



**MALMÖ UNIVERSITY**  
FACULTY OF CULTURE  
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# Slow Food for thought

Food as cultural heritage expressed in the Slow Food  
movement's external communication

Sara Nässén

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Supervisor: Bojana Romic

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Author: Sara Nässén

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**Abstract:** This thesis investigates the Slow Food movement which started in Italy in the late 80's and today is an internationally spread organization with around 100 000 participants in 160 countries. The core aim within the Slow Food movement is combining everyone's "right to pleasure" with social responsibility, summed up in their motto: "Good, Clean and Fair". The movement is interesting from a global development perspective, since it looks at food in relation to the cultural, physical, social, environmental and political aspects of our lives, and relates to sustainability in a wide sense. In 2003, UNESCO started acknowledging so called "Intangible cultural heritage" as a part of the common heritage of humanity, and a few years later some culinary traditions were inserted to the list. Departing from a social constructivist approach in how knowledge is constructed, combined with Pieterse's ideas of the relation between culture and power, the key research question for the thesis is: How is the concept of Food as cultural heritage being expressed within the external communication channels of the Slow Food movement? Followed by the sub-question: How do these expressions relate to power dynamics and to socially constructed assumptions of reality? Through a semiotic analysis, visual and textual material from Slow Food's official websites have been analysed, using the UNESCO definition of Intangible cultural heritage as an analytical tool. The findings are that many fundamental ideas within the UNESCO definition are expressed in Slow Food's external communication, but at the same time, that some aspects could be more highlighted in order to put a higher emphasis on the producer and the community. It is evident that Slow Food need to continuously address the critique directed towards them regarding issues of privilege and elitism, and keep a self-reflexive approach in their communication work.

*"La cultura e la storia vengono calate direttamente nelle cose, nelle pietre, nelle rughe sul volto degli uomini, nel sapore del vino e dell'olio, nel colore delle onde"*

*"Culture and history plunge directly into things, into stones, into wrinkles on human faces, in the taste of wine and oil, into the colour of waves" (Claudio Magris)*

## 1. Introduction

"Along with sex and death (and perhaps taxes, as the old adage goes), the production, elaboration, and consumption of food may very well be one of those sets of processes that are common to all human beings" (Brulotte, 2014, p. 1). The fact the world's population is expected to reach around 9, 1 billion people in 2050 urges for solutions to how to feed people and at the same time fight poverty (FAO, 2009, p.2). Along with the food crisis an impoverishment of food quality is leading to health problems such as obesity and cardiovascular diseases in rich countries. Urgent questions regarding food security on a global level are contrasted by an increasing hype around chefs and cooking-shows, Instagram flows of food and health blogs. Worldwide, *culinary tourism* is growing and people are increasingly identifying themselves as cosmopolitan "foodies" (Brulotte, 2014, p. 2). Massimo Leone, a scholar in semiotics, explains the obsession with food as people being "hungry not only for delicious dishes, but also for what they embody: an immediate, engrossing, and simultaneous confirmation of existential presence. I eat, ergo I exist. I feel the pleasure of ingestion, ergo I am alive" (Leone, 2016, p. 183). The way food is linked to fundamental human attitudes is expressed in the classic citation by the structuralist Claude Lévi-Strauss, saying that food is good not only to eat, but also 'bon(ne) à penser', 'good to think (with)' (Garnsey, p. 7).

Within the social sciences there has since long existed the belief that food related practices are political, since they both divide and unite people in social contexts (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010, p. 203). While the study of gastronomy has often been connected to snobbery, in reality many of the "typical products" created through inventions for preserving food, products today belonging to our gastronomic heritage, were born out of famine, necessity and poverty. "The fascination of culinary history is basically this: to discover how mankind, with effort and imagination, has sought to transform the pangs of hunger and the anguish of nutritional privation into potential occasions for pleasure" (Montanari, 2004, p. 17).

In this thesis I have investigated a modern association which aims at redefining the concept of gastronomy and combining it with social responsibility, the Slow Food movement. The fundamental values within the Slow Food movement are that choices concerning food-production and consumption are highly important for the lives of individuals, communities, and the environment (Pietrykowski, 2004, p. 311). In 2003, UNESCO started acknowledging "Intangible cultural heritage" as a part of the common heritage of humanity, and a few years later some culinary traditions were inserted to the list. Departing from the idea that food traditions play an integral role in our culture and lives, my aim is to investigate how these ideas are expressed within the Slow Food movement's external communication, specifically their official websites.

## 1.1 Research question

My main research question for the thesis is:

- How is the concept of Food as cultural heritage being expressed within the external communication channels of the Slow Food movement?

and the sub-question:

- How do these expressions relate to power dynamics and to socially constructed assumptions of reality?

Departing from a social constructivist framework, combined with Pieterse's ideas of the relation culture/power and culture as an "arena of struggle", visual and textual material from Slow Food's official websites have been analysed using Barthes' semiotics. The UNESCO definitions of Intangible cultural heritage have formed an analytical tool for examining the empirical material, and literature expressing various views on the Slow Food movement have been used to critically examine the material.

### 1.1.1 Relevance to the ComDev field

Questions regarding food are today top issues on many political agendas, and concern all people, in "developed" as well as "underdeveloped" countries. The wide approach to sustainability and the belief that food is tied to aspects such as culture, politics and the

environment is emphasized within the Slow Food movement (SF, (a)). UNESCO underline culture's power to transform societies in a highly global and interconnected world and its function as a source of identity and cohesion for communities "disrupted by bewildering change and economic instability" (UNESCO, (a)). The discussion regarding pros and cons with globalization is a relevant issue that is brought up by both Slow Food and UNESCO. The focus on culture as an inherent part of a sustainable society raises questions regarding the relation between culture and power. Another aspect that makes the topic relate to the ComDev field is Slow Food's increasing political engagement in issues regarding food policy on a higher level. Through an exchange between FAO researchers and Slow Food, FAO now recognizes the importance of pleasure in food as well as food traditions as important in keeping communities together (Petrini & Padovani, 2005, p. 117).

The relation to Media and Communication is evident in the choice of empirical material consisting of a selection of examples from the organization's official websites. Slow Food's communication work has a long story, rooted in Slow Food's president Carlo Petrini's journalistic activities in the newspaper *Il Manifesto* (Pietrykowski, 2004, p. 312). For Slow Food, today being a global network, the external communication is an important part of their publicity, and probably also success. Seen the sometimes "taken-for-granted natural realities" of images (Vannini in Given, 2008, p.930), a critical examination of the external communication can highlight important questions.

## 1.2. About Slow Food

### 1.2.1 History and aim

On the Slow Food website the organization is described as: "a global, grassroots organization, founded in 1989 to prevent the disappearance of local food cultures and traditions, counteract the rise of fast life and combat people's dwindling interest in the food they eat, where it comes from and how our food choices affect the world around us [...] Slow Food believes food is tied to many other aspects of life, including culture, politics, agriculture and the environment. Through our food choices we can collectively influence how food is cultivated, produced and distributed, and as a result bring about great change" (Slow Food (SF), (a)). Slow Food has its roots in Italy and its founders and followers mainly came from the left wing, secular intelligentsia (Sassatelli & Davolio,

2010, p. 204). Italy is a country with strong culinary traditions which before the 70's was mainly living from agriculture. Big changes on a social and economic level in the 80's within the country, from the last decades of idealism into an increased individualism and superficiality also influenced the world of food (Andrews, 2008, pp. 10-11). The official starting point of the Slow Food movement is connected to the opening of the second McDonalds restaurant ever in Italy, close to the Spanish steps in Rome in 1986, an event that led to a protest and demonstration by the cities intellectuals. The architect Paolo Portoghesi described the event as "if a bomb had hit the city center" (Petrini & Padovani, 2005, p. 69). In relation to this event, the piedmont communist journalist Carlo Petrini, together with some friends, formed the *Slow Food Manifesto*<sup>1</sup> (SF, (b)) and (SF, (c)), which was signed by delegates from 15 countries 1989 in Paris at a conference that marked the formal starting point of *Slow Food International*.

But the movement has a longer history: Carlo Petrini, the president of Slow Food, and his friends, were already in the 70's interested in the preservation and development of local piedmont wines, which at the moment were in decline (Andrews, 2008, p. 7). Their interest in Italian food and wine traditions was a response to how big parts of Italy's food and agricultural patrimony was being replaced by new forms of food distribution. In 1986 they started the forerunner to Slow Food, the cultural association Arcigola<sup>2</sup>, aiming at spreading knowledge of Italian enological and culinary traditions, and increasing the economic opportunities for more "proletarian" food producers, farmers, wine makers and restaurateurs (Chrzan, 2004, p. 118).

Slow Food's three primary objectives are:" (1) education of taste; (2) defending the right to material pleasure and conviviality; and (3) preserving the survival of endangered agricultural products and practices through the Ark of Taste<sup>3</sup>" (Pietrykowski, 2004, p. 311). Slow Food is rooted in a in a notion of how the "citizen-eater-as-consumer has lost effective rights to participate in a community of gastronomic true choice due to the hegemonic control of the food industry" (Chrzan, 2004, p. 119).

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix for the full Manifesto in Italian and English

<sup>2</sup> ARCI stands for Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana = Recreational Association of Italian Communists, and the word gola means throat and desire for food, also used in the sense of gluttony. The name is also connected to the Milanese journal "La Gola" (1982– 1989) to which many members were connected and which combined writings on food and wine with philosophy, sociology, literature, and anthropology (Petrini, 2003, p. 24).

