you magnifying, glamorizing, or ennobling the aesthetic features of canned tuna? Is noble canned tuna an oxymoron?

7

HABITS AND HERESIES

Authenticity, Food Rules, and Tradition

If any word has become the talisman of the food revolution, where its incantation can confer instantaneous legitimacy, it is the word *authentic*. The word is ubiquitously splattered across menus and throughout cookbooks. It screams from neon signs and crosses the lips of every foodie who wishes to criticize a restaurant not up to standards. The ability to cook with authenticity is a source of regional or national pride for aspiring chefs. There are food rules that indicate authenticity, and woe to the unsuspecting philistine who violates them.

I argued in the previous chapter that dishes are a representation of the food tradition from which they emerge. But what counts as an authentic representation of a tradition, and who decides? All of us come to the table with a history of eating experiences that have left behind a sediment of preferences, a map of what goes with what, an impressionistic bible of what particular ingredients should taste like and how particular dishes satisfy. Food is the constant companion present when love emerges, deals are made, and sorrow weighs. Thus, food memories meld with emotional cues and are appended to the minor and major ceremonies that constitute the routines of life. Flavors acquire an emotional resonance and symbolic power that enables them to express the style of a culture and provide some of the prohibitions and taboos that signify social boundaries and status. There is a right and wrong way to eat, and if you get it wrong, you cannot be one of us.

Just as linguistic meaning is encoded in physical inscription (writing) and phonemes (speaking), food meanings are encoded in the flavors and textures with which people identify, a semi-consciously held template that says Italian, French, or low country. This template cannot be fully articulated in a set of rules; one knows the taste of home even if one can't say what home tastes like. Although the original association of flavors with identities is arbitrary, conventional, and driven by accidents of geography, once established they are no longer arbitrary but consciously perpetuated via resemblance. Cooks working within food traditions create dishes that replicate that template because their patron's map and bible generate those expectations. The relationship between flavor and meaning is not merely an association but also a synthesis. Moral taste and mouth taste become one. When a server puts a plate of food in front of you, the dish confronts your map and bible. The dish may or may not represent your tradition, may or may not represent your map and bible, but it represents some tradition or other and expresses someone's style, thus posing a question about where and how it fits. The dish refers to other dishes as an imitation, interpretation, challenge, or affront. Is it an authentic extension of the tradition or a violation worthy of scorn?

What gives food traditions their staying power and capacity for repetition? Is it like a bad habit, something we've fallen into and repeat unthinkingly, or do they have some real authority? The fact that deviations from the norm are often met with derision, disgust, and hostility suggests that food traditions have genuine normative authority. They acquire such authority because they express one's cultural identity. Our self-concept is in part derived from perceived membership in a culture—eating a particular style of food, as a matter of habit, is for some people a condition of membership and a badge of authenticity. But, more important, food traditions embody familiar flavors served in familiar ways, and familiarity has its own deeply felt emotional resonance, especially when it involves taking something into our bodies. Food is a constant necessity and its procurement and consumption requires a robust social context, so it is deeply woven with our history and emotions, and it is naturally associated with a sense of "at homeness," of location, and intimacy. Food rules have normative authority because their violation is an affront to our self-concept and threatens our implicit sense of security that we expect from food. If you're Italian, don't eat cheese with fish or have coffee during dinner. If you're French, never eat salad before the main dish. Pennsylvanians

know you can't get a decent cheesesteak in any other state; transplanted New Yorkers would give up pizza rather than eat that stuff from Chicago; and to a Texan any other barbecue does not even count as meat. Transgressors be warned. Thus, culinary travelers take authenticity, strict conformity to the map and bible, to be a central aesthetic consideration. Only when eating the "real thing" does one gain access to that realm of intimacy and location. But all this vehemence rings false.

As I explained in chapter 5, food fights raise a paradox. The prevalence of food rules and the rhetoric of authenticity suggest that any transgression is met with disapproval. But history tells a different story, one of unstable identities and porous cultural boundaries rendering debates about authenticity interminable and pointless. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century that olive oil became essential to the cooking of southern France. Pizza and pasta were originally eaten only in southern Italy. Tomatoes, corn, beans, peppers, and potatoes, all staples of European cooking, had their origins in the New World. If identities are based on food preferences, those identities are ceaselessly changing. Today, anyone with resources can eat almost anything they want if they have a computer and a shipping address. The maps and bibles are so tattered they seem incapable of supporting the vitriol spilled in their name. Given their shabby condition, why do food fights arise in the first place? Why worry about authenticity at all?

