FOOD IN FILM: A STUDY ON AUDIENCE RECEPTION

A Master's Thesis

by
ECE SİMİN CİVELEK

Department of
Communication and Design
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University
Ankara
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To my father İsmet Gürbüz Civelek

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Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

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ECE SİMİN CİVELEK

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ECE SİMİN CİVELEK

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication and Design.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Özlem Savaş

Supervisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication and Design.

Vis. Asst. Prof. Dr. Ahmet Gürata

Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication and Design.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Dilek Kaya

Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences

----

Prof. Dr. Erdal Erel

Director

ABSTRACT

FOOD IN FILM: A STUDY ON AUDIENCE RECEPTION

Ece Simin Civelek

M.A. in Media and Visual Studies

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Özlem Savaş

May, 2012.

This study intends to analyze audience reception of foodstuff and related practices in films. In the study foodstuff and related practices are taken into consideration as a powerful semiotic system and in that respect are evaluated as an important property of filmic narration. Study examines how the audience who is a social and cultural subject interprets the encoded meanings of foodstuff and related practices.

Key Words: Audience Reception, Food, Film, Food Culture.

ÖZET

FİLMLERDE YEMEKLER: İZLEYİCİ ALIMLAMASI ÜZERİNE BİR ÇALIŞMA

Ece Simin Civelek

Medya ve Görsel Çalışmalar Yüksek Lisans

Danışman: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Özlem Savaş

Mayıs, 2012.

Bu çalışma filmlerdeki yiyeceklerin ve ilgili pratiklerin izleyici tarafından alımlanmasını analiz etmektedir. Çalışmada yiyecekler ve ilgili pratikler güçlü bir gösterge sistemi olarak ele alınmakta ve bu açıdan filmsel anlatımın önemli bir mülkiyeti olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Çalışma filmlerde yiyeceklere ve ilgili pratiklere yüklenen anlamların sosyal ve kültürel bir özne olan izleyici tarafından nasıl yorumlandığını incelemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İzleyici Alımlaması, Yemek, Film, Yemek Kültürü.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Says, Counihan (1999: 6), "[f]ood is a many-splendored thing, central to biological and social life." Besides having a vital and primary significance in feeding people (Mead, 1997), foods also possess social and cultural significance in societies as Counihan (1999: 6) states:

> Food is a product and mirror of the organization of society on both the broadest and most intimate levels. It is connected to many kinds of behavior and is endlessly meaningful. Food is a prism that absorbs and reflects a host of cultural phenomena.

As a matter of fact, food is a subject matter of wide range of studies in different fields. Anthropologists and sociologists offer insights to understand social and cultural structures and power relationships in societies through investigation of culinary cultures, nutritional trends, patterns of food

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consumption, eating habits, eating disorders, commensality, division of labour at home and symbolic meanings of food. (Mennell, Murcott & van Otterloo, 1992)

Bearing in mind the point that "[f]ood is life, and life can be studied and understood through food" (Counihan and van Esterik, 1997: 2), this study directs its attention to the representation of 'foodstuff and related practices in films' and aims to analyze their reception in order to provide an understanding on how people interpret and make use of them in their everyday lives and how it makes sense with their social and cultural positions.

The phrase 'foodstuff and related practices' frequently used in study refers to an extensive conceptualization. The term 'foodstuff' implies all foods and drinks in different forms. The term 'related practices' consists all the activities and performances related with food consumption in terms of cooking, eating, drinking, preparing, serving, holding, embellishing, etc. Thus, the phrase 'foodstuff and related practices in films' indicates an all-inclusive approach and contains the representation of all forms of foodstuff and related practices, besides any material object (glasses, pans, etc.) and any setting (kitchen, restaurant, etc.) related with culinary activities.

The second chapter explains study's general approach and objectives in details through clarifying the conceptualization of the key terms –audience, text and text-audience relationship in the study. As well, this chapter introduces and describes the method study resorts in order to collect data to analyze audience reception.

The third chapter provides an overview of foodstuff and related practices as a powerful semiotic system and tries to clarify how 'foodstuff and related practices become a speech' all by themselves. Underscoring the point in the third chapter, that foodstuff and related practices constitute a 'language' that Barthes (1997) metaphorically refers as if there is a 'veritable grammar of foods', fourth chapter proceeds with a general discussion on food culture fed with participants' statements and aims to answer the following questions: where and how are the grammar(s) of foodstuff and related practices constituted, in which social and cultural contexts are their attached meanings produced, reconstructed, circulated, reinforced, deconstructed? Where do people obtain, interpret, act upon and reproduce meanings in this 'language'? Where do film scenes of foodstuff and related practices stand in the process? Therefore, touching upon different fields in cultural studies such as consumption, everyday life and social and cultural geographies, fourth chapter provides an elementary look to food culture and suggests an

understanding to the question *in which contexts* people make sense of foodstuff and related practices. Accordingly, this chapter provides a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of participants' general approach to foodstuff and related practices and enables the study to map complex connections and relationships of their meaning-making about foodstuff and related practices in their everyday lives. Therefore, it gives the opportunity to situate their reception of foodstuff and related practices in films in a broader context of their social and cultural experience, which their reception is not apart.

Eventually, the fifth chapter presents the 'particular stories of the particular' and tries to analyze their receptions. Since participants' receptions touch upon the concepts 'self-identity' and 'self-formation', this chapter resorts and gives place to a discussion on identity to contextualize their receptions in line with the analysis.

CHAPTER II

MAPPING THE STUDY

2. 1. General Approach and Objectives

2. 1. 1. Studying Food in/and Film

Besides forming a significant subject matter in studies dealing with society and culture in the fields as semiotics, anthropology, sociology and consumption culture, foodstuff and related practices and their representation in the context of films also provide an insightful framework for film studies. In films studies, representation of foodstuff and related practices is studied as an important possession of filmic narration, as well, taken as a matter in hand in terms of the material world embedded in film.

To begin with, Bower (2004: 1) approaches symbolic imagery of foodstuff and related practices as a *powerful semiotic system* to create meaning in filmic narration that enables filmmakers "to communicate important aspects of characters' emotions, along with their personal and cultural identities" as well as "ethnic, religious, sexual and philosophical aspects of narratives" in *all film genres*. By referring to the distinction between 'food films' as a genre focusing on food itself and films in which 'food is an important element' contributing to filmic narration she highlights the fact that it is in some sense subjective decision to classify, related to the criteria taken in hand either 'dominant and pervasive use' or 'effective use'. Yet, Bower (2004: 5-6) describes some conventionally accepted properties of films assembled under food film genre as:

> To begin with, food, . . . has to play a star role, whether the leading characters are cooks (professional or domestic) or not. This means that often the camera will focus in on food preparation and presentation so that in closeups or panning shots, food fills the screen. The restaurant kitchen, the dining room and/or kitchen of a home, tables within a restaurant, a shop in which food is made and/or sold, will usually be central settings. And the film's narrative line will consistently depict characters negotiating questions of identity, power, culture, class, spirituality, or relationship through food.

Finally, Bower (2004: 4) indicates regardless of how, "whether food is coded negatively or positively, whether it plays a major or a minor role, it is often a

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major ingredient in the cinematic experience." Besides, Bower (2004: 7) indicates, even though it has taken attention recently, examining food in films opens up ways to understand "how movies shape our sense of the world and our place in it" due to the fact that representations of food "precedes literacy but then becomes part of our symbol-making, symbol-decoding capacity." (2004: 10)

In this manner, for instance, Balthrope (2004) looks at the symbolic meanings of food in three films narrating African American and Latino families, which make use of them to represent ethnicity and culture in terms of ethnic foodways and meanings attached to them. Hence, she indicates in her analysis that in these films food stands as the symbolic representation of love that feeds not only bodies but also souls, such that cooking and preparing food as spending special effort and time in kitchen becomes a way of demonstration of love. Besides referring to the many symbolic uses of food under different circumstances, as to care, to reward and to bring comfort she especially highlights the metaphoric use of eating together and sharing food in these films. She states, in these films eating together stands symbolic of a 'communication time' enabling strengthened bonds among family members, friends and communities, in which not only foods but also thoughts, feelings and emotions are shared.

Similarly, Counihan (2004) analyzes symbolisms of food and related practices as embedded meanings in filmic narrations representing gender issues by visual mediation. Thus, she highlights food symbolism's availability to challenge and evoke reconsideration of normative assumptions about gender, gendered roles and practices as well as of spheres allocated by gender in the dichotomies between public/community/men and private/family/women.

In addition, so as to continue over foodstuff in film studies, Loukides and Fuller (1993) emphasize over Hollywood films and American social life that the material world embedded in films offers the chance to interpret them both within the context of film and within the broader context of social reality. They indicate, since the representations of material world in films both interpret and also distort social reality, "they offer us a unique opportunity to study the visual record of our culture and reflect on the world caught on film." (1993: 2)

In that respect, by taking food into consideration in terms of a material world embedded in films Boswell (1993) describes food and related practices as one of the substantial and frequently used properties of film, which guides audience to enter the world of filmic narration owing to the familiarity that –

everybody eats. By analyzing many representational uses of food and related practices in various films, she underlines their role as to project differences in terms of representing ethnicity, nationality, economic and social status, and in this way give the audience an understanding of the characters, of the relationships and of the values narrated in film. Together with their valuable function in films, Boswell (1993: 8) indicates, by examination of food scenes "we may begin to understand not just how food is used as a device, but how Hollywood projects the nature of certain values presented to us in terms of food and eating scenes". Hence, she concludes her analysis by the conclusion that prevalent use of food in Hollywood films often associated with interruption, conflict and crisis, actually represents the fact that, though there are abundance of food, but not given value, people are 'hungry in the land of plenty' where food never suffices, never enough to cheer them.