<sup>3</sup> A catalogue listing endangered heritage foods on an international level

The French social scientist Claude Fischler wrote already in 1988 how consumers know little about the origin and production of food and how this loss of identification is disquieting (Fischler, 1988, p. 289). Slow Food wants to bring the consumer and producer together by seeing the consumer as a *co-producer*, a: “conscious consumer who goes beyond the passive role of consuming and takes an interest in those who produce our food, how they produce it and the problems they face in doing so. In actively supporting food producers, we become part of the production process” (SF, (d)). Slow Food’s “eco-gastronomy” - a responsible gastronomy, is defined as: “a recognition of the strong connections between plate and planet, and the fact that our food choices have a major impact on the health of the environment and society” (SFI (d)).

The Slow Food movement’s motto: “Good, Clean and Fair” address a wide range of issues:

- GOOD: a fresh and flavorsome seasonal diet that satisfies the senses and is part of our local culture;
- CLEAN: food production and consumption that does not harm the environment, animal welfare or our health;
- FAIR: accessible prices for consumers and fair conditions and pay for small-scale producers (SF, (e)).

The objective of Slow Food is not limited to food but to an idea of a “Slow life” in contrast to the frenetic modern “Fast life” in which a standardization of our culture has had consequences on safety, hygiene, health, environment and global equality (Andrews, 2008, p. 39). “Slowness in this formulation becomes a metaphor for a politics of place: a philosophy complexly concerned with the defence of local cultural heritage, regional landscapes and idiosyncratic material cultures of production, as well as international biodiversity and cosmopolitanism” (Leitch, 2003, p. 454). This approach has inspired organizations in different areas to adapt a “slow attitude” such as for example Slow tourism, Slow money, Slow journalism and Slow architecture, which all work with principles advocating for cultural, ecological and economic diversity and sustainability, and often supporting local initiatives.



### 1.2.2 The politics of pleasure

The concept of pleasure is central within the Slow Food movement, and considered a fundamental right for all (Petrini, 2016, p. 133). The modern “Fast life” is seen as indicative of a repression of pleasure in which food is reduced to a functional activity (Andrews, 2008, p. 44). The concept of pleasure entails not only the consumption but also the production and preparation of food (Andrews, 2008, p. 18) and the idea of food quality has been widened to embrace “taste and pleasure as indication of cultural traditions, to conviviality as indication of healthy community/human relations, to landscape and environment protection and diversity as a way to guarantee food safety and security” (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010, p. 219). The combination of pleasure and social responsibility has met various response. Already in Arcigolas days, a mission was to change the left wing politics attitude in which the pleasure of good food was not seen as a political priority (Andrews, 2008, p. 8). Catholic culture, very rooted in Piedmont, and ascetic Marxism often treated ‘food culture’ as an oxymoron (Sassatelli & Daviolo, 2010, p. 217). Petrini and his friends instead saw no contradiction between eating well and having a social and political engagement, on the contrary, they wanted to show that “the personal is political” and that the quality of cultural life, in which the enjoyment of food and wine is included, is a democratic issue concerning all, and not a question of elitism or hedonism (Andrews, 2008, p. 9). In this way, Slow Food retain the right to gastronomic pleasure as politically progressive, whereas it has traditionally been considered a conservative idea (Simonetti, 2012, p. 172).

### 1.2.3 Slow Food today

*Slow Food International* is today an internationally spread organization with participants in 160 countries and 1500 “convivia”, local communities, all over the world (SF, (a)). An important activity of the Slow Food movement is Terra Madre, or “World Meeting of Food Communities”, which was held for the first time in Turin, Italy, in 2004. Terra Madre is an international network uniting food producers, academics, NGOs and representatives of local communities working on grassroots level (SF, (f)). In connection to Terra Madre, the biannual gastronomical fair Salone del Gusto is held in Turin (SF, (g)). The invention of Terra Madre marked an important step in the evolution of the Slow Food movement, making it a global political movement increasingly focusing on

producers, very often in developing countries, and questions regarding the future of food (Andrews, 2008, pp. 48-49). The same year as the first Terra Madre meeting was held, 2004, Slow Food's Università delle Scienze Gastronomiche/ University of Gastronomic Sciences (UNISG)<sup>4</sup> opened in Pollenzo, Italy.

#### 1.2.4 Various standpoints on Slow Food

Slow Food has since its foundation received both praise and critique. One common critique has concerned a middle class dominance and assumed elitist approach within the movement (Chrzan, 2004). Other claim that the movement is rooted in an imperialist legacy using nostalgic, romantic narratives of traditional societies and even rejecting technical and scientific progress (Donati, 2005; Simonetti, 2012). Another critique is that Slow Food fails in addressing issues of food politics on a larger scale (Chrzan, 2004; Donati, 2005; Jones et al, 2003). Contrasting standpoints are that a focus on tradition can help societies that are undergoing fast change and offer a critical engagement with questions regarding globalisation, and that the methods of Slow Food in this way can be a good alternative to the prevailing socioeconomic paradigm (Tencati & Zsolnai, 2011). Positive voices also claim that the big network and complex activities of Slow Food open up for participation and a horizontal approach, and that they can offer a critical, alternative and ethical consumption with potential for positive and progressive social action (Wexler, Oberlander & Shankar, 2017). These various arguments will be addressed within the analysis.

## 1.3. Intangible cultural heritage

### 1.3.1. UNESCO definition of Intangible cultural heritage

When mentioning cultural heritage, most people probably associate in the first place to buildings, artworks and other physical manifestations of our common history. But since 2003, when the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage<sup>5</sup> was drafted, UNESCO also started recognize non- physical practices and expressions as part

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<sup>4</sup> An “international research and education center for those working on renewing farming methods, protecting biodiversity, and building an organic relationship between gastronomy and agricultural science” (UNISG)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention>

of our common heritage. UNESCO defines Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) as “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith - that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity” (UNESCO, (b)). ICH include: “oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts” (UNESCO, (c)). In the convention, “the importance of the intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development” is highlighted, and emphasis is given to the “deep-seated interdependence between the intangible cultural heritage and the tangible cultural and natural heritage” (UNESCO, (b)). UNESCO underlines ICH’s role as “a factor in bringing human beings closer together and ensuring exchange and understanding among them” (UNESCO, (b)) and claims that “the social and economic value of this transmission of knowledge is relevant for minority groups and for mainstream social groups within a State, and is as important for developing States as for developed ones” (UNESCO, (c)).

### 1.3.2 Food as cultural heritage

For Massimo Montanari, a scholar in Food studies, food “takes shape as a decisive element of human identity and as one of the most effective means of expressing and communicating that identity” (Montanari, 2004, pp. xii). Fischler goes even further, claiming that food makes the eater and therefore, “if we do not know what we eat, how can we know what we are?” (Fischler, 1988, p. 282). Food is therefore highly affective: “its taste on our individual tongues often incites strong emotions, while the communal, commensal experience of such sensations binds people together, not only through space but time as well, as individuals collectively remember past experiences with certain meals and imagine their ancestors having similar experiences. When this occurs, food is transformed into heritage” (Brulotte, 2014, p. 1). This last decade, an increasing number of food-related traditions have been added to the UNESCO ICH list. Some examples are

the Mediterranean diet (Italy, Spain, Greece and Moroccan cuisine being inserted in 2010 and traditions from Portugal, Cyprus and Croatia in 2013), Mexican cuisine in 2010, Washoku - the traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese in 2013, and the Beer culture in Belgium 2016 (UNESCO, (d)). Not all agree that culinary traditions should be included in the Intangible cultural heritage list. Some worry that it might lead to “mummification” and discourage innovation, and that the definitions are too wide. In response to this, UNESCO claim that this patrimony should be “traditional and living at the same time”, and “constantly recreated”, and argue that this type of recognition could help defending traditional cuisines in an era of globalisation and changing lifestyles (Twilley, 2016).

## 2. Literature overview

The area of Food studies, a quite well known academic field today, combines studies of food with historical, cultural, behavioural, biological and socioeconomic questions (Nestle & McIntosh, 2010, p. 160). There is a big amount of literature published within this area. A book which has been useful for this thesis is Massimo Montanaris<sup>6</sup> *Food is Culture* from 2004, in which the author takes us on a culinary journey from the invention of cooking until today, departing from the idea that all actions involved in cooking are cultural acts. Regarding my specific approach to food as cultural heritage, *Edible identities: food as cultural heritage* (2014) by Ronda L. Brulotte & Michael A. Di Giovine has been a good source. A lot of material about Slow Food has been written by the founder of the movement himself, Carlo Petrini, published by Slow Food's own publishing house, Slow Food Editore<sup>7</sup>. Among these titles we find for instance *Buono, pulito e giusto: principi di una nuova gastronomia* (2005), *Le ragioni del gusto (The case for taste)* (2003) and *Slow Food revolution: da Arcigola a Terra madre: una nuova cultura del cibo e della vita /Petrini & Padovani (Slow Food revolution, a new culture for eating and living)* from 2005. These titles have offered a good base to understand the movement's history and values from inside. The historian Geoff Andrew's book *The Slow Food story: Politics and pleasure*, published in 2008, gives a thorough overview of the movement both from a historic and contemporary perspective, and is a source cited in many scholar's work. Several academic articles on the Slow Food movement bring up various perspectives of their work. Examples of the range of topics are: the aesthetic appreciation of typical products through a case study of a Tuscan Slow Food restaurant (Miele and Murdoch, 2002); Slow Food as a new business paradigm (Nosi & Zanni, 2004) and Slow Food's idea of material pleasure transformed into social capital (Pietrykowski, 2004). A more critical perspective is offered by Peter Jones et al. (2003), who doubt Slow Food's capacity of addressing the bigger challenges in corporate agriculture and the fast food industry. Through *Food, Culture and Society*, an international peer-reviewed journal exploring the relationships among food, culture, and society from numerous disciplines, I have found interesting articles written by scholars with various opinions on Slow Food. These articles have provided a good contrast to the

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<sup>6</sup> Professor of Medieval History at Bologna University, a scholar in Food studies and also lecturer at Slow Food's University UNISG in Pollenzo, Italy

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.slowfoodeditore.it/it/>

material on Slow Food written by the members themselves and given valuable contributions to my analysis. Kelly Donati (2005) focuses on Slow Food's "ethics of taste", how it relates to its cultural "other", and especially its renderings of developing countries. Janet Chrzan (2004) discusses Slow Food's agendas, goals and organizational structure; Rachel Laudan (2004) critically reviews Petrinis book *Slow food: the case for taste* and Alison Leitch links issues regarding food policy to questions of European identity (Leitch, 2003). Other relevant works have been done by Mark N. Wexler, Judy Oberlander & Arjun Shankar (2017), who study the organization's ideological premises and find that Slow Food's "big tent" strategy of many overlapping ideological positions have helped the movement to build credibility and success. Antonio Tencati & Laszlo Zsolnai (2012) investigate the working methods of Slow Food and argue that their collaborative enterprise model can be a fruitful alternative to a mainstream business model. The various standpoints from different academic fields have been used to balance and deepen the analysis.