Identities, whether based on food or some other characteristic, are unstable because they confront a variety of oppositions that have already mounted an invasion and taken hostages. An explicitly articulated, self-conscious identity is not something one needs unless that identity is under threat, when trespassers have already taken their liberties. When identity requires continual assertion because it is persistently being challenged, it must be consciously held and forcefully asserted. At that point, the concept of authenticity becomes decisive. One needs some way of separating what is really theirs from the impostors who have crossed the border. Thus, food becomes a symbol of pride and contest. The British love of beef, in part, gets its authority from its ability to mark a difference from the French, who don't consider beef essential. But this would not be necessary unless French cuisine had not already gained a foothold among the British. Italians differentiate themselves from and even look down on others because of their belief that no one eats as well as they do, but only because they have been fighting encroachments from the Mediterranean

and northern Europe for centuries. Nouveau Mexican high cuisine is a reaction to the hijacking of Mexican food by global industrial food corporations. Food fights presuppose a contest that makes the assertion of identity necessary, defining oneself via a contrast with what one is not, as different from the other. But the other is setting the agenda, forcing the issue. Flavors cross borders easily and the attractions of food-induced pleasure, even when foreign and unfamiliar, are hard to resist, authenticity notwithstanding. The battle is joined after the war is lost.

Traditions represent a common stock of knowledge and use rituals, symbols, and ceremonies to link people to a place, a common sense of the past and a sense of belonging. But at the same time, the idea of local culture is a relational concept and the act of drawing a boundary a relational act that depends on situating oneself within a network of other localities that already have exerted influence. Modern food identities, in fact, must reverberate in two directions. They must unify a region or country and give it prominence on the world stage while relentlessly focusing on the local. This is why pasta is such a powerful national symbol for the Italians. It is ubiquitous in every part of Italy and has become the dominant symbol of Italian food. Yet the particular shape and texture of pasta is governed by an array of local norms that determine which shapes are to be used and with what condiment, thus providing a cultural boundary to identify outsiders.

In contemporary life, this assertion of identity has taken an interesting turn. The greatest threat to all food traditions, and the identities they support, is the increasing homogenization of food, as global food corporations expand across the globe. The ubiquitous hamburger, especially as interpreted by McDonald's and a plethora of other fast-food chains, Coca-Cola and other soft drinks, snack foods, and processed foods made identically by global corporations are common in every industrialized nation on the globe. In chain restaurants, novelty and surprise are minimized. The decor and menus must be familiar, with only minor adjustments made to accommodate local tastes, and interactions with the consumer are scripted regardless of locale. Today in major cities across the globe virtually any food can be found anywhere with no connection to a particular location, often in combinations that juxtapose many cuisines on the same plate. Even haute cuisine is threatened by homogenization, with pricey restaurants from New York to London to Tokyo serving very similar dishes to a business class seeking familiarity. The culinary traveler can remain at home and find most of what she or he can imagine. Thus, today, the authority of tradition comes from its ability to assert distinctiveness in the face of this homogenization. Food identities root us in the local and particular as opposed to the global, homogenized, bureaucratic world, and authenticity is perceived as a cure for excessive homogenization. Modern food identities presuppose a discourse of taste that implies that "natural," rooted, artisanal products taste better than mass-produced ones. Furthermore, knowing the producer adds an imaginary value to the food that helps it to taste better. The fact that a particular person made it contributes to its quality because it is seen as a genuine expression of that person's identity.

But we return to the problem. What counts as genuinely authentic, embodying a real awareness of actual history and geography? Too often appeals to authenticity select only portions of the past to remember and what is remembered is highly idealized, as manufactured as the corporate food it seeks to displace. Unfortunately, any return to the past will be a narrative reinvention—an account of the past as it looks to us after the fact, satisfying a need for romance and imagination, but having little connection to "how it really was."

Before the emergence of mass transportation, food cultures had essential properties determined by the necessities of agriculture and geography. Today food cultures are more imaginary—ways of constructing opposition and projecting strength. So they must react and be negotiated. There is no pure past available for the taking—all memory is influenced by the living present. This means that traditions must change because they are continually confronted by new threats, encroachments, copiers, and pretenders, and so they must find new ways of asserting identity.