As it can be concluded from the referred studies (Bower 2004; Balthrope 2004; Counihan, 2004; Boswell, 1993), owing to that food as material objects and food-related practices as performances supply a powerful semiotic system, producers make use of the social, cultural, visual codes and myths of foodstuff and related practices as a significant property of filmic narration. Whether in the context of film or in the narrower context of the film-scene, representation of foodstuff and related practices enables producers to

communicate important aspects of the characters, of the plot, of the setting, etc. whether through major or minor use. Whilst encoding meanings through making use of foodstuff and related practices producers presume a social, cultural, visual literacy on the part of the audience to decode the encoded meanings. Regarding to this point, Chapter IV discusses how knowledge(s), meanings and discourses about foodstuff and related practices applied in the decoding process and active in audience's engagement with text, are acquired from different sites and geographies in their everyday lives. Hence, this chapter touches upon the fact that being audience/consumer of media is not an isolated position but the audience of media is also the audience/consumer of other social and cultural objects, sites and geographies and in a constant interaction with them.

Yet, the referred studies (Bower 2004; Balthrope 2004; Counihan, 2004; Boswell, 1993) approaching foodstuff and related practices as a cultural production embedded in films' contexts, focus on the part of text and encoded meanings in order to decipher the food symbolisms embedded in filmic narrations and analyze how they have been subjected in the context of films asking the questions "what food is doing in films" (Bower, 2004: 11) or "how food functions and contributes to film". (Bower, 2004: 12)

On the other hand, this study, though similarly taking film scenes of foodstuff and related practices into consideration as a powerful semiotic system, nevertheless, directs its focus on the decoding part, rather than questioning what the representation of foodstuff and related practices stand for and analyzing what their symbolisms imply in films, aims to analyze *texts in interaction* as situated in the social and cultural context of audience's everyday lives. Accordingly, this study intends to answer the propound questions: 'what people do with the representations of foodstuff and related practices in films', 'how they interpret, make sense and use of them' and 'how their reception, their reappropriations and recontextualizations make sense with their social and cultural positions (class, gender, age, etc.) in the society. In other words, rather than 'reading' the 'encoded meanings' in texts (films), this research intends to 'read' the relationship between audience and texts and their reception by looking behind the shoulders of the audience. In this manner, the researcher becomes the audience of the text *–audience-text relationship*, whereas the study becomes a narration of the reception of the text *–audience-text relationship,* subjected through an intellectual interest and gaze.

In order to illustrate for instance, as mentioned above, Bowler (1993) concludes in her analysis that the prevalent use of food in Hollywood films

often associated with interruption, conflict and crisis, actually represents the fact that, though there are abundance of food, but not given value, people are 'hungry in the land of plenty' where food never suffices, never enough to cheer them. Recognizing that the meaning, which is 'the dissatisfaction of people in abundance', is there in text, as an intended and encoded meaning, nevertheless, multiple different readings can be seen in the reception due to the fact that meanings are not fixed but polysemic in character, and meaning-making occurs in the process where 'the discourses of text encounters with the discourses of audience' (Hall, 2002) who is a social and cultural subject having an already constructed repertoire of meanings. Therefore, different readings proliferate through texts by people's negotiations and interpretations. In order to highlight an important characteristic of the different preferred readings, they do not form an hierarchical relationship with each other as superior/inferior in terms of mis-understood, semi-understood, well-understood, since that all the meanings interpreted are available in the polysemous structure of text and are derived and poached within.

Hence during interviews, whilst talking about film scenes of foodstuff and related practices a 26-year-old, single-female linguist, likewise Bowler's (1993) emphasis on the food scenes' association with interruption, conflict

and crisis, expresses her awareness of such association. However, she interprets the interruption in these scenes by relating it to the other properties of filmic narration like dialogue and plot that she rendered having importance superior to food itself:

> The matter... takes my attention... generally food comes in front of them but they never eat... because of being in conversation... in many films... whether they start to argue or something happens... they leave even without drinking their tea... for instance, they go to a place to drink tea and then phone rings and they leave immediately and the tea remains... probably they don't finish them since what is important there is the dialogue and incident, not the food.

Accordingly, regarding to the points emphasized, this study aims to discover the relation audience adopts towards the representation of foodstuff and related practices in films and analyze how the texts are used in creative ways in people's recontextualizations and reappropriations by the meanings they assigned, in relation to their social and cultural subject positions.

2. 1. 2. Conceptualization of Audience

Within media studies different approaches construct and analyze different understandings of audience and text-audience relationship. Most prominent conceptualizations in the field can be seen in The Frankfurt School

(Horkheimer & Adorno, 1947/2002), in screen theory/psychoanalytic theory (Mulvey, 1985) as well as in media effects and uses studies (see McDonald, 2004).

On the other hand, this study aims to approach audience through reader-response model and critical audience reception theory (Hall 2002; Morley 1992; Radway 2001; Fiske 1987). Critical audience reception theory conceptualizes audience as people not hypothetical but much more blood and bone and indicates that audience are not passive as they are thought but instead are active, responsive, interpretive participants-readers who have the ability to engage and negotiate with the text and interpret it according to their social and discursive positions –which also implies that they are not positioned by text. Moreover, parallel to these conceptualizations, in reception theory, audience is not taken into consideration as a unified, homogeneous totality, but rather approached as a complex structure that subsumes different subject positions according to the discursive and social subject formations and constructed identities.

To this end, critical audience reception theory acknowledges the fact that audience in front of the text are not purified from the active determinants of their relationships with a text; before confronting with a text audience do not

take off their social and cultural subject positions as if they are taking their clothes off. Thus, text does not construct the audience; however but there is the pre-constructedness of the audience which is a strong factor affecting the circumstances of audience's engagement with the text.

Thus, in this approach production and reproduction of meaning (ideology) is recognized as a much more complex process than audiences' soaking up meanings without any resistance or without any ability of interpretation. Therefore, rather than putting emphasis on media's powerful effect; critical audience reception theory defines popular culture and media reception as a "field of struggle over meaning" where discourses encounter and compete to win consent. As Hall (2002) offers, although there are encoded meanings in text, in the decoding part subjects read and interpret the text through a process where discourses of text meet with the discourses of social/cultural/historical subject who is influenced by many discourses (in Foucauldian sense) and have a repertoire of meanings of his/her own. (Fiske, 1987; Pribram, 1999)

2. 1. 3. Conceptualization of Text

As well as audience, text is also a controversial concept within media studies in which different approaches construct and analyze different understandings of text and text-audience relationship. Whilst discussing the question of *what is text*; the approach of The Frankfurt School, effect studies, screen theory/psychoanalytic theory offers a *textual determinism* by taking the text into consideration as the main and sole site of meaning which brings the message. In contrast, uses and gratifications approach (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974) ascribes too much freedom to audience as if different interpretations occur independent and irrelevant from the encoded meanings (representations and signs in text), like they are audience's individualistic creative processes. On the other hand, although critical audience reception theory does not consider text as the main and sole site of meaning by textual determinism and accept the *polysemic* aspect of text by mentioning the different possibilities or more accurately –*availabilities* of different meanings and readings/interpretations of texts; there are still controversies about text in the field and discussion evolves around the question how polysemic a text might be.

Hall's (2002) encoding/decoding model in which he explains communication as a process where 'the discourses of text meet with the discourses of audience' offers an insightful understanding to text's polysemic attitude since he puts emphasis on the availability of *multiple discourses* both in encoding and decoding parts. Similar to Hall's (2002) statement about the polysemic aspect of text, the concept of *'activation of text'* suggests an insight to the discussion of polysemy, since it suggests that there is no *specific* text, but rather text is something realized in the encountering process between text and audience; and formed according to the different social and cultural backgrounds of audience (Bennett, 1983). Moreover, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of *heteroglossia* pointing the availability of contradictory discourses in the text (as cited in Jenkins, 2000: 168) is also explanatory in understanding text's polysemy that enables both pro-readings and anti-readings on the audience part.

However, as Shingler (2001) and Jenkins (1992; 2000) emphasize in their work although there is no fixed meaning in text, the audience do not produce meaning independent from the text itself, they 'interpret' and 'poach' *within the text*, within the gap where text lacks ideological coherence. So, this study aims to approach text with the aforementioned concepts of polysemy in which the raw material to be processed by the audience is not independent

from the text's encoded meanings (representations and signs) which permits

and opens itself to *multiple* –but *not unlimited,* interpretations.

To this end, Morley's (1992: 121-122) concept of *preferred reading* seems useful

to balance the production of meaning between text and audience, since it

offers a way of selective reading affiliated with the text while emphasizing

the autonomy of audience as he states:

> [T]he concept [preferred reading] was developed as part of an attempt
> to steer between two equally unsatisfactory positions – thus, on the
> one hand, avoiding any notion of a text as containing or imposing one
> fixed meaning: a conception which runs into difficulties in relation to
> evidence of differential interpretation of texts. On the other hand,
> there would also seem to be a need to avoid any notion of the text as
> completely open to the reader – as merely the site upon which the
> reader constructs the meaning.

2. 2. Methodology

2. 2. 1. Data Collection Techniques

By studying audience reception this study aims to ask and answer questions

about culture and identity affiliated with media's role as Kitzinger (2004:

169) puts forward: "how people use media texts and objects in negotiating

interpersonal power relations or developing identities, pleasures, and fantasies." Therefore, in order to collect the data to analyze audience reception this study resorts to *indepth interviews* conducted with participants by borrowing a method from ethnographical study. Considering interview as a way of meaning-making via talk in everyday life, this study aims to learn from the participants and understand how they interpret and make use of foodstuff and related practices in films. However, indepth interviews with participants to analyze audience reception are not based on a video representation including visual material as a collage of foodstuff and related practices in films because of the concerns specified below.

One of the reasons leading the study not to work with visual material was the intention of not constructing a 'in-survey' condition for participants. That is to say, having participants encounter with a text (a collage of representations determined to make a research) and then, proceeding with interviews based on the visual material would have changed their ordinary, everyday relationship with texts and would have transformed the context of their practice of watching. Thus, dimensions of audience's engagement with text might have changed in terms of watching in a more careful manner; in connection, different impressions could have been registered different from their everyday experiences at home or in cinema, due to the condition of

being need to talk about them in a constructed research environment. Kitzinger (2004: 171) emphasizes a similar concern with working visual material by refering to David Morley:

> David Morley himself became dissatisfied with the artificial nature of showing videos to groups who might not have watched them otherwise and would certainly not have done so under the same circumstances (in the same groups, with the same degree of attention).