## 3. Theory

### 3.1 Theoretical framework

In my analysis I depart from a constructivist approach, in which it is not the material world which conveys meaning, but the systems we use to represent our concepts, to make the world meaningful and to communicate that meaning to others. These systems of representation, linguistic and others, do not carry meaning in themselves but function as signs: “things don’t *mean*: we *construct* meaning, using representational systems - concepts and signs” (Hall, 2013, p. 25). This relates to reflexive knowledge in which we become both subject and object and which “demonstrates the human capacity to generate second-order symbols or metalevels - significations about signification” (Myerhoff, 1982, p.2), contrasting the positivistic idea of the “really out-there” (Myerhoff, 1982, p.7). The epistemological view within constructivism is that without individual knowledge, constructed through social interaction, there is no objective reality. This is connected to the “interpretive turn” - the move from the natural science’s aim of explaining (*Erklärung*) to a more human science oriented approach focused on understanding (*Verstehen*) (Costantino, 2008, p. 116). Specifically relevant for my study is social constructivism, which describes how knowledge is a social construct strongly influenced by values, ideologies, religious beliefs, language etc. (Constantino in Given, 2008, p.118). Social constructivism relates to my analysis in my references to myths and symbols, to be explained further in next chapter. Theory and method are in this way closely intertwined and to be seen as the common “lens” through which I see the empirical material.

Another theoretical point of departure relevant for this study is Jan Nederveen Pieterse’s view of culture and development in his article *The cultural turn in development: questions of power* (1995). Pieterse describes how the “cultural turn” in development studies aim at contrasting the implicit Western ethnocentrism within development in the age of globalization and high interaction (Pieterse, 1995, p. 176). If this was relevant when Pieterse wrote his article in 1995, it should be even more relevant today, in a fast paced global world. Pieterse mentioned already then how global concerns such as ecological questions change the role of a privileged West and how the modernization/westernization paradigm no longer is valid in a “polycentric” and post-modern world (Pieterse, 1995, p. 176). These arguments relate closely to my analysis, where power relations deriving from an imperial legacy, are being examined. As much as

Pieterse welcomes the cultural turn in development studies, he also mentions how it raises questions in its tendency of simplification and an “add culture and stir” approach. In contrast to this, Pieterse claims that culture is not to be considered something fixed, “a resource to be tapped” but rather constantly negotiated, an “arena of struggle” (Pieterse, 1995, pp. 176, 184). Pieterse is interested in the relation between culture and power, not only to be seen as equal to state power, but something exercised throughout all spaces (Pieterse, 1995, p. 184). This is connected to how agency is given higher priority than structure from the cultural turn perspective and how culture in this way is seen as the “structure of the informal” (Pieterse, 1995, p. 176).

Local, grassroots, indigenous and informal culture, has for quite some time been a focus in development discourse. While there is a tendency to see culture as equal to authenticity, purity and unity, Pieterse retains the importance of understanding that local culture is not an “uncontaminated space but a field criss-crossed by traces of travellers, traders, missionaries, colonisers, anthropologists” (Pieterse, 1995, p. 180). Just like national culture, local culture is “a terrain of power with its own patterns of stratification, uneven distribution of knowledge and boundaries separating insiders and outsiders – hierarchical or exclusionary politics in fine print” (Pieterse, 1995, p. 182). Pieterse means that the local culture perspective is based on an inductive approach which is strong in explaining cultural difference but weak in explaining inequality, and which by decontextualizing the local seems to equal the concepts “tradition” and “popular culture”. While the focus on local culture serve as a way of contrasting imperialism and capitalism and promoting an alternative development, in its attempts to erect cultural boundaries it also reflects a “politics of nostalgia” (Pieterse, 1995, p. 183). Pieterse argues that instead of focusing on ethnic culture, which is no more homogeneous than national culture, identifying communities as bearers of cultures can be a better way of fostering cultural difference (Pieterse, 1995, p. 187).

Pieterse’s view of the relations between culture, power and development is relevant seen the high emphasis of culture within both the UNESCO and Slow Food discourse. By placing culture centrally in development, but at the same time addressing the questions that this view might raise, it relates to the aim of this thesis which departs from the assumption that culture plays an integral role in our lives, but also examines power relations and legacy from the past. Pieterse’s reflections on the relation local/global, the simplified view of the local and the politics of nostalgia are also highly relevant to the topic of my thesis and my approach to the analysis.



## 4. Method

### 4.1 Semiotics

Semiotics is simply explained the science of signs - a sign being anything that we can perceive that points away from itself and towards something else. The semiotic research is the investigation of how things relate, and how these mediated relationships can increase our understanding of things (Shank in Given, 2008, introduction). Even though semiotics is based in a constructivist view it does not see the outside world as meaningless, we just need to discover its meaning. Some fundamental assumptions within semiotics are that *the world can be read just like a text, the world is always talking to us* and that *the world is rich in meaning* (Shank in Given, 2008, p. 809). The goal for us is to understand the world as completely as we can through the interpretative process called *semiosis* (Shank in Given, 2008, p. 809). Within semiotics, language (used in a broad way and not limited to verbal expression) is a system of signs working in the following way:

SIGN = SIGNIFIER (image/sound/word) + SIGNIFIED (meaning)

(Sturken & Cartwright, 2009, p. 29)

The formula above, which I use in my analysis, belongs to Saussure, but in this thesis I focus on the semiotic approach as formulated by Barthes. Barthes' semiotics is based on Saussure's linguistics, but Barthes used semiological codes and patterns to explore popular culture in a wider sense (Shank in Given, 2008, p. 807). Barthes ment that not only verbal messages but also images, attitudes, actions, and everyday items, carry meaning (Ribi re, 2008, p. 17). The terms *denotation* and *connotation* are used for the semiotic process, where denotation stands for the literal, explicit meaning and connotation for the meaning we give things, i.e. the interpretation influenced by cultural and social factors (Sturken, 2009, p. 20). A fundamental part of semiotics is the *arbitrary nature of signs* - how all meaning is relational, there is no "natural link" between signifier and signified (Hall, 2013, p. 27). A signifier can have different signifieds, and a signified can have different signifiers (Hall, 2007, p. 10). But even if meaning is constructed on an individual level, some shared conceptual maps make us roughly understand the world in the same way, this is usually what we mean when we say that we belong to the same culture (Hall, 2013, p. 18). Some meanings become so widely accepted that they reach

what Barthes calls *the level of myth*. Myth, in Barthes' view, should not be confused with or limited to stories or legends, but is rather a wider, culturally agreed meaning (Hall, 2013, p. 39). Myth implies socially accepted ideologies (ideology is by Barthes defined as a set of beliefs and values, a "vision of the world" in common for a group or a whole society) - that nearly become "truths". Barthes' idea of myth is inspired by Marxist thinking, claiming that dominant ideas or myths in a society often are represented by the dominant classes (Ribi re, 2008, p. 16). According to Barthes, basically anyone or anything can be given this type of mythical meaning. Barthes also observed that when the public consume certain myths or signs, they do not question its limitations and meaning (Ribi re, 2010, p. 18).

The semiotic approach suits my analysis because I interpret different types of representations, visual and textual. The arbitrary, sliding meaning is clear in how I find that many of the symbols or signs can be interpreted in more than one way. Barthes concept of "demystification" is about exposing these "lies" or "delusions" about what is "perfectly natural", but actually motivated by ideology (Ribi re, 2008, p.20), and accordingly, I aim at studying how collective representations might limit our understanding of certain expressions. Barthes also mean that a myth is not defined by its content, but by "the way it delivers that content" - meaning that myth can be seen as a system of communication (Ribi re, 2008, p .22).

Another interesting thing is Barthes' questioning of the general view of pictures as "natural expressions of the status quo": how we seem to believe that pictures are unable to lie<sup>8</sup> (Vannini in Given, 2008, p. 930). Questioning these "taken-for-granted" realities is important since it can reveal hidden messages in visual expressions that we might not reflect upon otherwise. Especially in today's media and information environment, where visual communication is easily accessible and also easily manipulated, this kind of critical approach is fundamental.

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<sup>8</sup> Even though this not always been the case, on the contrary, pictures were considered unreliable from Plato's days until the Enlightenment (Siegesmund in Given, 2008, introduction).

## 4.2 Empirical material

I have focused on a selection of visual and textual expressions within Slow Food's external communication channels, specifically their official websites. Slow Food has a big number of projects with different webpages and I chose to limit the material to the main pages of Slow Food (both International and Italian since they differ a bit), and two of the biggest project, the Terra Madre and Slow Food foundation for biodiversity websites (in the latter cases only the international ones since they are quite similar in content). The intent has been to choose some of the most visible images on the sites, with some exceptions for specifically representative subpages. I chose to limit myself to contemporary media representations online, partly because the scope otherwise would be too wide, but mainly because the movement has changed a lot through the years. The insertion of culinary traditions as ICH is also quite recent, why I believe that it is more relevant to look at current expression of these ideas. I have chosen around 2-3 images (some with text, and some not) from each site, and one video, representing various themes. From the Italian page some more examples are chosen, since this site is more informative. Even though not a part of the empirical material, the various opinions expressed in the literature regarding Slow Food have been integrated in the analysis. Both the empirical and the theoretical material has been chosen with the intention of getting a broad and balanced perspective of the topic.