This is where the chef as artist comes into play performing the delicate balance between innovation and tradition. Restlessness toward the status quo is essential to being an artist. They may be inspired by the past but their aim is seldom simply to emulate it. Any work of art is an experiment that strives to reach beyond what has been done. However, the artist's audience will be the ultimate arbiter of success and the culinary artist is no exception. Chefs must negotiate their way through maps and bibles—the expectations of diners. In the edible arts, awareness of tradition is essential and must be preserved.

Innovative dishes thus pose a question: Is it authentic? Are the violations of tradition that give a dish its originality and excitement indicative

of the proper direction for that tradition? There is tension between chef and patron. The creative chef revels in the detour, whereas customers want a straighter line, a place of respite, an end that is still recognizable according to their map and bible. How do chefs and cooks work through this conflict?

We need to question the very notion of authenticity that is presupposed by the conflict. Why should "authentic" mean that a dish is prepared exactly the way an insider from the past would have cooked it, especially when it is likely that insiders in the past did a lot of experimenting in responding to their local conditions. Every Italian grandmother will tell you she has a secret recipe for some staple dish that makes it utterly unique. But that conceit can possess a modicum of truth only if Italian grandmothers were experimenting, trying new approaches with the ingredients they had available. Who has the authentic recipe? There isn't one. There are as many authentic recipes as Italian grandmothers.

Furthermore, even if we could agree that a dish was prepared in an authentic manner using authentic ingredients, why think a diner has the ability to experience it as authentic? As noted, diners come to a dish with a history of experience that shapes their perception of it. People from outside a culture—or insiders who have had extensive experience as culinary travelers themselves—are unlikely to experience a dish in the same way as an indigenous, historical diner did since they have vastly different experiences—a different map and bible. A work of cuisine is a different work for the cultural insider in contrast to the culinary traveler. Whatever authenticity means, it cannot mean a pure origin that can repeat itself over and over without variation.

Who gets to assert the authority of authenticity, insider or outsider, the indigenous cook or the diasporic cook? The diaspora represents a danger. It may be utterly cut off from the history, traditions, and ingredients of the homeland and thus inventions may lack any continuity with an original tradition. Transgression is easier in the diaspora because it may be divorced from the experiences that gave rise to historical pressures to assert an identity. However, the diaspora can also represent multiple directions and modes of representation. Diasporic communities must try to make a difference within their cultures of residence often amid a good deal of hostility. Thus, the diasporic cook is located between two histories and must invent a narrative in active relationship with the native culture. Furthermore, a historical reality wedded to a place of origin is not more

"natural" or "authentic" than the experience of people who have been displaced and must create a plural identity. Diasporas are too real to be dismissed as aberrations—the connection between home and diaspora must be relational, with neither having the authority to speak for the other.

The border crossings that inevitably disrupt narratives of authenticity are perhaps best illustrated by the story of Mexican food, ably told by Jeffrey Pilcher in his book *Planet Taco*.[1] Is your neighborhood Mexican restaurant in LA, Minneapolis, or New York authentic? As Pilcher describes, they likely serve tacos that were probably invented by Mexican silver miners and gradually became identified with Mexico City street food. But in the mid-twentieth century, Mexican Americans in the Southwest began to fill them with hamburger, cheddar cheese, iceberg lettuce, and tomato because these were available in their local supermarket. Were they being inauthentic? Glen Bell of Taco Bell fame claims to have invented the hard shell taco, but Mexican cookbooks show tortillas being folded over and fried at least a decade before Bell's patent. Thus, even that symbol of industrial food may have a more authentic origin than is generally acknowledged. And if you prefer Tacos Al Pastor, now popular throughout the United States and Mexico, you're probably eating a version of the taco invented in the 1950s by Middle Eastern immigrants to Mexico who cooked pork on a vertical spit shwarma-style and put it on a corn tortilla with a slice of pineapple.

Your neighborhood Mexican restaurant also is likely to serve burritos; yet they are seldom eaten in Mexico. At best they may date back to the late nineteenth century in northern Mexico, where wheat was grown and transformed into flour tortillas, but they were never a prominent part of the diet. They became part of California Mexican food because they were popular along the contemporary U.S.-Mexican border. They are, in a sense, distinctly American because it was Mexican Americans who decided they must be made with flour tortillas. In northern Mexico they were likely eaten with both corn and wheat tortillas.