Besides, working with a video collage material produced by taking the representation of foodstuff and related practices in several films would have separated the scenes from their context in films and editing them back and back would have created *another text* (a text of foodstuff and related practices in films) carrying utterly different meanings from their original forms.

Another issue taken into account is, working with a video collage material involving scenes from several selected films would mean already pre-constructing the participants as the audience of these films/scenes. Whereas, in their everyday live practices and according to their preferences, participants might not have chosen the films in question, they could be unknown, unpreferred, irrelevant texts for the participants.

Thus, based on these concerns about working with visual material this study plans to talk and make interviews with participants over *their own repertoire* of representations of foodstuff and related practices in films *inter-textually*. In this manner, this study acknowledges the fact that the audience of films are also the audience of other media (TV shows, internet, newspapers, magazines etc.) and can not be separated as audience of films apart from being the audience and consumer of other media.

During the interviews which lasted three hours average, rather than preeminently directing participants with specific questions related to the fundamental concern of the study as foodstuff and related practices in films and their reception of them, significant amount of time have been spent in order to understand their general thoughts and making sense of foodstuffs and related practices in their everyday lives. In order to incline them to narrate their thoughts, interviews began by asking some basic questions such as their favorite foods/drinks to their preferences in terms of places and ways of eating. Then, interviews proceeded with complicated scenarios like what they would do when they have guests in order to learn their eating habits, attitudes, choices, pleasures and the meanings they assign to foodstuff and related practices. Despite the fact that at the beginning the intention was solely not to precondition participants particularly to talk about film scenes

of foodstuff and related practices and provide a context for a casual ordinary

talk embedded in their everyday lives, the statements and expressions of the

participants in the time spared to general thoughts contributed to the overall

discussion of the study as a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) and the details

in their narrations gave insight to evaluate the issue in a broader-scope with

its extensions as discussed in Chapter IV.

In that respect, interview schedule contains open-ended questions, although

there are *set of questions* in order to proceed the conversation, interviews are

carried out in a flexible manner, giving space to participants to make leaps

and connections –even irrelevant under the basic topic of research in order to

learn from them with the expectation what Kitzinger (2004: 173, original

emphasis) points as:

> *Invidivual* interviews have been employed to document the role of the
> media in relation to people's personal biographies, the influence of the
> media on their understandings of the world, and experiences and
> pleasures as readers, viewers, or listeners.

Through the narrations of participants, which are their meaning-makings

embedded in their everyday lives, the study attempts to understand the

microstructure and microprocesses embedded in everyday life which

definitely is not ruptured from the macrostructure which is the context of

their meaning-makings and reappropriations. Gibson (2000: 258) describes

such an approach to be followed by the researcher should contain two

important steps:

> To accomplish this dialectical feat, we clearly need (1) a way to conceptualize the totality of a society—that is, how the wider structures of economic, political, and cultural power are configured and organized at a particular historical moment; and (2) an understanding of how this totality is reproduced within, and perhaps even transformed by, the practices of everyday life, including the practice of media consumption.

2. 2. 2. The Research Audience Sample

Kitzinger's (2004: 172) metaphorical description reveals the complexity of

sampling:

> The elasticity and sheer scale of mass media audiences means that sampling for audience research is rather like trying to frame the sky. Researchers have to decide who constitute a meaningful group of research participants in the context of their particular research aims. . . . Alternatively, the key research questions may mean that the best type of sample is one that maximizes possible diversity of interpretation or response (e.g., taking snapshots of different audience groups from very diverse backgrounds or across cultures).

Therefore, bearing Kitzinger's (2004) emphasis in mind, this study self-

reflexively acknowledges that any decision to constitute sample audience is a

somewhat subjective decision. Though the researcher tries to look up the sky

at the moment of research and tries to catch a photo, the quadrage she chooses which determines who will be inside or who will be left outside, constitutes a sample group subjectively decided.

Therefore, without any statistical claims, interviews have been conducted with *twenty participants* from diverse social and cultural backgrounds and positions (varying in age, gender, class, occupation) in the familiar social surroundings of the researcher. At this point, it seems necessary to clarify the point that national identities of participants in the study do *not* stand as a specific *determined variable* to be generalized in terms of *Turkishness* but rather stands as a common variable of the 'available sample within the environment' of the research.

Geertz (1973: 23) emphasizes that "[e]thnographic findings are not privileged, just particular" and explains cultural analysis with this statement:

> Cultural analysis is (or should be) guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses, and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses, not discovering the Continent of Meaning and mapping out its bodiless landscape. (1973: 20)

Taking Geertz's (1973) emphasis into account, participants interviewed in the study stand representative of the 'particular' and this study tries to analyze

'particular stories of the particular' and aims to 'guess at meaning'. Therefore, the research audience sample and its particularities do not stand as representative of a group, consequently, generalizations should not be made without cautious care and further comparative studies.

CHAPTER III

FOOD AS A MEANING SYSTEM

3. 1. The Semiotics Of Foods

The ideas Saussure (1916/1993) puts forward in his linguistic works on how language, as one of the fundamental instruments of communication operates have been influential in semiotics, in other words, study of signs and meanings. As being recognized one of the founding fathers of semiotics in that respect, Saussure (1916/1993) emphasizes the *arbitrariness* of signification and arbitrary relationship between the sign and the signified that does not derive neither from their intrinsic qualities nor natural connections but due to the conventional agreement and collective acceptance. Furthermore, he indicates that signification process functions based on differences, contrasts, oppositions and relative positions which mean both the sign and the

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signified/concept acquire its meaning and value and signify what it is –not in

isolation, but through the simultaneous coexistence of the other signs and

concepts what it does not stand for –through *differentiation*. In order to

highlight the constitutive characteristic of what exists outside of the sign,

which makes possible to identify and distinguish it Saussure (1916/1993: 118)

states:

> The proof of this lies in the fact that the value of a sign may change
> without affecting either meaning or sound, simply because some
> neighbouring sign has undergone a change.

Owing to the fact that people not only speak and write with signs, but also

think, produce ideas and make sense of the world with signs, any

signification system, other than language, expressing and making use of

meanings through signs whether they are images, objects or practices, can be

subjected to semiotic analysis. Therefore any social and cultural practice and

object can be read as a text and be analyzed by taking the aforementioned

principles underlying semiotic approach into consideration. Hence, there are

studies of anthropologists from structuralist tradition approaching foodstuff,

cuisines and related culinary practices as a signification system like

'language'. In their works, they deconstruct foodstuff and related practices

into their units by structural analysis and through the meanings deciphered,

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decoded and demystified aim to dig the social and cultural ways of making sense in societies.

For instance, Lévi-Strauss (1997) makes structural analysis of different forms of food such as *raw*, *cooked*, *rotted* as well as culinary techniques by situating different ways of cooking such as *boiling, roasting, smoking* into different axes i.e., nature/culture, elaborated/unelaborated by examining the mediation of different natural/cultural objects. In this manner, he indicates that forms of food and culinary techniques differ from each other and signify different concepts, in fact, working like a 'language'. Therefore, offering the method he usually employs as to look at the manifest content in order to reach the latent content, he states that deciphering societies' cuisines also means decoding their contradictions since "the cooking of a society is a language in which it unconsciously translates its structure—or else resigns itself". (1997: 35) Though Lévi-Strauss' (1997) work has been criticized due to presupposing universal food meanings for all mankind, it is no doubt an insightful work to look 'foodstuff' and 'culinary practices' as a means to analyze 'ways of living' and 'meaning systems' of societies.

Following the structuralist tradition Douglas (1997) also strives to decipher meanings of food categories by looking at the structuration of meals at her

home as a micro-scale social system, in a particular time. She divides foods

into units according to their various properties (hot/cold, sweet/sour,

liquid/semi-liquid etc.) as well as analyzing the patterns of foods in their

syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations (daily/weekly sequences of meals,

courses, etc.). Over her analysis, Douglas (1997: 37) indicates that "[t]he chain

which links them together gives each element some of its meaning" and

supports the idea that foods acquire their meanings in the 'signification'

system likewise 'language' operates, through similarization/differentiation,

inclusion/exclusion in an hierarchical order. Therefore, she concludes that

since the meanings assigned to foods constitute conventions of what is a

proper meal, what is appropriate to be eaten/drunken according to the

context in terms of when, where, why, how and with whom, and also

articulate the qualities of social relations in terms of intimacy/distance or

social events as ordinary/festive, the encoded meanings of food can be

decoded in the process of social occasions. As Douglas (1997: 36) states:

> If food is treated as a code, the messages it encodes will be found in
> the pattern of social relations being expressed. The message is about
> different degrees of hierarchy, inclusion and exclusion, boundaries
> and transactions across the boundaries. . . . Food categories therefore
> encode social events.

Herein, Barthes' (1957/2009) contribution to semiotics carrying Saussure's model a step further with the notion 'myth' carries great importance to understand how any object, any practice, any image, in our case how any foodstuff and related practice 'becomes a speech' all by itself. He explains myth as a *metalanguage*, *a second-order semiological system*, which functions getting hold of the *language-object*, *the first-order semiological system* that Saussure (1916/1993) manifested. In order to illustrate how myth operates, for instance, *rakı* as a signifier, signifies and corresponds to the image-concept *whitish alcoholic liquid*; in there *rakı* becomes a sign associative of signifier-signified as a language-object, but then, *rakı as a language-object* becomes a signifier of another signification where signified concept is *masculinity*, then *rakı* becomes *masculinized rakı* in the second-order system caught by myth through following the semiological chain. As Barthes (1957/2009) says that the signifiers are much more fertile than concepts, there may be many other foodstuff and related practice similar to *rakı* corresponding and expressing the concept masculinity e.g., meat, whisky, making barbecue in which *myth talks about the language-object.*

In addition to his explanation on how myth operates, Barthes (1957/2009) also emphasizes the characteristics of this function by asserting that though

signification of language-object is arbitrary, the mythical signification is not, but is in fact particularly motivated and constructed, even though myth distorts and naturalizes the correspondence of the *form* and *meaning* so as to camouflage its constructedness. Explaining how myth functions in an arbitrary manner, he says that myth transforms history into nature by erasing the historicity and human agency and freezes itself innocent as if meaning sticks to signifier naturally, in an unproblematic, taken-for-granted fashion; as a statement of fact not an explanation; such that Barthes (1957/2009: 169, original emphasis) states it becomes depoliticized and irresponsible from human agency:

> What the world supplies to myth is an historical reality, defined, even if this goes back quite a while, by the way in which men have produced or used it; and what myth gives in return is a *natural* image of this reality. . . . in it, things lose the memory that they once were made.

