memoir*. New York: Random House, 2005.

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Gilbert, Elizabeth. *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman's Search for Everything across Italy, India and Indonesia*. 2006. New York: Penguin Books, 2007.

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Diaspora et déplacement : L'évocation des traditions, des origines et de l'identité dans les mémoires culinaires, un genre littéraire émergent

Résumé: Les mémoires culinaires, qui empruntent des traits sémantiques aux mythes familiaux et au discours féminin, invitent à s'interroger sur leur pertinence littéraire en tant que genre contemporain. Cette étude considère leurs ambitions narratives, leur qualité poétique, le(s) genre(s) dont ils procèdent, mais aussi celui qu'ils constituent. L'examen d'un vaste corpus de mémoires permet d'en observer la diversité et l'intertextualité, et de dessiner une continuité historique avec les textes précurseurs dont l'approche est renouvelée.

Empruntant à l'autobiographie, à l'écriture culinaire, ainsi qu'à la littérature de voyage, les mémoires culinaires sont un genre hybride qui explore l'identité, dont la quête est souvent motivée par la perte diasporique d'une patrie ou par un traumatisme familial. Nous analysons les liens, dans le récit et le genre tout entier, entre la nourriture, l'écriture de soi et le voyage. Outre le tissage de traditions culinaires avec des recettes, les mémoires révèlent une dimension spirituelle, synonyme de voyage intérieur. Lire les mémoires culinaires dans la double perspective des habitudes alimentaires culturellement bien définies et de la littérature de voyage permet d'élucider les questions centrales de l'identité dans le contexte des déplacements intérieurs et extérieurs.

Les multiples paradoxes du genre sont symptomatiques de son ingéniosité, associant divers éléments pour créer une narration culinaire globale, en un corpus de recettes qui incarnent une vérité universelle, et proposent ainsi une nourriture à la fois physique et symbolique.

Mots clés: mémoires culinaires ; origines ; identité ; traditions ; diaspora ; nourriture ; littérature contemporaine anglophone.

Diaspora and displacement: The evocation of traditions, origins and identity in culinary memoirs, an emerging literary genre

Abstract: Bearing semantic elements of family myths and feminine discourse, culinary memoirs invite questions about their literary pertinence as a contemporary genre. This study considers their narrational ambitions, their poetic quality, the genre(s) from which they emerge, and also that which they define. We hypothesise that they have a literary relevance at the intersection of several genres. The examination of an extensive corpus allows us to observe its diversity and intertextuality, as well as the historical perspective of precursory texts, offering a new reading of earlier works.

Rooted in autobiography and food writing, with traits of travel literature, culinary memoirs are a hybrid genre that explores identity, the quest for which is often motivated by the diasporic loss of homelands, or family trauma. We analyse the narrative and the emerging genre to understand how it represents self-writing and food within the travel narrative genre. As well as weaving culinary traditions with recipes, memoirs reveal a spiritual dimension, synonymous with an inward journey. Appraising culinary memoirs from the perspective of foodways, as culturally-defined consumption, and travel literature, elucidates the central questions of identity and origins within the context of inner and outward displacement.

The genre's multiple paradoxes are symptomatic of its resourcefulness, drawing from diverse elements to create an overarching food narrative, as a corpus of recipes that embodies a universal truth, to which nourishment, both physical and symbolic, holds the key.

Key words: culinary memoirs; origins; identity; traditions; diaspora; food; contemporary Anglophone literature.

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