Purists often dismiss this so-called border food as inauthentic. But why? People who lived along the Mexican/American border have their own food traditions that are worthy of celebration and elaboration. Whether a food is authentic or not crucially depends on the question—authentic for whom? Since the Mexican/American border regions are made up of land and populations stolen by the United States in an attempt

to expand slavery, it hardly makes sense to exclude the indigenous cuisines of the border states as lacking authenticity. What is authentic are people reformulating their recipes to take advantage of whatever ingredients they have available. This is how food traditions have always developed.

TWO MEANINGS OF AUTHENTICITY

Part of the difficulty with the whole debate about authenticity is that there are at least two primary definitions of authenticity. In contemporary debates about food the two definitions are often conflated. We use the term "authentic" to describe something whose origins have been correctly determined—the authenticity of historical accuracy. A painting is an authentic Rembrandt if it was indeed painted by Rembrandt, not a forgery or a copy. A dish or recipe would be authentic, in this sense, if it were identical to some original version of it. In the culinary world, there are many reasons why we might value authenticity of this sort—we might want to understand the sensibility of historical people or seek to understand how a dish was related to the culture in which it first appeared. We might want to know why people found it attractive or to recapture something of the history of taste that is in danger of disappearing.

From an aesthetic point of view, we view originals as having more value than copies or forgeries because it is the original that constitutes the achievement. We value an original painting by Rembrandt more than an identical copy because it is the original that represents the struggles and insights that led to its creation—the copy has none of those associations regardless of how attractive it may be. Similarly, we value a traditional dish or recipe because it was actually a part of people's lives, a companion to their hopes, dreams, or tragedies.

However, it is crucial to note the ways in which culinary preparations differ from paintings. When viewing one of Rembrandt's self-portraits in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, you are in the presence of the actual object that Rembrandt painted. No doubt the paint is now cracked and faded and the painting is in a museum rather than Rembrandt's studio, but nevertheless we witness the very object itself. The art of cooking can claim no such direct acquaintance with artifacts of the past. We may have a recipe, a set of instructions about how to prepare a dish, but recipes are

rendered differently by individual cooks, and, as noted above, the mixing of populations and the liberties taken by individual cooks make it difficult to determine a single "authentic" version of a dish. Furthermore, ingredients may no longer be available or may taste differently today when grown under vastly different geographical or climatic conditions. In addition, cooking utensils and appliances are made from different materials than in the past. But most important, our map and bible is utterly different from that of historical people. We are accustomed to different foods and so any judgment about what it was like to eat something from the past will be in comparison to a vastly different diet.

This problem with historical reconstruction is not unique to the culinary arts. Musicologists face similar problems because original works of music, prior to the advent of recordings, could be preserved only in a musical score that gives instructions to performers, much like a recipe. Individual performers will have different interpretations of the score. Changes in the technology of musical instruments make it similarly difficult to reconstruct the experience of musical works as historical people would have heard them. Just as in the world of music there are attempts to reconstruct past listening experiences as best we can, there are similar attempts in the food world. But these are largely matters for food historians and anthropologists to pursue. Only on rare occasions could a restaurant undertake to reconstruct a dish with unerring historical accuracy. Outside academic contexts the pursuit of authenticity understood as the correct origin of a dish is a fantasy—or just marketing.

Are gastrophiles who seek authenticity on a quest that can never be realized? It is tempting to disown the whole idea of authenticity because in the contemporary world authenticity isn't authentic. The quest for authenticity is endlessly appropriated by large corporations who claim to advance artisanal values and deck themselves out in the trappings of old-world romance and compassionate service, their franchisees often hiding their affiliation with the larger company. Authenticity has become just another selling point, a marketing ploy to fool unwitting customers, or it is preserved in mothballs by governments who fear the old ways of cooking and eating are disappearing. In 1993, the European Union introduced a framework for granting protected status to certain dishes and products that prevents them from being copied and appropriated by other localities. Thus, only the sparkling wine produced in Champagne can be called "Champagne," and only Parmesan cheese made in Reggiano can be

called "Parmesan Reggiano." And the United Nations, via UNESCO, has placed certain cuisines on their Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, which has general specifications for defining these cuisines. But these attempts to preserve heritage cannot accommodate new developments in cuisines, and decisions are often politically motivated, designed more to promote tourism and trade than to preserve an authentic history.