As in language how the arbitrariness of the relationship between signifier and signified is overlooked, in mythical signification historical construction between meaning and form goes unnoticed as a casual natural relationship. To proceed over the aforementioned illustration, in the mythical signification *rakı* seems *masculine* so naturally and taken-for-granted that the question 'how come?' disappears, abolishing the historicity and construction of *rakı* as

a signifier of *masculinity* whereas also differentiating and opposing it from *femininity*.

In another work, in which Barthes (1993) analyzes the rhetoric of an advertisement image he specifies how meanings proliferate through signs whilst expressing basic –*denotational* and enhanced –*connotational* meanings, *at one and the same time*. Accordingly, he puts emphasis on the exhaustive field of connotations, which he refers as "a system which takes over the signs of another system in order to make them its signifiers". (Barthes, 1993: 19) So, he suggests, exhaustive field of connotations is constitutive of the ground where myth operates with distortion, by making connotational meanings seem denotational. Another important detail he highlights is based on the polysemous characteristic of signs that imply "underlying their signifiers, a 'floating chain' of signifieds" (1993: 19) which makes them open to be decoded variationally by readers depending on "the different kinds of knowledge—practical, national, cultural, aesthetic—invested in the image" (1993: 24), or in other words, according to existing lexicons of the person "forming in some sort a person's *idiolect*". (1993: 24, original emphasis) (See also Lacan, 1986, on 'sliding signified' for polysemic aspect of signs)

As a result of approaching signification as a mythical journey within proliferating meanings, in "Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption" Barthes (1997) emphasizes that 'foodstuff is never just foodstuff' belonging to nutritional domain, but foods are *attitudes* and *protocols* bound to certain images and usages; are *instutions* implying "a set of images, dreams, tastes, choices, and values" (1997: 20) and are "elements of a veritable collective imagination showing the outlines of a certain mental framework" (1997: 21), therefore at the same time 'a system of communication' though based on 'mythical notions' as he states:

> When he buys an item of food, consumes it, or serves it, modern man does not manipulate a simple object in a purely transitive fashion; this item of food sums up and transmits a situation; it constitutes an information; it signifies. (1997: 21) . . . Substances, techniques of preparation, habits, all become part of a system of differences in signification; and as soon as this happens, we have communication by way of food. . . . People may very well continue to believe that food is an immediate reality (necessity or pleasure), but this does not prevent it from carrying a system of communication; it would not be the first thing that people continue to experience as a simple function at the very moment when they constitute it into a sign. (1997: 22)

Thus, Barthes (1997) metaphorically speaks of 'a veritable grammar of foods' in which significations of food can be decoded and their referent concepts can be deciphered. He indicates that foods may refer to – *themes* like nostalgia, nationality, belonging, historical quality; or – *feelings* of femininity,

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masculinity; or – *somatic values* like relaxation, energy, alertness as well as may function to express – *situations* like work, leisure, celebration, etc.

Similarly, Lehrer (1991) takes foodstuff into consideration with their symbolic values that interact with other value systems and affect the consumption experience. She ranges symbolic associations of foods and drinks with exemplifications in terms of ethnicity (e.g., pasta and tomato sauce with Italians), class and taste (e.g., yuppies and exotic food), occupational stereotypes (e.g., professionals and French wine), occasions (e.g., turkey-Thanksgiving and Christmas), lifestyle (e.g., whereas olive oil and oat bran stands for healthy life-style, butter and sugar represents opposite) and also emphasizes possibility of misunderstandings deriving from different symbolic values attributed to foodstuff by different groups of people. Additionally, she examines the linguistic devices used in naming of foods and drinks, though she says some of them are transparent enough to recognize (e.g., fish soup) some of them are euphemisms requiring mastery and assimilation in terms of specialized information about ingredients and cooking methods (e.g., *Florentine*) especially when invented words or foreign-language equivalents are used in order to upgrade terminology to differentiate one foodstuff from another. Finally, she emphasizes the role

advertising plays in production of symbolic values attached to foodstuffs by promoting techniques enhanced by using visual material as well as written slogans for target consumers.

3. 2. Symbolic, Cultural and Social Capital: Food, Taste and Class

As we mentioned the existence of 'different kinds of knowledge' on the part of the reader actively functioning in the decoding process of polysemous signs (Barthes, 1993) and necessity of 'mastery and assimilation in terms of specialized information' to make sense of some foodstuffs (Lehrer, 1991); symbolic, cultural and social capital, the notions asserted by Bourdieu (1979/1984) seem explanatory to understand the distribution of these knowledge(s). Bourdieu (1979/1984) puts forward the idea that not only economical capital as Marx (1995) manifested in terms of holding productive forces is distributed unequally in societies, but also symbolic, cultural and social capitals, possession of social and cultural competence/wealth to apply whilst interpreting cultural objects and practices differentiates within a society. Therefore, he addresses social distinction with the classifying concept he developed *habitus* as a 'structuring structure', which acts both as a cause and also as a consequence. He states, internalizations of these capitals

differ due to social distinction whereas different stylizations of lives according to these different internalizations reconstruct social distinction. He explains that, on the one hand, in obtaining these capitals, education and social basis, which are also related to economical capital, play an important role in terms of familiarization and acquisition. On the other hand, different internalizations of these symbolic, cultural and social capitals constitute different ways of livings, tastes, embodiments, pleasures, choices of necessity, habits applied to everyday choices from cooking to decoration, which become symbolic for differentiated and conformed habitus(es). Thus, he asserts, appropriation of tastes and life-styles makes them act like the symbolic expression of class positions. As a consequence, he concludes, hierarchical social distinction operates through differentiated tastes and life-styles whilst constructing tastes and life-styles in an hierarchic superior/inferior order as well as reconstructing and legitimizing hierarchical social distinction over them.

The related work of Roseberry (1996) in which he analyzes *specialty coffee* over consumption, class and taste supports the idea that meanings attributed to foodstuff are constitutive of taste and their uses are representative of social status. He examines 'coffee' by looking its historical background and

emphasizes its biographical journey from its entrance into the US market as an expensive good appealing to affluent to become a mass-produced standardized commodity; then, again to turn into 'specialty coffee' through diversification within standardization by the reimagination of market niche in terms of class –*yuppies* and generation –*college students.* He states that though coffee beans range according to their type, shape, size and texture by their different places of cultivation as well as the methods of processing as different degrees of roasting; introduction of different ways of blending, techniques of preparation styles and added flavors like vanilla, chocolate, etc. and multiple combinations of these variables provide diversification of coffees where socially conscious, ethically prudent brand image also becomes a property in differentiation of products.

Yet, he highlights that although invention of such blend coffees which provides strategic flexibility on the part of the producer seems to offer a wide-range of differentiated consumption experience, they actually re-standardizes diversification. However, he adds that despite the standardization in diversification of gourmet specialty coffees, they do not become 'truly mass-produced' due to their special function on the part of consumers, which is, recreating the perception of pre-mass times as before

mass-production and mass-society. To emphasize specialty coffee's success in terms of answering consumer desires Roseberry (1996: 773) states:

> They work not because there is a manipulable mass out there waiting to be told what to drink but because there is a complex, if specific, intersection between the shaping actions of various actors in the coffee trade and the needs, tastes, and desires of particular groups of consumers and potential consumers.

Accordingly, Roseberry (1996) points that, despite the fact that consumers need to decide within a structured system and may lack the knowledge of economic and social relations embedded in the product in the way of 'commodity fetishism', they derive satisfactions fulfilling their needs and desires. In order to explain the satisfactions fulfilled in their consumption, he illustrates how diversification in products and availability of varieties carry consumer experience from being boring to a pleasurable discovery, and arouse sensations to feel and act like a gourmet as well as enable identification with places through consumption. Therefore, in relation to the satisfactions fulfilled, he concludes, in the consumption experience specialty coffees transform to a means of representation of differentiated life-styles and become markers of displaying distinct tastes through consumption. In that respect, Roseberry's (1996) study also highlights an important detail conforming to Kopytoff's (1986) emphasis that meanings assigned to objects

do not stay permanent but shift and change in relation to the cultural biography of foodstuff itself.

In order to summarize all the references and aforesaid assumptions thus far, it can be stated that foodstuff and related practices form a 'language' that communicates through objects, images, practices and performances surrounded with *knowledge(s)*, *discourses* and *meanings*. Thereupon, being much more than an essential part of people's everyday life routine as a basic biological necessity, interwoven with social, cultural, economical, political discourses and representations, foodstuff and related practices act emblematically and constitute a *domain of meaning production* that can be contextualized in terms of lifestyle, taste, consumption, class, etc. Correspondingly, by the use of symbolic, social and cultural meanings of foodstuff and related practices and through making use of their mythical notions people form their attitudes and beliefs and represent their tastes and lifestyles over consumption. They communicate through food and they consume meanings by literally swallowing them.

CHAPTER IV

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS

Broadly based interviews conducted with the participants, expose the fact that meanings about foodstuff and related practices are constantly under reproduction and renegotiation in the very process of their everyday lives, in its routine and causality. That is to say, they obtain, interpret, act upon, reproduce and make sense of knowledge(s), meanings and discourses about foodstuff and related practices in an extensive domain constituted of complex and intermingled set of sites and geographies where social, cultural, visual codes and myths attached to them are constantly produced, reconstructed, circulated, reinforced and deconstructed. With regard to participants' statements explaining wherein/from where and how they make sense of foodstuff and related practices, these complex and intermingled set of sites and geographies can be specified as: family home, circle of friends as

social milieux, important people in their lives who can be considered as 'opinion leaders', their travels and places they have been (whether for educational/business purposes or touristic), restaurants, supermarkets that can be approached in all as metropolitan/urban city itself and media as gourmet travel and cookery TV shows, besides magazine and newspaper articles introducing and praising new places and new tastes. In addition, alongside the sites and geographies they mention active in their making sense, they also touch upon the role of foodstuff and related practices in films, which mediate to their everyday lives as 'incorporated representations'.