## 4.3 Analytical tool

I have created an analytical tool for categorizing my findings into different themes, based on the categories within the UNESCO definition of ICH:

**Traditional, contemporary and living at the same time:** intangible cultural heritage does not only represent inherited traditions from the past but also contemporary rural and urban practices in which diverse cultural groups take part;

**Inclusive:** we may share expressions of intangible cultural heritage that are similar to those practised by others. Whether they are from the neighbouring village, from a city on the opposite side of the world, or have been adapted by peoples who have migrated and settled in a different region, they all are intangible cultural heritage: they have been passed from one generation to another, have evolved in response to their environments and they contribute to giving us a sense of identity and continuity, providing a link from our past,

through the present, and into our future. Intangible cultural heritage does not give rise to questions of whether or not certain practices are specific to a culture. It contributes to social cohesion, encouraging a sense of identity and responsibility which helps individuals to feel part of one or different communities and to feel part of society at large;

**Representative:** intangible cultural heritage is not merely valued as a cultural good, on a comparative basis, for its exclusivity or its exceptional value. It thrives on its basis in communities and depends on those whose knowledge of traditions, skills and customs are passed on to the rest of the community, from generation to generation, or to other communities;

**Community-based:** intangible cultural heritage can only be heritage when it is recognized as such by the communities, groups or individuals that create, maintain and transmit it – without their recognition, nobody else can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage (UNESCO, (c)).

The aim is to see how these ideas correspond to Slow Food's external communication, whether these categories are being expressed, and also, *how* they are expressed. Which symbols are being used, and in which way? Are some ideas more recurring and other less dominant? Through the semiotic analysis I aim at finding less explicit meanings and concepts, sometimes referring to archetypal images and symbols and Barthes' concept of *myth* - socially accepted "truths". Far from all projects connected to Slow Food are a part of UNESCO's ICH list, but since the Slow Food movement claim that food and culinary traditions are integral parts of our culture, I find this analytical tool relevant for my investigation.

#### 4.4 Methodological considerations

The collection of empirical material has been done with the intent to get a broad idea of the organization's external communication. The selection is intended to be coherent, focusing on the most common communication channels and recently updated pages, at the same time as the aim has been to achieve a range of images that can be representative of the organization's values and work. The choice of subject for this thesis comes from a long-standing personal interest and fascination for the Slow Food movement, from its days as an "eno-gastronomic" through its transformation into an "eco-gastronomic"

organization. During the work with this thesis I have gained a deeper understanding of various standpoints towards Slow Food and I can understand some of the critique directed towards them. At the same time, I find some of the critique failing to see what this organization actually stands for and the variety of activities it is involved in. I believe that my own personal views have been balanced through the integration of various standpoints on Slow Food which also increase the validity of my work. It is important to highlight that the organization's work is highly practical and related to a field context, so the conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis only reflect a part of the organization's work. The semiotic approach, as many qualitative methods in general, is also in itself not aiming at finding a "truth out there" but rather discovering layers of messages and symbols that can be interpreted in order to get a more complete picture of a question.

## 5. Analysis

### 5.1 Slow Food Italian Website



Image 1 ([www.slowfood.it](http://www.slowfood.it)). Used with permission.

This is first the image that we (currently) meet on the Italian home page. It takes up a big space of the upper part of the site and its dominant size together with the intense red of the text implies that the message is important, at the same time as the italic font of the text communicates a more “soft” feeling. The colours are in themselves signifiers: the red symbolically being both the colour of life and a signal of danger, and the green representing nature and today also ecological awareness (Ronnberg, 2011, pp. 638, 646). Other signifiers are the semantic message of the image - “prendiamoci gusto” to the left - which roughly translates into “let’s get a taste for”, “insieme alimentiamo il futuro” “together we feed the future” on the right side and “Sostieni. Condividi. Agisci. Pensa Slow Food” - “Support. Share. Act. Think Slow Food” at the bottom of the image. “Let’s get a taste for” relates to the central concept of pleasure within Slow Food, but is also an invite to get involved, especially read together with the “insieme alimentiamo il futuro” “together we feed the future”. Slow Food finance their activities mainly through membership fees and sponsoring, which can explain the encouragement to support. For UNESCO, ICH “contributes to social cohesion, encouraging a sense of identity and responsibility which helps individuals to feel part of one or different communities and to feel part of society at large” (UNESCO, (c)), an aim that is expressed in the words “together”, the imperative “let’s” and the “Support. Share. Act”. “Think Slow Food” is also interesting in relation to the earlier mentioned Levi-Strauss citation about food as something good not only to eat, but also “to think” (about). This sends a message about how food “nourishes but also signifies” (Fischler, 1988, p. 276). The encouragement to action relates to the co-producer, a conscious consumer who is also the target group in the implicit “us” and “we” in the text. Chrzan is critical to Slow Food’s middle class

dominance (Chrzan, 2004, p. 122), which might well be the target group for this ad, but, as Sassatelli & Daviolo claim, this group of consumers could perhaps also do some good from gaining pleasure from food which is more aware, fair and respectful (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010, pp. 227-228) and “as such, the consumer is quite a powerful figure” (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010, p. 218).

On a connotative level, the signifiers fork and broccoli can be seen as representing man, civilization, culture and specifically culinary skills (fork), and nature (broccoli). In this sign, instead of acting as a nature/culture dichotomy, the two elements are brought together, creating a new signified - the shape of a tree – a strong symbol in: “the reach and rootage, the sturdiness and balance between high and low, the way it meets each season holding its ground, spare or blooming” (Ronnberg, 2011, p. 128). Trees embody life in how “moments of obtainment are usually followed by new cycles of desiccation and growth” and in an alchemist interpretation the tree is “not only a place of awakening to new life, but also of suffering” (Ronnberg, 2011, p. 130). Trees represent the rooted, traditions, as well as change, a movement into the future in its stretching movement upwards, highlighting the traditional, contemporary and living at the same time. The symbolic merge of nature/culture in the image represent the harmonious relationship between the two which is often expressed by the Slow Food movement, and in combination with “together we feed the future” the connotation of the image can be read as the need to work with nature to be able to create, and feed, the future.



Image 2 (<http://www.slowfood.com/donate/it/>). Used with permission.

Also this image takes up a lot of space on the upper part of the page, this time being a sub-page called “donate”. The denotation of the image is a woman from an African country, sowing seeds from a traditional container, and visually contrasting the light clear blue sky. The text in red expresses gratitude to the supporters of the campaign “Ama la

terra – difendi il futuro”, “Love the Earth – defend the future”. That the target group is a supporter/donor is clear by the theme of the sub-page itself, but also by the text. The food container, other than being a tool for work, can be read as a signifier for traditional working methods in contrast to today’s industrialized agriculture. The sowing of seeds itself is a strong symbol of fertility and growth which “evokes every form of procreation” (Ronberg, 2011, p. 464) and symbolizing the “act of dispensing seeds and hoping for the future” (Ronberg, 2011, p. 464). Together with the text “difendi il futuro” “defend the future” the importance of investing in future generations is emphasized. This again highlights the UNESCO emphasis on tradition as well as the living (and future), and it also relates to Inclusiveness – how traditions are “providing a link from our past, through the present, and into our future” (UNESCO (c)). The working woman is smiling and the harmonic feeling of the image is strengthened by the clear blue sky in the background. This is interesting with regards to Slow Food’s idea of how pleasure exists not only in the consumption but also the production of food, and in the simple things in life.

A possible connotation, what we can interpret through these signifiers, is how a preservation of traditional methods can lead to both a satisfaction for the people working with the earth, as well as be a common good for the future. But this image can also be read as quite stereotypical, depicting a black woman working with the land and being “close to Earth” an image that even extends to the level of myth. Petrini says that “when we commit ourselves to a comparison with different cultures, we must critically examine the dark and aggressive side of our culture, and in so doing, we must reject ethnocentrism” (Petrini, 2005, p. 131). But Donati argues that Slow Food’s nostalgic renderings of the “other”, however well intentioned, run the risk of fetishizing cultural diversity (Donati, 2005, p. 228). This highlights Barthes’ idea of myths, of however “innocent” and good the intentions might be, what he calls the “second-order meanings” attached to them can however serve a certain ideology (Ribi re, 2008, p. 20). In accordance with these critical arguments, Pieterse claims that in some culture and development discourses, local culture is seen as “the last frontier of cultural authenticity” and, in the age of globalization, as representing the “last custodians of paradises lost” (Pieterse, 1995, pp. 180, 182) - a tendency which can be seen represented by the rural woman together with the imperative “love the Earth”. The smiling face of the woman also relates to Bell Hook’s discussion in *Eating the other: desire and resistance* regarding the Western culture’s fear of *adhedonia* - incapacity of happiness and pleasure - in which the “other” is seen as more “alive” and capable of those feelings (Hooks, 1992, p. 26). This



reflection is interesting seen the strong emphasis of pleasure in the Slow Food discourse, where pleasure often is connected either to foreign cultures or traditions and habits from the past.



Images 3&4 (<http://www.slowfood.it/chi-siamo/sostieni-le-donne-slow-associati-slow-food/>).

Used with permission.