But giving up on the idea of authenticity would be a hasty concession to the forces of the production paradigm, which would be happy to see truth swallowed up in the pursuit of profit. The search to find something situated in its place and time, a source of direct contact and unmediated communication, may be an old idea, but it is one with increasing resonance as our hold on place and time slips away. People seek authenticity because they want to take care of their needs without the loss of freedom entailed by socially dysfunctional corporations. The pursuit of what is real is not likely to lose its attraction regardless of how much the propagandists laugh.

Happily, there is another meaning of the word "authentic" that is more readily achieved—we might call this "expressive authenticity."[2] It means, essentially, being true to oneself, not being derivative or copying someone else's way of doing something. Such authenticity requires a commitment to one's personal expression rather than to an historical tradition, although one could view continuity with tradition as essential to one's personal expression. Philosophers will recognize this kind of authenticity in the writings on the subject by existentialists such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Martin Heidegger. This, I would argue, is the kind of authenticity we care about when we criticize a restaurant's food for lacking authenticity—there is something manufactured, factitious, or fake about it. It claims to be something it is not. How do we recognize food that is inauthentic, factitious, or fake?

To get to the bottom of expressive authenticity, it would be helpful to suspend discussion of food for a moment and think about how we deal with this issue in other arenas. Blues is a musical form that is widely considered an authentic expression of African American culture in the United States. It has its origins in the spiritual music of nineteenth-century slaves, and the traditions of American blues have a continuous development that can be traced from this spiritual music through the music of southern blacks such as Mississippi John Hurt or Robert Johnson. Yet in

the 1950s and 1960s American blues changed dramatically. Electrical instruments were introduced, recordings became a common medium for listening, and the music thus received wider distribution. Although rock 'n' roll had evolved from and was deeply influenced by the blues traditions, newly created rock idioms and techniques began to feed back into the development of the blues, and white performers, most notably from England, such as Eric Clapton and John Mayall, become central figures claiming continuity with this tradition. Importantly, the audience for this music had shifted substantially. Earlier incarnations of the blues were directed to other members of the African American community. But gradually, the blues acquired a white audience as well. Were these white performers authentic blues players or pretenders engaged in cultural misappropriation?

No doubt there were examples of cultural misappropriation. But many of these white performers were able to master the subtle expressive details of the guitar work or vocal mannerisms of African American performers. There were clear differences in sound, especially in vocal timbre, and the ethos of romantic individualism, which characterized the world of rock music, gave license to performers to add their own personal dimension. Yet an analysis of the music—melodic and harmonic structure, rhythmic patterns and musical textures—shows broad continuity between this new approach to the blues and the blues traditions. The fact that many black performers were embracing the electric guitar and some of the rock rhythmic patterns made this continuity easier to discern.[3]

However, the question of cultural expression is the sticking point. The blues traditions were an expression of the nature of life in the African American community, the hardships and trials, the confrontation with racism, the life rhythms of the rural South or, later, the inner-city ghettos. White players from the suburbs of Chicago or the working-class neighborhoods of Birmingham, England, were at some distance from the cultural milieu of the black community, although many of them saw themselves as dealing with their own forms of oppression and alienation. In any case, they lived vastly different lives. How, then, could these new developments in blues be seen as having cultural continuity with the past incarnations of the blues firmly rooted in African American communities?

To be sure, these questions of authenticity caused a good deal of conflict within the blues community. Many African Americans saw the

white performers as interlopers and their audiences as engaged in a cheap form of cultural tourism, helping themselves to the satisfactions of the music without experiencing the hardships and joys of life in the black community. Yet not all viewed these new performers and audiences in a negative light. Many, especially the black musicians themselves, admired some of the white players for their skill and dedication to the music, and some viewed the expansion of the audience for blues as opening up opportunities for the growth of blues as an art form.

Without minimizing the very real conflicts that inevitably accompany such cultural appropriation, it nevertheless seems fair to say that to the extent that white players were able to master the subtleties of the musical idioms that constitute playing the blues, and thereby communicate the emotional content of the music, they were an authentic extension of the blues tradition. When they brought a new sensibility to the music through individual creativity they were expanding the expressive possibilities of that music by showing that the feelings evoked by the blues were human feelings that could be heartfelt despite lacking rootedness in the original community. For those players who took continuity with the blues tradition seriously, there was nothing in their approach that was in conflict with the values of the originating community. (This, of course, was not true of all white blues players if they lacked respect for the traditions they were appropriating.)