4. 1. Family Home and Social Milieu

To start with, commonly and frequently expressed in participants' statements, family as an institutionalized social and cultural location and geography of family home as a consumption site, come into prominence as important contexts providing the basis for production and interpretation of social, cultural, visual codes and myths attached to foodstuff and related practices. Similar prominence can be recognized in the aforementioned work of Douglas (1997) in which she deciphers structuration of meals through her

observations in her home as micro-scale social system, in a particular time, by taking home into consideration as a relatively small scale 'meaning center', a location, wherein meanings about foodstuff and related practices are constituted.

The importance of family and home as contexts to make sense of foodstuff and related practices can also be explained with different internalizations of tastes, choices, needs, life-styles and habits within different families related to the existing symbolic, social and cultural capitals (Bourdieu, 1979/1984). Raised in different families belonging to different habitus(es) which assign meanings to foodstuff and related practices differently, it can be suggested that people acquire some knowledge(s), discourses and meanings in these spatial institutions as a transmitted language on foodstuff and related practices which contribute to frame their choices, pleasures, needs and habits as well as their routines and customs as internalized way of life. Besides being an effective site in terms of forming one's idiolect of foodstuff and related practices, as it is seen in participants' statements, the obtained meanings in family home also contribute to the way people make sense of themselves in terms of gender, nation, ethnicity, class, etc. and to narrate

their identities through their identifications of foodstuff and related practices.

However, it should be stated that family home is neither the sole nor the final site that constitutes thoughts, attitudes and manners towards foodstuff and related practices. Even more, the acquired meanings in family home do not always proceed as settled and uniform, but undergo negotiation and reproduction through people's life-course in which they get through different life-stages and experiences as Bell and Valentine (1997: 77) highlight by giving reference to their another work:

> [C]hanges in identity (e.g. from child to independent student; from accountant to environmental worker; and from sharing a house to living alone) are articulated on individuals' plates – affecting not only what is bought to eat and the places from where it is purchased, but also who has prepared it and the spatial dynamics of when and where it is consumed within the home.

For instance, a 24-year-old, single-female stage actress recognizes family home as a contributional meaning-site forming her approach to foodstuff and related practices. However, complying with Bell and Valentine's (1997) statement, she touches upon the unsettled characteristic of the meanings and habits acquired within family home that undergo negotiation with her spatial disassociation from family and cause a differentiation in her attitude

towards foodstuffs and related practices. The differentiation in her attitude is reflected in her changed daily life habits, with the shift in meaning of food and eating from 'an orderly practice and an agent of getting together' to 'an irregular practice and a necessity to relieve hunger':

> When living with my parents I was eating as I used to with them... every day at the same time dinner and such so… but when on my own I eat on a more random basis I guess... whenever I am hungry...

Correspondingly, a 27-year-old, single-male business manager prioritizes family home as a knowledge site. But then, by laying emphasis on a change in his life-course for educational purposes he touches upon another site as travel in terms of a change of location, which deployed him new experiences:

> Family… as I had been with my family till university finished, I acquired them inside family... after going to a foreign country for graduate degree I started to try different cuisines… in Germany, I tried like Thai, Vietnamese cuisines... there was much more cosmopolitan… I even ate African meals with my hands...

Similar pattern can be remarked in the statements of a 26-year-old, single-female linguist in which she expresses that her existing knowledge(s) and meanings about foodstuff and related practices derived from her family as well as her travels:

> From family... I've learned drinking tea after meal from family... or
> drinking coffee some sort of half an hour after breakfast (in Turkish
> counterpart word for breakfast is *kahvaltı,* a compound word formed
> by noise reduction *kahve-altı* meaning before-coffee)… as my parents
> have a wide circle of friends I hear from them when they talk about...
> and also learn in our visits… for instance, in our visit to *Mardin* I have
> learned famous dishes of this place by eating in our trip… I don't
> remember them namely but there were various *mezzes* and meat
> dishes... a person who have never been in *Trabzon* may not know
> *kuymak* for instance... it all happens in travel… since I stayed for 9
> months in India for my education, I may talk for hours about Indian
> cuisine.

Similarly, a 34-year-old, married-female janitor also narrates the active sites

contributional to her making sense of foodstuff and related practices through

distinguishing her life-course into parts over time and place. By especially

emphasizing her migration from rural to urban area as a change in her life-

course, she differentiates her childhood from adulthood as well as separating

the corresponding locations by hyphenation as rural-urban experience.

Another important detail she expresses, introduces that meaning production

about foodstuff and related practices is already embedded in her everyday

life routine, in the domains she bodily participates due to her work, as well

as in her everyday talks with her acquaintances in the social milieu she is

situated. In addition, by laying emphasis on the knowledge(s) she acquired

from one of her acquaintances that seem to act as an 'opinion leader' in her

life with her interpretations and assistance, she exemplifies how she makes

use of the knowledge(s) and meanings about foodstuff and related practices

whilst hosting her guests and producing practical economical solutions in

her everyday life:

> Order of eating is from childhood… eating at morning, at noon and at evening… generally we used to cook *bulgur pilaf*, *bamya* (okra), *kuru fasulye* (dried beans), our hand cut pastries like *erişte* (noodle)… dessert was not made so often, it was special for *Bayrams* (festive holidays) and so… caring for guests, hosting them is something I saw in my family… now I elaborate more… I observe in the houses where I go for cleaning, in doctors', in lawyers' houses... sometimes I go help in their hurry when they have guests... I see how the plates are put, napkins, forks, spoons… what is served first, what is cooked, what is prepared... you see things you never saw, never known, rural and here are not the same... a newly-wed young girl that I go helping was looking at books to cook... whilst working in a socialite, wealthy house you learn all sort of various things… for instance, I have Ayşe *Abla* (though *abla* means elder sister, generally women call their older and wiser acquaintances as *abla*), I have learned a lot from her about everything… she helps me about my insurance papers, we go shopping together… I learned also about food, about hosting guests from her... when I call her she tells me like my mother... I am asking her questions like 'I prepared this… what suits besides it?' or 'which kind of fork should I use with this dish?'... I am trying to correct my little things… as she is from *Hatay* she knows a wide range of dishes, they like bitter-sour, *kısır* (a dish made from bulgur and vegetables), *nar ekşisi* (pomegranate syrup), *lahmacun* (a thin piece of dough with meat topping)… I have learned to prepare *lahmacun içi* (topping for *lahmacun*) from her... now I am preparing the topping and bring to baker's… outside you give 30 *lira* (Turkish currency) and have very few *lahmacun*... but buy minced meat for 10 *lira*, mix with tomato paste, onion, black pepper... I give 14 *lira* to the baker's but have a lot more *lahmacun*… If you have 10 *lahmacun* for 30 *lira*, with this you have 25... you may host a big family, feed them… you may put *ayran* (a drink made from yogurt) and salad with it... it is much more economical.

In the following process whilst talking about birthday celebrations she repeats a related statement again but at this time she makes a comparison with film scenes:

> I see like blowing candles and such in the apartment, at the homes I go... I see in films and TV series too... but you forget that... I don't forget what I see around me in the place where I live...

In this manner, by putting films scenes and real life experiences in an hierarchical order she gives superiority to her real life experiences to internalize 'ways of doing things' and 'ways of thinking' and interprets film scenes not effective enough for internalization by referring them 'forgettable' in comparison with the real life in which she participates.

4. 2. Restaurants and Supermarkets

Proceeding with participants' statements in order to clarify active sites in meaning-making about foodstuff and related practices, another important social and cultural phenomenon becomes remarkable which points both a social and cultural location—restaurants and also a social and cultural performance—eating out.

For instance, a 20-year-old, single-female university student responds to the question directing her to examine wherein/from where and how she makes sense of foodstuff and related practices, through entirely on the ground of restaurants located in the city she lives. By specifying her eating out routines and experiences since her childhood, with her family as well as with her friends she exemplifies some of her acquired knowledge(s) in terms of ethnic cuisines:

> For instance I have learned holding chopsticks from the Chinese owner of the restaurant we used to go… since primary school whenever school term ended we used to make a kind of celebration dinner with my family at a Chinese restaurant in the city... there was boiling water in the middle of a rotating table... inside there was a kind of water with sauce… they were putting the things around the table such as mushroom, tofu, fish ball, noodle inside that water one by one according to their cooking periods and serving on the plates in front of us… also I have learned Mexican dishes at a Mexican restaurant in the city where we go with my girlfriends, but I want to taste Mexican food in Mexico...