These images are quite big on the subpage “Le Donne Slow”, “Slow women”, an Italian initiative to support women working in the food industry and in making them protagonists of their projects. On a denotative level, they show women in rural settings, one standing in a farmland dressed quite traditionally, and the other in a cows stable, wearing more modern clothes. The connotation of the text in big “Difendi il cibo vero coi denti” “Defend the real food with your teeth”, can be interpreted in different ways, making the sliding meaning in the semiotic analysis evident. We can see it as an imperative - an encouragement to action familiar within the Slow Food discourse. It could also be read as a reflection of a “sentimental discourse” within the Slow Food movement in its use of words such as “authentic”, “genuine” and “pure”. Leitch claims that Slow Food’s “narratives of cultural loss may fuel a deepening sense of nationalist nostalgia” (Leitch, 2010, p. 457), and the use of strong “positive value-statements” and their opposites, specifically in the Slow Food manifesto, is criticized by Chrzan for creating a binary mental system where everything is divided in to into "fast" or "slow," “good” or “bad” (Chrzan, 2004, pp. 120-121). This relates to Pieterse’s discussion on the “habit of dichotomic thinking” which is to be seen sometimes in the development discourse: the tendency of using simplistic schemas such as tradition/modernity, premodern/modern,

South/North instead of seeing the complexity of modernity (Pieterse, 1995, p. 186). A connotation of the image is also what Petrini calls “i contadini, custodi della terra”, the farmers, seen as the “caretakers of the earth” (Petrini, 2016, p.177). For Slow Food, the role of women in traditional and sustainable agriculture, food production, conservation and distribution is very much highlighted (Slow Food, 2012, pp. 7, 14-15). Righteously, the value of women’s work should be defended, but the same time, a promotion of a traditional image of women can be seen as a conservative trait, especially when used in combination with the discourse of the “real” and “natural”. Simonetti argues that there within Slow Food exists a “praise of the traditional role of women in the food chain” without critically examining that overthrowing this role is what has emancipated women in developing countries (Simonetti, 2012, p. 180). Also Barthes (although in very different time period) reflected on how women often, even when encouraged to be free, creative and productive on the market, still are depicted in domestic settings (Ribiére, 2008, pp. 19-20).



Video 1.

(<http://www.slowfood.it/chi-siamo/sostieni-le-donne-slow-associati-slow-food/> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HjKw4ANfhIE>)

On the same page, there is a video in which women from the food and agricultural industry talk about their various work. The videos are spontaneous (the participants seemingly a little nervous), with happy music in the background, and some the women holding a mimosa – a flower traditionally given to women in Italy on the International Women’s day, 8<sup>th</sup> of March. This detail is interesting, since the tradition has been criticized for becoming too commercial and having lost its political meaning. The flower combined with the “easiness” of the video gives a somewhat “cute” impression. The

target group in both images 4 &5 and the video is either a female audience who would identify with these women and wish to join, or a donor.

Despite the more critical interpretations, these are quite personal portraits of a diverse group of women entrepreneurs of different ages and backgrounds. The diversity of the stories highlights how ICH is not only “inherited traditions from the past but also contemporary rural and urban practices in which diverse cultural groups take part” (UNESCO, (c)). The community based aspect is also very central here since the women themselves define their stories and work. Also the inclusiveness, social cohesion and contribution to creating a sense of identity and continuity is in focus in these portraits, which are commonplace rather than idealized. Both images and video also focus on the producers, an explicit goal within the Slow Food movement.

## 5.2 Slow Food International Website



Images 5 & 6 (<http://www.slowfood.com/our-network/> and <http://www.slowfood.com/get-involved/>). Used with permission.

Both these images are big in size, image no 5 on the subpage “our network” and image no 6 on the subpage “get involved” on Slow Food’s International website. The denotation of image no 5 is a white man (Slow Food’s president Carlo Petrini) standing in a group of African children, and in the back there is a poster with “Petrini” written on it. His contrasting physical look and bright yellow shirt make him stand out in the image. The central position of Petrini in the image is in itself a signifier which can be read as

portraying him almost like hero or a saviour. In Donati's critical examination of Slow Food's relation to development countries, she sees an imperialist dichotomization of the Western self and its "other" as civilized/underdeveloped, powerful/powerless, generous benefactor/unfortunate beneficiary (Donati, 2005, p. 233). Also Barthes was interested in how some individuals get depicted almost as superhuman or god-like figures by placing them in everyday, normal contexts which reinforces their achievements, since "they can only be super-human because they are first of all human" (Ribi re, 2008, p. 19). "Superhuman" or "god" might be strong terms in this context, but there are definitely some traits suggesting this myth. But the image can be interpreted from a more pragmatic perspective - it is also a concrete description of how Slow Food work a lot on the field and with participatory methods (SF, (h), p.19), initiating projects together with and basing projects on the knowledge of the communities. Slow Food has since 2004 increased its collaboration with NGOs and its presence in developing countries, especially in Africa and Latin America (Sassatelli, 2010, p. 211). Seen from this perspective, the connotation is rather the importance of community based work, essential also within the UNESCO definition.

The target audience in both images is a supporter or donor. It is important to remember that food and foodways, even in rural settings, are of course always embedded in economics (Brulotte, 2016, p. 2), and the support from outside is an important part of Slow Food's activities. As pointed out in the UNESCO convention for ICH: "international community should contribute, together with the States Parties to this Convention, to the safeguarding of such heritage in a spirit of cooperation and mutual assistance" (UNESCO, (b)). Image no 6, a line of children, evokes emotions of empathy and will to help - speaking directly to Slow Food's co-producer who is part of the production process and "goes beyond the passive role of consuming and takes an interest in those who produce our food, how they produce it and the problems they face in doing so" (SF, (d)). It also highlights the focus on children and young people, as expressed in UNESCO's convention as the importance of building "greater awareness, especially among the younger generations, of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage and of its safeguarding" (UNESCO, (b)), an idea reflected also in the Slow Food Youth Network<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.slowfoodyouthnetwork.org/>



Image 7 (<http://www.slowfood.com/take-hands-off-earth/>). Used with permission.

This image is medium size on the subpage “Take your hands off the earth”. Visually it stands out quite a bit from the other images in its strong political message. The term “land grabbing” is used to describe “the purchase or lease of large tracts of fertile land by public or private entities” (SF, (i)). The denotation of the image is a piece of rural land, likely in the Global South, being cut up by a giant fork and knife. Here again, the dichotomy nature/culture is described, with the fork and knife being signifiers for civilization; in this case the rich/developed world and the landscape being signifiers for nature and the developing/ poor countries. The “hungry” entities grabbing the land are described by the symbolic image of a knife and fork actually taking a bite of, eating the land. This image describes Slow food’s idea that food processing needs to “return to the land” (SF, (h), p.20) and also how the organization has changed its focus during the last years: “SF broadened its mission from the developed to the developing countries, from consumption to production, from dish to soil and environment” (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010, p. 210). In their own words, the Slow Food Movement “has evolved to embrace a comprehensive approach to food that recognizes the strong connections between plate, planet, people, politics and culture” (Wexler, Oberlander & Shankar, 2017, p.3). A connotation of the image is how Slow Food aim at reaching “beyond gastronomy as narrowly defined” and to address “issues of global justice and environment conservation” (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010, p. 204).

But worries about Slow Food’s capacity of addressing wider food policy issues have been expressed by Chrzan (2004, p.127) and Donati (2005, p. 229), and Slow Food’s possibility to promote real change in the modern world’s eating habits has been questioned by Jones et al, (2003, p. 304). This critique echoes back to Pieterse’s argument regarding the “failure to reproblematised development” based on underestimating the

complexity of modernity and falling into dichotomic thinking and simplistic schemas (Pieterse, 1995, p.186). These simplifications, which according to Chrzan exist in Slow Food's discourse (see Chrzan, 2004, p.121) are sometimes reflected in their images, in this case by highly emphasizing a defence of the local in contrast to a greedy, global economy. The text "Take your hands off the earth" reinforces this dichotomy - a message claiming the original right to the earth. The fork and knife are signifiers for power - represented by their abnormal size and the violent act of opening up a piece of land. The knife as a signifier is also a strong symbol in itself which can represent both the human intellect and adaption as well as "soulless dissection", aggression, and "meaningless destruction" (Ronnberg, 2011, p. 490).

The community based aspect of UNESCO is actualized in the defence of the local vs the global. Andrews calls food a "source of identity often in conflict with the powerful forces underpinning globalisation, which erode local traditions and impose corporate monocultures" (Andrews, 2008, p. 130). UNESCO point out how "the processes of globalization and social transformation, alongside the conditions they create for renewed dialogue among communities, also give rise, as does the phenomenon of intolerance, to grave threats of deterioration, disappearance and destruction of the intangible cultural heritage, in particular owing to a lack of resources for safeguarding such heritage" (UNESCO, (b)). This point is clearly a relevant issue for developing countries that might not have the resources to safeguard their heritage. Slow Food does not want to "undo" globalization, but rather "change the rules of the game so that taste, cultural identity and regional individuality are not assimilated into, and homogenized by, a global food culture devoid of diversity and pleasure" (Donati, 2005, p. 228). Even though Slow Food share the view of many NGOs on global inequality issues, they do not define them self as an anti-global movement. Instead Petrini talks about a "positive" or "virtuous" globalization in which a global network is used to mobilize support and in that way being an "international actor for the global support of the local" (Andrews, 2008, p. 149; Sassatelli in Andrews, 2008 p. 152).

The target group again in this image is a supporter/donor/ consumer. Slow Food actually believe that in the long term, consumers can influence on the larger political level - arguing that consumers through their choices can contribute in putting pressure on transnational firms, agri-business and banks (Wexler, Oberlander & Shankar, 2017, p.2).

### 5.3 Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity Website



Image 8 (<http://www.fondazione Slow Food.com/en/>). Used with permission.

The Slow Food Foundation for biodiversity projects are meant to be “tools to promote a model of agriculture that is based on local biodiversity and respect for the land and the local culture, is in harmony with the environment and aims to provide food sovereignty and access to good, clean and fair food for all communities” (SF, (j)). At the Hangzhou international congress on culture and sustainable development in 2013, Carlotta Baitone, the Slow Food East Asia director, underlined that “it would be senseless to defend biodiversity without defending cultural diversity. This diversity is the greatest creative force on earth, the only condition possible for the maintenance and transmission of an outstanding heritage of knowledge to future generations” (Baitone, 2013, p. 1).