Thus, the question about the authenticity of electric-based white blues is not about its conformity to an origin. Neither electric instruments nor white performers were there at the birth of the blues. What seems to matter here is the personal commitment of the players to continuity with the blues tradition and the degree to which their personal expression via the music showed evidence of that personal commitment. Thus, it should be emphasized that a connection to history is not irrelevant to expressive authenticity. But what matters is not fidelity to an origin but rather a commitment to continuity. To be taken seriously as part of the blues tradition, electric blues players had to preserve key elements of the harmonic and melodic structure as well as the expressive idioms of that tradition. As Dutton notes, judgments about expressive authenticity involve attention to "the larger artistic potential" of a work. An authentic performance is one "in which the aesthetic potential . . . is most fully realized." Thus, expressively authentic works can express unforeseen meanings and new directions that go beyond the intention of the original,

raising questions about whether what we find in a new direction is appropriate, given the original meanings, and whether audiences are likely to understand these new directions. Expressive authenticity is under constant development, not established by an origin at the work's creation but constituted by a work's ability to accommodate change and continue to make itself intelligible without losing its center.

The element of personal commitment is decisive. Works of art express both the cultural beliefs of a people as well as the sensibility of individual artists. We are interested in art because of its capacity for such multifaceted expression, and part of the meaning of a work is the degree to which it is continuous with some tradition. In addition, the sincerity and passion with which artists undertake their work is part of what we find attractive about it, and in evaluating the work we seek evidence of that passion and commitment. The artist's intentions and the quality of her or his practice in its commitment to expressing the values of a tradition are what matters. This is why the issue of commercialism will arise in this debate. To the extent that an artist is focused on making money instead of extending the expressive possibilities of a tradition, she or he lacks the proper intentions to claim authenticity. This is not to say that commercially successful artists cannot be authentic—only that some commercially successful artists can lose their intention to advance a tradition or engage in self-expression if they make too many compromises, and thus their authenticity can be challenged.

Expressive authenticity does not require that a work be identical to some original version or that it strictly conform to the past. But it does require that a work express the values of the artist including the values shared by the historical community with which the artist identifies. Authenticity in this sense is as future focused as it is focused on the past, for the aim is to project a tradition into the future in a way that preserves its vitality. Expressive authenticity lacks the simplicity of authenticity based on historical origins. Whether something is an original or not can be established as a fact. Establishing the expressive authenticity of a work requires a complex interpretation that takes into consideration intentions, audience, and aesthetic potential, none of which can be established without controversy.

AUTHENTIC FOOD

Let's return to food and the appeals to authenticity that are so extant today in the world of food. A dish, recipe, or approach to cooking is authentic if the cooks or chefs have gone to the trouble to learn the techniques and flavor profiles that constitute the tradition they are working in so that changes are viewed as an organic development of that tradition. In their practice, they care about the vitality of the tradition. They have made a commitment to show continuity with the tradition, preserving key elements when they can and making only those changes that can be viewed as continuous. In doing so, the meanings that attach to the tradition, the resonance with memory, the mark of the centrality of key ingredients, and the "flavors of home" are still available as a matter of interpretation. The intention to be genuine is there and can be sensed in their approach. The food has work to do; it must evoke the rhythms of life associated with the people whose tradition it is. When you eat, for example, a machaca burrito made in the traditional way by people who trace their heritage to Sonora, Mexico, you are experiencing a representation of the sensibility of a particular group of historical agents. The representation is all the more vivid when consumed in a place and with people who have a historical connection to the original. Is it a representation, a facsimile? Of course. As I noted above, we cannot return to a pure origin. But there is a vast difference between eating a burrito at El Charro in Tucson and eating one at Disneyland because the meanings and associations in Tucson will show more continuity with the traditions of Sonoran-style Mexican food than what you are likely to find in the shadow of the "Matterhorn."

This is why artisanal foods, locally produced and in limited quantities, are more likely to be authentic in the expressive sense of that term. Care to preserve continuity with a tradition, to stay close to the sensibility of a particular local culture, and to produce food that creates the associations that make food meaningful is more likely when the pressures of efficiency, profit, and shareholder dividends are not the primary motivation. Standardization and commercialization are not compatible with these goals of a genuine artisan, and thus we are unlikely to find authenticity in chain stores and franchise operations. A friend recently reminded me that Starbucks, the ubiquitous chain of coffee shops, was once a small artisan coffee roaster located in Seattle and asked me, "Should we fall out of love

with them because they've grown?" The short answer is yes. As much as they have contributed to putting quality coffee on the map in the United States, they can no longer claim to be sensitive to local sensibilities or to avoid the dreaded monotony of standardization.