In a similar vein, statements of a 23-year-old, single-female economist bring restaurants into prominence, besides supporting the previous discussion on family home as a meaning site. She mentions family as a powerful site by metaphorically using a high percent value to represent its broad-scale contribution to her meaning-making about foodstuff and related practices as well as to form her sense of taste in terms of palate —an expression that can

be considered analogous with Bourdieu's (1979/1984) aforesaid ideas upon internalization of tastes within *habitus*. Moreover, through putting emphasis on a stage in her life-course as university times which necessitated a change in her everyday eating practices, she refers to restaurants, where she frequently performs eating out, as a meaning-site that contributes to her interpretations. She describes restaurants as a site that give inspiration and knowledge in terms of both content and visuality of foodstuff and related practices which enables her to emulate and reproduce what she have seen at these places within the geography of home. Her expression conforms to Finkelstein's (1998: 202) statement that, "the restaurant can function as a site for gathering food knowledge; the diner can collect gastronomic experiences, follow trends in cuisine, become an epicure." Lastly, she slightly touches upon magazines as a visual source that constitute part of another broad-context –media, which will be discussed in detail further:

> Fifty-percent home… I do learn what is cooking at home, it also determines my palate too... when in university, every week I was eating almost every day, minimum two times at outside, not fast-food but at restaurants… I try at home what I saw in these places… salad for example… I try by the use of spinach, broccoli, lentil, wheat as greenstuffs... these are the things that I have learned outside and consume at home too... I like making desserts too; periodically I try... *künefe* (a kind of dessert), *soufflé*… I'm not good at cookies… I pay attention to visuality... restaurants, magazines are efficient but the

magazines I refer are not cooking magazines, I don't buy and read such magazines…

With regard to the participant's statement, restaurants seem not only constitutive in making sense of foodstuff and related practices but also operative in the circulation of these meanings. In the way that, when the images and knowledge(s) as well as meanings derived from a restaurant are brought and welcomed within the spatial location of home, they interpenetrate to people's everyday life practices through reproduction and reappropriation and start to form part of their menus, in other words, become part of the 'food language' already spoken within the site of home. Therefore, taking into consideration the fact that home is a dynamic social and cultural space for family members where meanings are constantly renegotiated and reproduced and though being a private domain, a location that becomes to some extent public, time to time as in the cases of hosting acquaintances and relatives; it can be concluded that meaning-making about foodstuff and related practices proceeds in the site of home over derived meanings from restaurants. Thus, reproduction and circulation of meanings about foodstuff and related practices proceed through the representations brought home, conjoined to the previously existing 'food language', where also being introduced to a broader group of people who eat together sharing

the same table. Insomuch as restaurants in terms of spatial locations and eating out as a social and cultural performance related to leisure and entertainment embedded in people's everyday lives, constitute active contexts for people to get familiarized and informed about social, cultural, visual codes and myths about foodstuff and related practices; as well as contributing to the process of their circulation, allowing an additional discussion on the issue seems requisite as well as useful to advance the examination.

Although underscoring the potential of restaurants to gather knowledge on foodstuff and related practices as mentioned above, Finkelstein (1998) approaches restaurants and dining-out experience somewhat pessimistic due to her specific concerns. She describes dining-out as a performative entertainment "as if the restaurant were a theater or a diorama" (1998: 204) that has the ability to supply pleasurable experiments to consumers in terms of discovering new sensory gratifications, displaying self in public and playing different roles. In that respect, she states what actually purchased by dining-out is 'a desired state of being' selected among wide-range of restaurants appealing to differentiated pursuits. Nevertheless, she emphasizes that these desired state of being(s) and pleasures to be pursued

in question are not defined and valued by consumers, but predetermined, shaped, conducted and offered by culture industry, hereof restaurants, as the civilized, urbanized way of life to be consumed. Such that she inserts, although people seem to get satisfied within the ambiance of the restaurants, they become passive players of consumption who accept the suggested without valuation and self-examination, whilst their experiences become superficial and hyperreal due to their lack of self-engagement. Hence, she expresses her concern that due to the commodification of pleasures in new consumerism, people become passive, alike and victimized as long as they participate in the encouraged fashionable construction without self-examination and self-valuation which she elucidates fundamentally constitutive and required conditions of civility above all.

On the other hand, Martens and Warde (1997: 148) respond to Finkelstein's (1998) work by stating that "[t]he experience of eating out is neither as homogeneous nor as passive as she implies", due to the fact that "[d]ifferent kinds of people seek different sorts of pleasure when they eat out;" (1997: 148) and "[d]ifferent people read the signs and symbols in different ways: they understand the same place differently (1997: 146)". Therefore, by approaching eating out as a multi-faceted experience, Martens and Warde

(1997) put emphasis on varied pleasures satisfied in eating out deriving from different objectives and imply that rather than forming a passive participation, eating out is an experience that can be articulated with awareness and self-engagement. Hence, over research interviews they specify these varied pleasures taken from eating out; as deriving from the rareness of its occurrence as an occasional activity; or from having the opportunity to try new foods that would not be eaten at home as discovering new varied experiences and cuisines, or due to "the joy of escape from domestic chores" deriving from "not only of being spared the labour of cooking, but also the luxury of being served by someone else." (1997: 142)

In interviews, whilst talking over going brunch as an eating out performance in their everyday lives, some of the participants state some expressions conformed to Martens and Warde's (1997) approach. Their narrations support the fact that they do not passively participate in eating out solely as an encouraged popular and fashionable urban performance without their evaluations and interpretations. But rather, they articulate how they make use of their eating out performances to satisfy pleasures defined in their own terms through their self-engagements and valuations which rather than being illusionary supply them much more tangible outcomes.

For instance, a 26-year-old, single-female linguist interprets brunch as a joyful breakfast ambiance having variety of foodstuff which provides an effortless way to come together with her three elder sisters who left family home after their marriages and also with their ever-increasing family members:

> Sometimes on Saturdays if we are having breakfast with my elder sisters, we go brunch that have unlimited tea, orange juice… a lot of variety from fruit salad to cake, pie, cookies… from olives, variety of cheeses to baby corns... at like 09.00-10.00 a.m. …if we didn't want to prepare breakfast, weather is fine, we go all together with my elder sisters, their husbands, their kids… if we gather at our home we become overcrowded... things need to be prepared… so someone prepares... another one clears the table… you don't understand anything… outside there are no such problems… and there is so much variety and no tiresome work like arranging the table, being too lazy to clean the table… we don't want to put all the work on my mother but we want to be together… if we meet on weekdays time is limited... but at the weekend, at brunch, drink your coffee, chat until noon… at home nobody gets out of the kitchen because we want to help my mother… I've heard that brunch is nice at the place we go from my elder sister... it is also close to our home... the ambiance, service and the slow music are nice… if you do this every weekend it hits your wallet but once a month it is a very pleasant change… especially in the garden outdoors.

Similarly, a 25-year-old, single-male engineer differentiates brunch from breakfast on the grounds of availability of wide-range of varieties and ascribes going brunch a function appealing especially for working married couples due to providing the luxury to be served breakfast readily-prepared:

> Brunch is something named differently but actually it is breakfast... it is not just because it is 'brunch' but because it is a breakfast that has a wide-range of varieties… it is something preferable for being readily-prepared... preparing meal in the morning may be difficult for everyone… especially for working married people preparing breakfast on Sundays can be hard… at present, since I live with my parents in my home I don't have such a problem because in any case breakfast is prepared but it may be different especially for working married people.

Hence, as it is seen in participants' statements, due to their differentiated interpretations of eating out, particularly as brunch, they make sense of eating out differently and attribute different meanings to their performances in relation to the pleasures they obtain. In the former statement, brunch undertakes the meaning for a woman as a way to pause hurry and burden of kitchen work while enabling her to enjoy the time spent with family and acquaintances. In the latter, brunch becomes a luxurious experience for working people to keep non-working Sundays literally non-working as without spending extra effort on daily tasks and being obliged to do the regular things like preparing breakfast, valid for both working wife and husband.

Therefore, it can be indicated that wide-range of spatial locations to perform eating out, which already have a structuration in themselves such as coffee houses, luxury restaurants, food courts, pubs, snack bars, cafeterias, etc. that

differentiate according to many variables, from their decoration to their menus, from manners and clothing of their workers to their music as well as their differentiated functions responding differentiated purposes, needs, pleasures and occasions in different times, constitute a broad-scope meaning-domain. Thus, as a social and cultural text encountered in people's everyday lives, restaurants function as an active site in people's interpretations of foodstuff and related practices and in how they relate them with different concepts, conformed with Bell and Valentine's (1997: 125) explanation of eating out performance as "a container of many social and cultural practices, norms and codes." Though not being a specific concern of this study, it is insightful to realize that restaurants as locations and eating out as a performance embedded in people's everyday life routines constitute one of the very important domains for people to read, interpret and make sense of social, cultural, visual codes and myths about foodstuff and related practices.

After underscoring the importance of restaurants and eating out performance in terms of their far-reaching contribution to production and circulation of meanings about foodstuff and related practices, another consumption geography—supermarkets, deserve a mention due to their contribution to proliferation of meanings and representations. Supermarkets

provide a site where people renegotiate with foodstuff and related practices and render them meaningful during one of their casual everyday life activities—shopping; as Berger (1997: 142) describes "[s]hopping in supermarkets, we must realize, is not just a random activity but is instead a highly structured ritualized one in which the customer is led, more or less unsuspectingly, along preselected pathways."

Supermarkets are sites that communicate to consumer within their maze-like structure, not only through the echoing verbal announcements but also through their spatial designs, order of departments, dimensions of sections, price labels, campaign banners, juxtaposition and alignment of products that all imply meanings —a property which leads Berger (1997: 143) to describe supermarkets akin to media and take them in hand as text(s) able to reveal traces of differentiated social and cultural structures when deciphered as he states:

> [S]upermarkets should be looked upon as media that "broadcast" food and related items. They use other media, the newspapers and television, to advertise, but they are themselves media in that they carry something and spread it to the public. We can look at supermarkets in terms of their structures and find the following oppositions in them: basic foods versus convenience foods, perishables versus staples, red meat versus green vegetables, a periphery and an interior, and most importantly, free entrance and payment on leaving.

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Besides supermarkets' everyday contribution to the reproduction of the knowledge(s), meanings and discourses about foodstuff and related practices, their function as a meaning-site comes into prominence in festive occasions as well. By the time of a festive special occasion, by arranging thematized and embellished sections devoted to the occasion supermarkets not only give notice and remind people forthcoming arrival of the occasion, but also represent social, cultural, visual codes and myths about foodstuff and related practices to consumers' interpretations.

For instance, by the time of New Year, represented as 'the most wonderful time of the year', the assembled foodstuff products on the shelves of the devoted section take upon meanings in relation to the occasion's festive, joyful and entertaining spirit. Thus, existing foodstuffs in the section like fizzy drinks, alcoholic beverages such as beer, wine and vodka as well as champagne; dried fruits like hazelnuts, pistachios, peanuts; crisps, chocolates and colorful goodies become reification of joy and entertainment conformed to the occasion's signified concepts. Whereas other foodstuffs such as milk and grain absent in the section, happen to denote 'cheerless-ness' through differentiation by contrast to the foregrounded turkeys that signify their

festiveness and appropriateness in a New Year dinner whilst informing consumer about traditional eating rituals and its essentials.