Image number 8 is one of the main images on the upper side of this page. It is a beautiful image of kola nuts in different colours, from red to pink to white, contrasting the hands touching them and the colourful piece of cloth to the right. The kola nut in itself is a strong symbol in African countries, given as a token of respect and an important part of community meetings, ceremonies and rituals (Starin, 2013, p. 510). The aesthetic value of this image is something important in itself, as Slow Food claims that beauty is an absolute value important for human wellbeing, and that good food, except for being a source of pleasure, also is a “conservator of beauty” (SF, (h), p.13). The signifiers kola nuts represent the biodiversity which is the focus on this site; their irregularity in shape, size and colour highlights the importance of variety, symbolizing Slow Food’s resistance to standardised, mass-produced foods (Pietrykowski, 2004, p. 318). Clearly, this image relates to the importance of “intangible cultural heritage as a mainspring of cultural diversity and a guarantee of sustainable development” (UNESCO, (b)). Chrzan means that Slow Food has a “loose” definition of biodiversity, which can mean anything from

biological substrata, ecological systems as well as the human systems that produce particular forms of food webs and products (Chrzan, 2010, p.123). That biological and cultural diversity are seen as closely connected is described in the text of this image: “Protecting biodiversity means respecting diversity in cultures, knowledge and local areas”. Within Slow Food, agricultural goods are regarded as vital part of a community culture to be preserved and safeguarded just like intellectual property (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010, p. 222). The hand actually has a protective gesture upon the kola nuts, emphasizing the protection of biodiversity and also underlining how it is the community itself who should be safeguarding this heritage, which connects to UNESCO’s focus on indigenous communities’ role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of ICH (UNESCO, (b)). A possible connotation of this image is how biological and cultural diversity are closely linked and need to be safeguarded and protected, mainly by the community itself.

Donati sees within Slow Food a “tendency to fetishize cultural diversity in order to satisfy the appetites of a privileged minority” (Donati, 2005, p. 229). Donati’s view is based on the “mythical” assumption that the “other” is culturally richer and more diverse than the self<sup>10</sup>. Related to this, it is important to go back to Pieterse and his view of culture as an arena of struggle, and not something which conforms to a structure. (Pieterse, 1995, p. 176). Local culture, to Pieterse, is just like national culture “a terrain of power” (Pieterse, 1995, p. 182).

The signifier hand gives associations to crafts and tactile skills, and as archetypal symbols hands represent the “sovereign, world-creating reach of consciousness; they embody effectiveness, industry, adaptation, invention, self-expression and a will for creative and destructive ends” (Ronnberg, 2011, p. 380). This image relates to many of the UNESCO definitions: its representation of both traditional and contemporary rural practices, how these practices have contributed to giving us a sense of identity and continuity (underlined in the connection biodiversity - cultural diversity) and its basis in the communities knowledge, skills and customs (through the symbolic image of the hand). The target audience in this image is an “outsider” (supporter/consumer), not belonging to the culture described but who is to gain knowledge about it. The focus is rather educational than encouraging fundraising.

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<sup>10</sup> It is important however to mention, that this article was written in 2005 and that Slow Food has increased its activities in developing countries since then.





Umqombothi is a traditional Xhosa beer made from a combination of maize meal, crushed corn meal, crushed sorghum meal, yeast (traditionally made from the fermented root of the medicinal plant, *Ulc-ganyu/lele*) and water. In appearance, the beer is opaque and lighter in color. It has a thick, creamy, gritty consistency from the maize, and is known for having a heavy and distinctly sour aroma.

Umqombothi is brewed following traditional customs and these vary slightly between regions. Xhosa people filter the fermented mash through a tube-shaped, woven glass strainer called *inkozo*.

The strainers are made by sewing together many strands of carefully prepared, twisted, grass-like sedge stems. They are only made by elderly people, using a centuries-old technique. It is a complicated and time-consuming technique that takes great patience to learn and pass along to others. Younger generations are not always willing to learn this art, meaning that it is in danger of dying out, which could contribute to a loss of knowledge in brewing beer the traditional way. Symbolically,

the *inkozo* was a very important item in a traditional Xhosa household. For example, it was given as a wedding gift to a newly married couple. Unfortunately, metal factory-made strainers are more commonly used today.

Umqombothi plays a very important cultural, social and spiritual role. It is used to celebrate the betrothing of young men known as *stokwatho* in Xhosa culture, after initiation and ritual circumcisions. But it is also part of the process of contacting the ancestors (*amadlozi*) and plays a central role in many celebrations or life events like weddings, funerals, and *inkozo* (traditional meetings).

## Centuries-Old and Steeped in Tradition, Umqombothi Joins the Ark

© 12 February 2017

*The 4,000th passenger on the Ark of Taste, Slow Food's international catalog of food products, has arrived from the Xhosa people of South Africa. A handcrafted beer called Umqombothi, marks an important milestone for Slow Food's project.*

Hundreds of years before handcrafted artisan beers became fashionable, the Xhosa people had been brewing their own home made beer from ingredients and tools produced in the region where they lived.

The Xhosa settled in the region of the Eastern Cape after migrating Southward from the Great Lakes region of Central Africa. They were primarily cattle farmers, but also had goats, sheep, and poultry. Their main crops were sorghum, millet, pumpkins, beans, and maize.



Images 9 & 10 (<http://www.fondazione Slow Food.com/en/centuries-old-and-steeped-in-tradition-umqombothi-joins-the-ark/>) .Used with permission.

Image 9 & 10 are small on a subpage to the Foundation for biodiversity, describing an Ark of Taste project, the production of the handcrafted beer Umqombothi. In the right image, in contrast to the colourful image of the left, the colour of the grain almost floats into the colour of the hands, illustrating a connection man/nature. These images again contain the signifier hand - a reinforcement of the crafts and artisan skills. The text, here only presented in part, describes how the old beer making technique today risks dying out due to a lack of interest from the younger generation. UNESCO's statement regarding the importance of building awareness of ICH among the younger generations is again actualized (UNESCO, (b)). The text describes how the strainers are made "by elderly people, using a centuries-old technique", which connects to Inclusiveness and how intangible cultural heritage has been passed from one generation to another. Also the traditional, contemporary and living at the same is being presented: old traditions that today still live and prosper. The perhaps most important message however is how ICH is community based, how it "thrives on its basis in communities and depends on those whose knowledge of traditions, skills and customs are passed on to the rest of the community, from generation to generation, or to other communities" (UNESCO, (b)). From the description of how the product is used for celebrations and rituals as well as a way of contacting ancestors, we get the connotation that the craft carries spiritual and cultural importance. The Slow Food critic can here associate to the by Donati argued Western tendency to see the cultural "other" as spiritually or culturally richer (Donati, 2005 p. 231). Donati writes about Slow Food's "narratives of hope" - stories of people

protecting disappearing food traditions and described as having unique qualities - a discourse which, according to Donati, even though the intention is respectful, “reveals a deeply paternalistic approach to the very people whom Slow Food seeks to support” (Donati, 2005, p. 232). Also Pieterse talks about how within anthropology, there is the tendency of describing the “other’s” cultural world as different from our own, citing Keesing in saying that “we are dealers in exotica” (Pieterse, 1995, p.182). An interesting fact with regards to this is what Slow Food calls the “narrative label”, in which they argue that in order to judge a product’s quality, the physical analysis is not sufficient; the description should contain origin, history, processing technique and other information that allow the consumer to judge if a food is produced in an environmentally or socially fair way. With the narrative label, Slow Food address the problem of “mystifying” products, recalling a “world of farmers filled with poetry”, “vague references to ancient flavors” and “evocative images” that are very far in reality from the actual product (SF, (k)). The text in the images above is informative rather than “mystifying” and lives up to this definition.

The promotion of local culture and history, central for Slow Food (SF, (h)), is evident in the descriptions. The Representativeness as described by UNESCO is also visible in the description of how the brewing of Umqombothi vary slightly between regions. In these images, the fact that “the importance of intangible cultural heritage is not the cultural manifestation itself but rather the wealth of knowledge and skills that is transmitted through it” (UNESCO, (c)), is expressed, alongside with the importance of “the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills - as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith” (UNESCO, (c)) - expressed in the detailed description of tools and procedures in this craft. Fischler claims that “Food is central for our identity and can both assert our oneness and otherness” (Fischler, 1988, p. 275). This focus on identity in a global world is important within UNESCO’s discourse. The risk however, seen through the eyes of Pieterse, is that this local culture is seen as something static and homogenous rather than a constantly evolving field.

There is a clear educational purpose on this site - to inform about the practical as well as cultural context of the producers, which enhances Slow Food’s ambition to connect the consumer with the producer. The target group is clearly someone from “outside”, who is invited to learn about these cultures.