Crucially, just as in the case of music, audience matters. Instead of insisting that dishes be prepared the way they historically have been prepared in their native context, we should endorse cooks who recognize the limitations of their diners, cooking interactively by emphasizing unusual flavors in ways that show the connections between their cuisine and the map and bible of their diners. Authenticity is thus a property not of a dish by itself but of the relation between cook, dish, and a diner whose own map and bible is a given. Acknowledging this is not inauthentic but truthful. History shows that culinary insiders have no obligation to preserve their culture "as is," since no culture has ever been preserved in that way. Again, it is worth repeating, expressive authenticity is not about origins but about the commitments people make and what those commitments reveal about their sensibility. There is a reason why tomato sauces marry nicely with pasta and why a tomato served with olive oil and basil is heavenly. Tomatoes may not be originally Italian, but Italians have done wonderful things with tomatoes. They committed themselves to tomatoes, discovering how they resonate with their local ingredients, and now there is a certain way with tomatoes that is uniquely Italian.

So should we just throw out the food rules that are invoked so often as markers of authenticity? I think not. Food rules must be respected because they set the table for innovation—they define the standards that innovation must meet. Food rules say, "If you want to violate this tradition it better be good." Without tradition, innovation is just novelty. However, anyone who is just a slave to tradition and rigidly conforms without entertaining new ideas is threatening the conditions that enable the tradition to persist—its ability to be affected. The ability to be affected is, after all, what sensibility is. Traditions become great because of their capacity to seamlessly absorb new influences. Tradition and authenticity are not opposed to innovation—they depend on it. No tradition can remain alive if it does not innovate by accepting and transforming influences from abroad.

To be authentic, in this expressive sense, is to relentlessly search for the particular, the original path that links us to our past in a way that illuminates a future. It is to grasp what one cares about, to see the pos-

sibilities in one's heritage, and "leap ahead" in the care structure without endless dispersal in the face of external demands. Authenticity is creative appropriation driven by a deep concern for what is appropriated. It means being open for a possibility not yet realized that will transform one's heritage in a distinctive way and reveal one's commitment to that heritage—something that is there but latent and unexpressed. Authenticity begins in openness but takes what is discovered in a way that allows the care structure to advance. Authenticity means owning one's openness to influence.

And so the edible arts, perhaps more so than any other artistic genre, have the capacity to gather the tribes through anchoring identities. But these are identities that gain their power from the differences they assert and assimilate. Flavor maps and bibles don't contain canons or rules; they are fields of problems that come seeded with new and unforeseen directions awaiting an event of creativity to express their potential. In this respect, they are like other maps and bibles (though that is seldom acknowledged by the bible thumpers).

8

THE FUTURE OF TASTE

I have argued that our recently acquired interest in good taste is not merely a preoccupation of the wealthy or a signal of class status but also a response to the production paradigm—the idea that more is always better, growth must be constant, and efficiency is the only measure of worth—that threatens to consume all life. The role of good taste is to carve out a space where the production paradigm is less central. Part of my argument is that some aspects of the food revolution are inconsistent with central features of the production paradigm. The intrinsic value of the pleasures of the table; their capacity to anchor genuine communal bonds; and the values of authenticity, particularity, originality, and the do-it-yourself ethos, all of which are tracked by the notion of food as art, resist the transformation of good taste into a standardized, fungible commodity. However, if the production paradigm has indeed penetrated all aspects of life, co-opting everything from religion to the world of fine art, why think the food revolution can succeed as a form of resistance?

Aesthetics is a double-edged sword. It celebrates particularity and deepens subjectivity while uniting people in a community of taste. But the worry is that the aesthetic standards presupposed by a community of taste can turn out to be just another mechanism for the production paradigm to colonize and regulate individual lives. We only have to look at our digital lives to see how this insidious co-optation works. On Facebook and countless other venues online, communities of autonomous individuals spontaneously arise to share preferences, cultivate differences, and give people multiple ways of establishing their identity and