Acknowledging the fact that these encoded meanings in supermarket are decoded by consumers' interpretations and put in use with their valuations and reappropriations (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Miller, 1987); it can be stated that supermarkets contribute to the 'ways of thinking' about foodstuff and related practices. In the way that, proceeding over the aforementioned illustration, the presentation of foodstuff products known as 'junk food' in the section devoted to New Year not only strengthens their signifying concept 'junk-ness' but reconstitutes the mythical correspondence between junk food and entertainment, whereas foregrounding of turkeys enhance their indispensable characteristic in New Year dinners.

4. 3. Urban City

When looked from a broader perspective it can be seen that the mentioned spatial locations —restaurants and supermarkets, are themselves sub-sites of a broader spatial site, which is urban city itself, and performances related with these spatial locations as eating out, shopping or having food delivery are sub-practices constitutive of urban city experience. Therefore, through

subsuming them under a broader-context, it can be suggested that everyday life in urban city itself function as an active meaning-making site about foodstuff and related practices.

In a supporting manner, Cook and Crang (1996: 132) over taking London exemplary of a cosmopolitan metropolis, feature urban city as a contemporary material cultural geography wherein "globally extensive networks and flows of foods, people and culinary knowledge are being locally articulated" and complex cultural positionings are objectified through foods. They explain how the metropolitan city with its wide-range of ethnic restaurants and supermarkets offering wide-range of foods from all around the world, gives the sense of 'global in local' as 'the world on plate' both to its permanent dwellers and temporary visitors, by referring to the construction of cultural diversity through geographical knowledges. They explain geographical knowledges as, "understandings of places, spaces and environments" (Cook and Crang, 1996: 133) that enable people to differentiate foods as well as cultural geographies and to "associate products with 'other' peoples and places". (1996: 143) In that respect, whilst analyzing geographical knowledges surrounding foods and cultural geographies, they explain their function by highlighting the double commodity fetishism they

are bound to. They state that whilst first fetishization limits the knowledges of social relations embedded in foods' production through "disconnections of worlds of production and consumption" (1996: 135); second fetishization fills its deficiency with reconnections through emphasized geographical knowledges and representations about foods in terms of their settings, biographies and origins which "become a crucial means of adding value to those commodities." (1996: 134) As a consequence of such double commodity fetishism, they conclude, foods become fetishized with their global connections and introduced not only as different tastes but also as 'different tastes from different places' they become able to give the experience of 'time-space compression' besides evoking 'sense of travel' without leaving the local space of metropolitan city. Hence, they specify that geographical knowledges and representations active in making sense of 'displaced' food commodities not only form a quasi food lexicon conjoined with a map but also play an important role in the social and cultural construction and differentiation of national, regional, local identities and cultures affiliated with certain bordered geographies, since they constitute and enhance "the understandings of self and other, here and there, bound up with those knowledges." (1996: 137)

Sushi as one of the most popular foodstuffs available in the restaurants of metropolitan cities, for instance, supplies a satisfying representation of how geographical knowledges and understandings of places affiliated with cultural and national identities play an important role in construction of meanings about foodstuff and related practices. Bestor (2005) explains how sushi, or in other words, "raw fish on rice" (2005: 14) moved "from an exotic almost unpalatable ethnic specialty, then to haute cuisine of the most rarefied sort" (2005: 15) and got its popularity among Western countries "turning into a sign of class and educational standing" (2005: 14) by emphasizing the globalization of 'cultural diversity' which functions through the associations of foodstuffs with specific geographies and cultural identities. Hence, he concludes that 'sushi went global' not through homogenization but in fact through differentiation since it "remains firmly linked in the minds of Japanese and foreigners alike with Japanese cultural identity." (2005: 18)

In parallel with the discussion, a 27-year-old, single-male interpreter explains that he gets acquainted with foodstuffs and related practices over his talks and shared experiences with his brother and girlfriend. His approach to his brother and girlfriend as sources introducing him new practices and cuisines through places of eating out can be considered supportive to the aforesaid

fact that social milieu, with whom one gets in touch, is contributional in the way how one makes sense of foodstuff and related practices. However, when the social milieu is recontextualized not in terms of people around, but as the spatial location one is situated, it can be seen that their talks and shared experiences are fed by the urban city and take place on the ground established by the urban city with its availabilities. In this manner, starting with his daily life he differentiates some foodstuffs in terms of required time and skill and attributes simplicity and effortlessness to the foodstuffs he consumes in his daily life by identifying them with his single man status. Then, he proceeds with his eating out experiences that include foodstuffs denoting difficulty and laboriousness in comparison with the ones that he daily consumes, such as squeezed natural fresh orange juice indicating an effort and time spent, besides emphasizing the role his brother and girlfriend play in his familiarization with new tastes and practices:

> As a man living alone I am preparing simple meals at home like ready-made *mantı* (a dish made of small size meat dumplings), chicken, *makarna* (pasta)... if I stay at home at weekends I spend more time but this is just like chopping onion along with red meat… I can't make complicated dishes, I fail in cooking, I'm not quite handy in the kitchen… the first time I went to brunch was with my younger brother... he convinced me and brought me saying 'come, there are a lot of orange juice'… so when we wake up late at the weekends and have nothing to do special, we don't bother ourselves with preparing food, instead we go to brunch... and also I get acquainted with new

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cuisines through my girlfriend... she has taken me to a Mongolian cuisine restaurant and so… that is to say, my getting acquaintance with new foods generally happens with my younger brother and with my girlfriend.

In this manner, his statements support the fact that urban city with its various places and the possibilities it offers, nourishes the reproduction of knowledge(s), meanings and discourses about foodstuff and related practices as well as facilitating their circulation and renegotiation among people via everyday talks and everyday practices where knowledge(s), meanings and discourses are constantly in flow. In addition, whilst continuing his explanations, by identifying some foodstuffs with cities he puts emphasis on another aspect of cities, in terms of their ability of constituting correspondence between geographical locations and foodstuffs and render them symbolic for each other reciprocally; as in the case of *tantuni* (a kind of wrap) and *Mersin*, *ciğer* (a kind of variety meat) and *Şanlıurfa*, *ayran* and *Silifke* where foodstuff's signified concept becomes a geographical location and also signified concept of a geographical location becomes specific foodstuff through a signification process in which myth talks about both foodstuff and geographical location (Barthes, 1957/2009). In this wise, his statement is also analogous to Cook and Crang's (1996) aforementioned

explanation that constituted 'geographical knowledges' are active in making sense of foodstuffs and related practices:

> Also *ciğer* is something that I identify with *Şanlıurfa*, I have lived there for four years, and almost at every corner there was *ciğer*... I have tried *tantuni* in *Mersin*… *Silifke ayranı* was very delicious... travels are also effective to try new tastes.

In a similar vein, a 25-year-old, single-male engineer narrates wherein/from where and how he makes sense of foodstuff and related practices by touching upon his family and circle of friends, but through their shared experiences within different geographical locations in terms of cities changing time to time by their relocations and travels during their life-courses. Thus, his statements as well point city as a 'geography of consumption' wherein knowledge(s), meanings and discourses about foodstuff and related practices are mobilized. In this manner, he indicates urban city as a meaning-making site constituting the ground for people to differentiate, identify and make sense of foodstuff and related practices in terms of different concepts through their urban city experiences:

> The first time I have tried Chinese cuisine was with my family at a restaurant in *İstanbul*, and I have liked it at that time, there was rotating tables and chopsticks... I was at primary school I guess... in the case of *mantı*, there used to be a *mantı* restaurant close to our home in *Adana*, we were ordering often and this is how I got used to it...

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iskender (a kind of kebab) again, I got used to with my family... when we were in *Adana* we used to eat *Adana kebab* and so... people around me are influential… maybe TV... sometimes I am reading in newspaper or in magazines about newly-opened, praised restaurants, learning about their menus and then we go... but I don't search for a meal on my own, I eat what I heard, tried and liked.

On the other hand, by pointing different geographical locations in terms of cities wherein he situated for different time periods and through his reference to magazines and newspaper articles he brings into prominence another important contexts frequently expressed in participants' statements but not discussed elaborately yet, which are, change of location and media.

4. 4. Change of Location and Travel

Though emphasized shortly, in the statements of participants, geographical locations and places not only become more of an issue by virtue of being dwelled and resided in but also on account of that they are moved across. That is to say, in the statements of participants, change of location as moving across spaces whether through relocation as in the case of migration or through travel either touristically-oriented or arising from business/educational purposes, comes forward as an important context in acquisition and interpretation of social, cultural, visual codes and myths attached to foodstuff and related practices. Due to the fact that changing of

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one's place where one is situated also means one's resituation in a different social and cultural milieu, it enables one not only to interact with new people but also to experience new places available within the spatial location of the city in terms of restaurants, supermarkets which themselves are significant contexts constitutive of meaning-making about foodstuff and related practices as discussed with details in advance.

At this juncture, in parallel with the consideration of cities not only as geographical locations but also as spatially structured social and cultural texts people engage to, Certeau's (1980/1984) analysis of city experience focusing on the footprints of ordinary city practitioners in the micro-streets is elucidatory in order to understand how people engage to cities and what are the particularities of their relationship. In his analysis, Certeau (1980/1984) lays emphasis on the fact that despite cities are strategically institutionalized, disciplinary spaces through their architectural structures, everyday life in the city is full of different micro-writings where 'proper meanings' of urban system are eluded by people through their 'speech acts' in everyday life's routine during their everyday spatial practices within the space of city. By the term 'speech acts' Certeau (1980/1984) implies the enunciative aspect of people's spatial practices in the way that when walking in the city, by

making selections among the possibilities and making use of the structured forms people not only choose paths to take their ways and make advantages of them. But, over choosing some and not the others in their actualizations where they pass by, they make statements with their footsteps whilst reappropriating the city and constituting their own routes in the city experience. Therefore, Certeau (1980/1984) suggests that people are constantly in dialogue with the spatial locations they situate and their spatial practices function as a language to manifest their subjectivities. In the way that, people respond to the encountered spatial text of the city in their bodily participations, through their explorations, determinations and preferences and interpret the city through their differentiated routes, uses and reappropriations.