## 5.4 Terra Madre Website

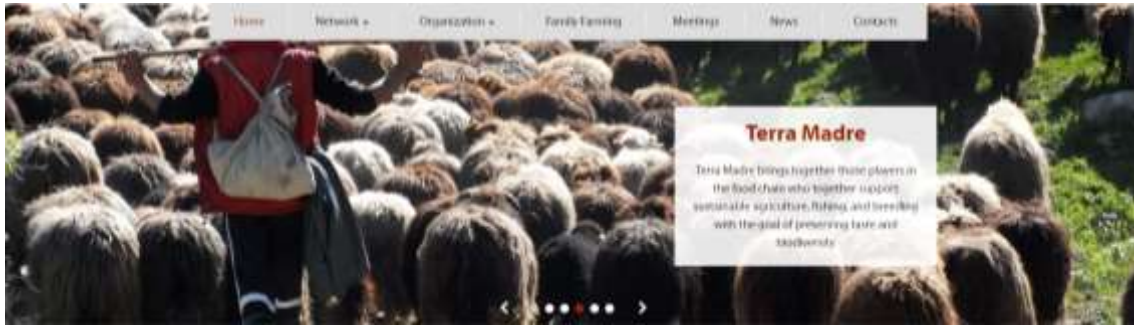


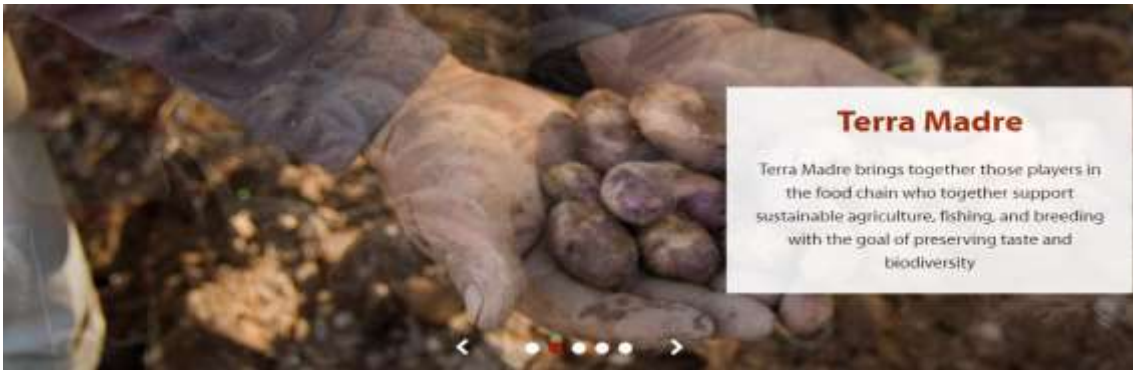
Image 11 (<http://www.terramadre.info/en/>). Used with permission.

This is a big image placed on the Terra Madre homepage, with a text saying: “Terra Madre brings together those players in the food chain who together support sustainable agriculture, fishing, and breeding with the goal of preserving taste and biodiversity” implying that the target group is either a supporter or a producer interested in joining the Terra Madre project. The denotation of the image is a shepherd in what looks like a European setting, carrying a wooden pin and a simple rucksack. The traditional setting and the bright colours communicate a peaceful, even idyllic feeling. The image evokes “the myth of the countryside” - the idea of a place where we can experience unadulterated nature (Hall S. , 2007, p. 150). It also relates to the “Slow paced life” that Slow Food promotes - a “leisurely, gracious, and sensually-pleasurable imagined past” as opposed to the fast-paced modern life (Chrzan, 2004, p. 121). Jones et al. believe that Slow Food risks tapping into “a deep cultural well that romantically harks back to illusory images of a rural idyll or utopian past in which people and nature lived together in simple harmony” (Jones et.al, 2017, p. 303). Donati specifically mentions the “sentimentalization of the European peasant” (Donati, 2005, p.233), and how European culture, especially in the US, is depicted as a “mythical culture” in which the “lower classes” once were considered “an artisan class” (Donati, 2005. p. 235). This critique is interesting with regards to Barthes’ view of history. Barthes meant that with time, the understanding of ones position in the world changes, and ideology is therefore always a product of history. For Barthes, “the very distance that separates our values and assumptions from those of our forebears is the key to our understanding of both our past and our present” (Ribi re, 2008, p. 15). The idea of a gap between our understanding of the world in different times of history is important to keep in mind when looking at these sometimes idealized images of the past.

Was the traditional rural life of the past really so “simple” and “easy” as depicted today?

The signifier sheep is an archetypal symbol for innocence, and the lamb reminds us “idyllically, of childhood simplicity, frolic and oneness with nature” (Ronmberg, 2011, p. 322). But “because the mildness and purity of the lamb make it especially vulnerable to the predatory and destructive, nature does not let us stay in lamblike innocence for long. In the same way that since ancient times the immaculate lamb has been offered up, so our naïveté is sacrificed in the service of adaptation and independence” (Ronmberg, 2011, p. 322). This interpretation is an interesting analogy to the vulnerability of nature and how ICH, according to UNESCO, needs to be protected in the growing globalization. The “Good Shepherd” is one of our oldest religious symbols (Ronmberg, 2011, p. 322), and can in this case can be seen as representing the caretaker of the fragile, innocent nature. The connotation can accordingly be a defence of old working methods as well as an exposed nature.

Even though its archaic associations, this image does live up to the definition of traditional, contemporary and living at the same time - depicting a contemporary setting but with old working methods. Tencati & Zsolnai call the methods of Slow Food at the same time innovative and traditional: “innovative because they represent a real, feasible alternative to the prevailing socioeconomic paradigm; traditional in that they are based on the cultural heritage of local communities all over the world” (Tencati & Zsolnai, 2011, p. 349). Pietrykowski describes Slow Food’s methods which “allow small-scale producers to continue to maintain traditional production methods, methods that would otherwise be seen as antiquated and inefficient. The older production methods comprise a cultural heritage and while there is the danger of idealizing the toiling of labourers past, to the extent that unique tastes and products can be produced only through craft production techniques, Slow Food attempts to provide a market rationale for the continued use of such technologies” (Pietrykowski, 2004, p. 315). That nostalgia is not always necessarily a bad thing but can also be a way to “protect some societies that are undergoing fast change” and “imply imagining a better future” is also expressed by Donati (2005, p. 229).



Images 12 & 13 (<http://www.terramadre.info/en/>). Used with permission.

Images 12 & 13 are big and positioned on the main page of the Terra Madre site. The connotation of image 12, hands rinsing saffron flowers, emphasizes slow life and work which requires patience in contrast to the speed of industrial working methods. Beauty is again highlighted, as well as pleasure being present not only in the consumption but also in the production of food. The text is the same as in image 11, connecting to the Community based aspect - how ICH must be first recognized by the communities themselves. In both images we find the signifiers hands representing skills and crafts. Hands as archetypal symbols are often seen as directly connected to the brain (Ronnberg, 2011, p. 380) - which also relates to Petrini naming farmers the “intellectuals of the earth” (Andrews, 2008, p. 64). The roughness of image 13, dirty hands working with the earth, symbolize a return to a pure, “primitive” state of nature. Chrzan mentions a strong metaphor in Western thought which relates to a “potentially whole and fulfilled self represented ‘naturally’ by ‘real’ culture” (Chrzan, 2004, p. 121). The image also relates to the name of the project Terra Madre, Mother Earth, itself, seen as the mother of all living and representing fertility. Earth as a symbol is “the primary womb” (Ronnberg, 2011, p. 400), and “the highest and most essential mysteries of the feminine are symbolized by the earth and its transformations” (Neumann in Ronnberg, 2011, p. 400). The hands touching the soil are a strong symbol for the protection of the earth as well as a return to the basics. The focus on tactile knowledge also illustrates the will to give

visibility to the producers and to traditions and skills - clear aims in the Terra Madre project. Hands touching soil or holding plants or fruit, sowing seeds and performing artisanal culinary preparations are recurring symbols within Slow Food's communication.

A possible connotation could be the will to bring back the human aspect of agricultural work - both in a practical way - in focusing on skills and producers, and a "symbolic" way- contrasting the inhumane way that we are "enslaved by speed" (SF, (c)). The other connotation, the romantic, mythical idea of nature, can seem provocative when soon facing a world with 9, 1 billion inhabitants and an increasing food crisis. But Slow Food has actually never claimed to offer a solution to all these problems. A Slow Food coordinator in an interview with Sassatelli & Davolio said that: "as a movement, we're not pretending to get an overall strategy to solve worldwide problems, we just want to pursue some aims on specific issues about food and agriculture" (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010, p. 220).

The text actualizes Inclusiveness - visible within the whole Terra Madre project - an aim at contributing to social cohesion, encouraging collaboration between different actors and feeling part of society at large. The theme traditional, contemporary and living at the same time is again actualized, as well as the significance of communities - represented by hands as signifiers for skills and elaboration. Simonetti addresses Slow Food's idealizations of an imaginary past, the return to a traditional, pre-industrial society and rejection of technical and scientific progress (Simonetti, 2012, pp. 179, 183). Petrini, however, argues that Slow Food is by no means antagonist to modern science and technology, but that they wish for a food industry in dialogue with agroecology and the knowledge of farmers (Petrini, 2016, p. 234). Tradition, according to Andrews, is for Slow Food focused on specialized skills that started out as innovations (Andrews, 2008, pp. 24-25). Also Montanari argues that "What we call culture takes its place where tradition and innovation intersect. Tradition is made up of knowledge, techniques, values which were handed down to us. Innovation exists inasmuch as this knowledge, these techniques, these values modify the place of man in the environmental context, rendering him able to experience a new reality. *A very successful innovation*: that is how we could define tradition. Culture is the interface between these two perspectives" (Montanari, 2004, p. 7).

## 6. Conclusion and discussion

The various themes on the websites are reflected in differences also in the visual and textual communication. On the Slow Food International and Italian site, there is a clear focus on support and donation, expressed both explicitly in words and visually by the usage of many images of women and children in the Global South. The target group is clearly a supporter/consumer/donor and there is an intention to encourage action. On the Slow Foundation for biodiversity page, image and text communicate a perspective which puts culture and identity in the first place. Biological and cultural diversity, and the connection between the two of them, just as emphasized by UNESCO, is a strong focus on this site. The target group is a supporter/consumer and the perspective is slightly different, with a stronger educational purpose and the aim of creating culturally and socially conscious consumers. On the Terra Madre site, a lot of focus is given to traditional skills and crafts as well as the emphasis on international collaboration between various producers. The addressed target group could be a producer interested in joining the project, but very often it seems directed to a supporter/consumer. Again, the focus on this site is rather to enhance cultural awareness that can transform ourselves from passive “consumers” into active “co-producers”, than direct donation.

With regards to the UNESCO definition of Intangible cultural heritage, all points are expressed in the empirical material, in various strength, showing that Slow Food and UNESCO depart from very similar ideas of the role of food and culture in society. The strongest focus on the Slow Food International and Italian page is the encouragement to action, which can be connected to the point regarding Inclusion and social cohesion. Generally, on all pages, there is a strong focus on traditions, old techniques, products and skills, but in contemporary settings. The often heard critique towards Slow Food for a nostalgic view is reasonable - the imagery is quite often idyllic, depicting happy farmers and allusions to a “slow” and “simple” life. But the critique is not always put in context - the emphasis of traditions is at the same time connected to the importance of survival for the communities involved in these practices today, thus emphasizing the UNESCO point regarding Intangible cultural heritage as “traditional, contemporary and living at the same time”. Intangible cultural heritage as Representative - how food traditions are valued not only as cultural goods, but also for its basis in communities knowledge, traditions, skills and customs, and how these are passed on from generation to generation - is very clear in Slow Food’s communication, and especially on

the Terra Madre and Foundation for biodiversity websites. On these pages, the imagery has strong emphasis on tactile skills - often represented by images of traditional working methods, and hands as a recurring strong symbol. On these pages, focus is given to the importance of traditions as representative for the identity of communities. The community based aspect is visible in the focus of the producers. In some cases this is done through quite personal portraits such as in the project “le donne slow” on the Italian site. When it comes to the global South on the Terra Madre page, there are less such personal portraits. Perhaps the insertion of more personal, commonplace stories of people involved in these global projects could strengthen Slow Food’s argumentation against the critique of an inherited imperialist view. This could also further strengthen the community based aspect and focus on producers, which is an explicit goal for the organization. Slow Food also need to address the issue, raised within Pieterse’s discussion, of culture as something in constant movement and not a static resource “to be tapped”. Since the importance of culture in society is strongly expressed by Slow Food, a critical examination of their view of culture should be an inherent part of their work.

The findings of this study relate to the ComDev field in several ways. The relation local/global and a critique towards some of the risks that globalization entails for traditional communities is central both in the discourse of UNESCO and Slow food. Slow Food’s vision of a “virtuous” globalization, which can work if there is a balance, a “global social contract” between developed/less developed countries (Andrews, 2008, pp. 152-153), is visible in the focus on international collaboration within projects such as Terra Madre. The focus on marginalized groups, often in the global South, comes through both in the projects of Slow Food and their external communication. The will to communicate knowledge and skills from rural communities to consumers to create conscious consumers which, according to Slow Food, can bring change on a bigger scale, is clearly expressed. The critique directed towards Slow Food for its elitist nature and imperial legacy is sometimes visible in hints of symbolic colonialism and an exotic view of the “other”, often in the Global South. Some images are quite stereotypical, such as the image of Petrini being celebrated in a group of African children, or the African smiling woman in a rural setting. The romantic idea of an idyllic past in traditional settings is to be found in some images evoking archetypal/stereotypical/mythical ideas, sometimes so strong that we can read them as “truths”. Slow Food need to address these issues and not fall in to what Pieterse calls the “politics of nostalgia”. This is valid also for some quite traditional depictions of women, especially black women, as closely connected to Earth. As good



intentions as there probably are, I believe that Slow Food should be aware of the strong symbolic value within some of their visual material, and try to balance it. This also goes for the verbal communication and the use of dichotomies such as “real” “natural” and “genuine” in contrast to “fast” and “standardized”, expressions that should be used with caution, seen how they can easily lead to a simplified view of reality.

Though parts of the expressed critique is valid, I believe, just like Andrews, that some of it “underestimates the depth and complexity of [Slow Food’s] politics of place, while failing to address the more recent Slow Food presence in the countries of the South and its critical engagement with globalisation” (Andrews, 2008, p. 133). Slow Food is involved in a wide range of activities and, as Sassatelli & Davolio claim, should perhaps, rather than a coherent entity, be seen as “a composite and diversified international network of initiatives” (Sassatelli & Davolio, 2010, p. 205). Some of the critical articles were also written when Slow Food had just started working in developing countries and with a bigger political aim.

To conclude, a reflexive approach, also central to Pieterse’s discussion on the view of other cultures, is a key to address the issues above. Donati says that: “only through a process of self-reflection can the relation between the inside and the outside become meaningful and go beyond a nostalgic rendering or fetishistic consumption of cultural diversity” (Donati, 2005, p. 237). Nostalgia becomes problematic when “it is not accompanied by a critical awareness of how easily the imperialist politics of the past are repeated and perpetrated on others, even in genuine attempts to forge more ethical cultural and economic relationships” (Donati, 2005, p. 230). This is especially relevant with regards to Slow Food’s increasing engagement in work in developing countries. It is interesting to see Slow Food’s conscious approach with regards to the communication of products, as described for instance in the “narrative label” theme. If managing to keep and develop a self-reflective approach, and stay mindful and respectful to local cultures, I do believe that Slow Food has a possibility to make a contribution in its aim of creating a “social economy around the preservation of food as both a bearer of cultural heritage and an embodiment of material pleasure” (Pietrykowski , 2004, p. 315).

## 6.1 Reflections and suggestions for further research

Through the literature review I quickly noticed that Slow Food is an organization that can be viewed from many perspectives. It also became clear that, even though a lot could be read through the external communication of Slow Food, it would have been fruitful to complete the empirical material with interviews. Time constraints as well as the will to keep the analysis basic were the reasons for not choosing to do so. Reviewing the many various standpoints on Slow Food was a quite time consuming activity, but I believe that this part of the work was important to get a balanced perspective within the analysis. With a semiotic analysis, there is always the risk of reading too much into an image, ideas that might not have been intended by the creators of the content. Seen that Slow Food has a range of activities as well as many various communication channels, it is hard to generalize the findings, instead they need to be seen as a slice of the whole picture. This analysis is limited to a few the visual and textual representations within Slow Food's external communication, and is not to be seen as representative of all of their work.

Through the reading of the literature I found many interesting topics that gave ideas to further studies. A topic to investigate deeper, perhaps through a discourse analysis of textual material, could be the power relations and the critique of elitism that the movement has been a subject to. Seen the wide range of activities that Slow Food is engaged in, a more field-based study, conducting interviews with producers, farmers, restaurant owners etc. could also give another perspective to the movement's work. With regards to the critique directed towards Slow Food as well as the various opinions on the insertion of culinary traditions in UNESCO's Intangible heritage list, it could also be interesting to investigate the area of Critical heritage studies in which our heritage is seen as a political act, influenced by the power relations in society - such as nationalism, imperialism, colonialism, cultural elitism etc. (ACHS).

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## 8. Appendix

### 8.1 Slow Food Manifesto in Italian

#### **MANIFESTO DELLO SLOW FOOD MOVIMENTO INTERNAZIONALE PER LA TUTELA E IL DIRITTO AL PIACERE**

“Questo nostro secolo, nato e cresciuto sotto il segno della civiltà industriale, ha prima inventato la macchina e poi ne ha fatto il proprio modello di vita. La velocità è diventata la nostra catena, tutti siamo in preda allo stesso virus: la "Fast-Life", che sconvolge le nostre abitudini, ci assale fin nelle nostre case, ci rinchiude a nutrirci nei "Fast-Food". Ma l'uomo sapiens deve recuperare la sua saggezza e liberarsi dalla velocità che può ridurlo ad una specie in via d'estinzione. Perciò contro la follia universale della "Fast-Life", bisogna scegliere la difesa del tranquillo piacere materiale. Contro coloro, e sono i più, che confondono l'efficienza con la frenesia, proponiamo il vaccino di un'adeguata porzione di piaceri sensuali assicurati, da praticarsi in lento e prolungato godimento. Iniziamo proprio a tavola con lo "Slow Food", contro l'appiattimento del "Fast-Food" riscopriamo la ricchezza e gli aromi delle cucine locali. Se la "Fast-Life" in nome della produttività, ha modificato la nostra vita e minaccia l'ambiente ed il paesaggio, lo "Slow Food" è oggi la risposta d'avanguardia. E' qui nello sviluppo del gusto e non nel suo immiserimento la vera cultura, di qui può iniziare il progresso con lo scambio internazionale di storie, conoscenze, progetti. Lo "Slow Food" assicura un avvenire migliore. Lo "Slow Food" è un'idea che ha bisogno di molti sostenitori qualificati, per fare diventare questo moto (lento) un movimento internazionale, di cui la chiocciolina è il simbolo".



## 8.2 Slow Food Manifesto in English

### **SLOW FOOD MANIFESTO INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR THE DEFENSE OF AND THE RIGHT TO PLEASURE**

“Our century, which began and has developed under the insignia of industrial civilization, first invented the machine and then took it as its life model. We are enslaved by speed and have all succumbed to the same insidious virus: Fast Life, which disrupts our habits, pervades the privacy of our homes and forces us to eat Fast Foods. To be worthy of the name, Homo sapiens should rid himself of speed before it reduces him to a species in danger of extinction. A firm defense of quiet material pleasure is the only way to oppose the universal folly of the Fast Life. May suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow, long-lasting enjoyment preserve us from the contagion of the multitude who mistake frenzy for efficiency. Our defense should begin at the table with Slow Food. Let us rediscover the flavors and savors of regional cooking and banish the degrading effects of Fast Food. In the name of productivity, Fast Life has changed our way of being and threatens our environment and our landscapes. So Slow Food is now the only truly progressive answer. That is what real culture is all about: developing taste rather than demeaning it. And what better way to set about this than an international exchange of experiences, knowledge, and projects? Slow Food guarantees a better future. Slow Food is an idea that needs plenty of qualified supporters who can help turn this (slow) motion into an international movement, with a little snail as its symbol”.