On the one hand, by taking into consideration the aforementioned fact that spatial locations, in terms of cities, establish active grounds for people to acquire and make sense of social, cultural, visual codes and myths about foodstuff and related practices; and on the other hand, by acknowledging Certeau's (1980/1984) ideas on the relationship between cities and people that cities are interpreted and reappropriated spatial locations by enunciative spatial practices of people in their everyday lives; it can be suggested that

change of location and moving across spaces constitute active contexts for meaning-making about foodstuff and related practices due to the fact that they enable people to engage in dialogue with differentiated spatial locations. Change of location enables people to become spectators of new spectacles and experiences where also the spatial location moved, opens out new knowledge(s), meanings and discourses accumulated in itself and presents them to the interpretations of people, like a new spatial text in the form of an urban system.

Hence, as participants' statements put forward, people identify some knowledge(s), meanings and discourses about foodstuff and related practices, through the places they have been and over the spatial locations they moved across during their life-courses. They narrate their getting familiarization and making sense of social, cultural, visual codes and myths about foodstuff and related practices with 'been-there' clause through their memories, over the meanings acquired within different spatial locations and brought along, which also affect their sense of place and sense of self, since they are reminiscent of both the places they have been and of the past experiences they lived.

For instance, a 53-year-old married-woman working as an administrator explains how she makes sense of different kinds of coffees through taking a journey in her memories and past experiences. She touches upon her travels abroad and returns back to her younger ages when she used to live in her parents' home. She differentiates kinds of coffees as espresso-cappuccino and *Turkish coffee* over her lived experiences and ascribes different qualities to them. Whereas the former ones stands for 'sense of travel', the latter one evokes 'sense of belonging' in relation with their attached concepts like global/local and non-traditional/traditional and in this manner affect her sense of place and sense of self. Furthermore, her statement describing how she makes sense of *Turkish coffee* expresses that her acquired 'food language' from her family during their everyday life practices, in terms of drinking *Turkish coffee*, constituted her internalization of the practice with its surrounding social and cultural meanings. In her making sense, *Turkish coffee* stands for a 'pleasant traditional social drink' and leisurely act of 'drinking Turkish coffee' as a ceremonial ritual in everyday life corresponds to a 'symbolic practice' able to evoke the 'collective sense of togetherness' when it is shared and accompanied everyday talks of family members and acquaintances due to its enhanced and transmitted social and cultural connotations and constituted rituals surrounding the practice:

The reason why I like drinking different kinds of coffee like espresso, cappuccino in the morning is that I have been impressed by the fascinating smell of coffees in my travels abroad, whether at the hotel or in the cafés... whilst drinking coffee like that I remember the ambiance abroad… and sometimes I make comparisons about their tastes as how they were there and how it is here... in the case of my relationship with *Turkish coffee*... it is a traditional culture coming from my family… it is considered as 'morning coffee' and drunk after breakfast... whether with family members or with the guests coming for a morning talk...

Henceforth, after highlighting the urban city, change of location and travel as important contexts constitutive in making sense of foodstuff and related practices, the last but not least site frequently expressed in participants' statements, but remained undiscussed up to this point, which is agency of media, can be elucidated elaborately due to its correlation and conjunction with the aforementioned contexts.

4. 5. Media

4. 5. 1. Television and Newspaper

In participants' statements though media comes into prominence as an active site in meaning-making about foodstuff and related practices it is mentioned in a narrow sense. They indicate especially printed media and television as specific types and limited content in terms of magazine and newspaper

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articles introducing and praising new places/tastes and limited genre as gourmet travel and cookery TV shows. In a supportive manner, by focusing on media in a narrower scope as 'food media', Bell and Valentine (1997: 5-6, original emphasis) point its agency in the production and interpretation of social, cultural, visual codes and myths attached to foodstuff and related practices, enabling inspirations through the representations from how to cook to where to go, as they state:

> The food media have been instrumental in this, and recent years have seen a proliferation of food professionals, mediatisers and celebrities. Professional and amateur chefs are household names . . . their restaurants given the status of temples of consumption in countless guides and features; food writers, critics and broadcasters meanwhile show us not only how to cook, but tell us what, when, where, how – and even why – to eat and drink. . . . adverts in print and on TV offers us all manner of temptation, trying food in with all the old favourites: with health, with status, with sex, with existential happiness, or *jouissance*.

In accordance, a 32-year-old, married-male historian in order to explain wherein/from where and how he makes sense of foodstuff and related practices, puts forward the agency of gourmet travel TV shows in addition to his emphasis on family, change of location, interactions with social milieu and urban city similar to the previously discussed statements of the participants. However, since he refers gourmet travel TV shows in conjunction with urban cities, in his statements cities come into prominence

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as constitutive of meaning-making about foodstuff and related practices with a duality. He points cities not only as 'spatial texts' situated in and experienced, but also as 'spatial texts' subjected and narrated with foodstuff and related practices in 'media texts', in gourmet travel TV shows:

> For me a food culture coming from family is available... but at university, when you are away from family you learn to do things on your own... in a large city other people's cultural accumulation starts to affect you, by this way your own palate forms... we see in *Vedat Milor's* (a famous food critic) program too, for instance there it is said to be a *Hatay* restaurant in *İstanbul*, he eats *künefe* (a kind of dessert) there as the best *künefe* in *İstanbul*… we tried when we went… he finds particularly local cuisines... the best restaurant for *Kastamonu* cuisine for instance… he says *tirit* should be tasted there… it is the *tirit* (a kind of meat dish) in '*tiridine bandım* (lyrics of a folk song)'… such places attract attention on taste and place.

As it is seen in the participant's statement 'food media' and 'urban city' feed each other reciprocally and enhance their constitutive aspects as meaning-sites to make sense of foodstuff and related practices, within their intermingled relationship. On the other hand, his reference to lyrics of a folk song is informative to understand the intertextuality in his readings enabled through the interdependency of texts. Hence, it can be indicated that newspaper and magazine articles or gourmet travel TV shows introducing and praising new places/tastes, deploy and encode meanings over the possibilities available in urban city and produce knowledge(s), meanings and

discourses over and contingent upon the spatial locations. On the other hand, in this reciprocal relationship, with the representations of 'food media', spatial locations (restaurants, supermarkets, or in all urban cities themselves) enhance their contributional function as meaning-sites in everyday life of people, supporting the fact Cook and Crang (1996: 141) state that "the geographical knowledges associated with foods can potentially be produced at a variety of sites within the 'worlds' of those products by a variety of actors involved in their provision and consumption." In a similar vein, Bell and Valentine (1997: 202-203) point the role of 'food media' in consumer culture and its reinforcement of the status of urban cities as spatial locations acting as meaning sites supplying agency to make sense of foodstuff and related practices:

> Of course, kitchen table tourism and armchair tourism are neatly linked together by the food media; cookery shows, magazines and newspaper columns bring exotic delights into our homes, and encourage us to put the world on our plates (and in our ovens) – the link is made even more explicit in hybrid forms which link travel and cookery…

Thus far, it has been recognized and discussed with regard to participants' statements that social, cultural, visual codes and myths attached to foodstuff and related practices are constantly in production and circulation among diverse sites and geographies having complex and intermingled

relationships with each other. Besides, it has been emphasized that these different sites nested and embedded in each other active in the very process of people's everyday lives, in its routine and causality altogether constitute the extensive domain wherein people obtain, interpret, act upon, reproduce and make sense of knowledge(s), meanings and discourses about foodstuff and related practices.

In accordance with the discussion, a 30-year-old, married-female art historian's statements almost summarize all the sites and geographies discussed as active in meaning-making about foodstuff and related practices. By focusing on her family, she differentiates some foodstuffs belonging to the Aegean cuisine, and refers them as a transmitted language from her family especially through the passed on recipes from her mother. Thus, she makes sense of them as ethnic foods giving her the sense of belonging to an ethnic identity through their internalized meanings. Moreover, she refers to another acquisition from her mother enabling her making sense of some foodstuff locally through the geographical knowledges in terms of *Urfa* dishes. By using 'been there' clause in order to explain the journey of the knowledge acquired from her mother she emphasizes the importance of spatial locations situated in and moved across and also of the interactions between relatives in

reproduction and circulation of meanings about foodstuff and related practices. Nevertheless, she highlights that the interactions active in her meaning-making about foodstuff and related practices are not limited to the family members and relatives. But, they include her everyday talks and practices shared with people in her social milieu, in the form of whether exchange of ideas and recipes among her friends at work or being hosted in her friends' homes. Lastly, whilst juxtaposing the sites where knowledge(s), meanings and discourses about foodstuff and related practices are constantly in flow, she mentions a cookery TV show by calling the program with its chef's name. In addition, she touches upon a newspaper column introducing a place on coffee that leads her visit during her travel in the city where the place is located. She narrates how her experiences and interactions within the coffee shop contributed her making sense of foodstuffs and related practices—a statement can be considered analogous to the aforementioned point that food media and urban city enhance their constitutive aspect within their reciprocal relationship:

> Family... circle of friends... I like vegetable dishes but I haven't tasted artichoke for example, I was thinking it's not nice... after eating when we were at a friend for dinner, I tried and liked it very much… also, at work we talk with friends about what to do for dinner, we give recipes and such to each other... I like trying new things so… Aegean cuisine, *zeytinyağlılar* (olive oil dishes) and such are from my family

since we are Aegean… I know *Urfa* dishes because my uncle's wife is from *Urfa*… and as my mother stayed there for a while also, she knows dishes like *kısır*, *içli köfte* (a kind of meat ball), *yumurtalı köfte* (a kind of meat ball made with bulgur, egg and vegetables rather than meat), peculiar to that region... I've learned them from my mother… aside from that when I come across to a new recipe in *Oktay Usta's* (a famous cook) program, I do try sometimes... also, you are reading a column for instance, about a place on coffee… saying 'drink a cup of coffee there, if you happen to pass *İstanbul*'... when we went to *İstanbul* with my elder sister and her family, we drunk and liked for example… staff members were very interested and they gave us information about that coffee beans cultivated in high places have higher quality and so…

4. 5. 2. Films

Moreover, the participant (the 30-year-old, married-female art historian) whose statements are mentioned above as almost summarizing every site discussed, proceeds her narration by recalling a film scene with foodstuff content. Touching upon the fundamental concern of the study, which is 'foodstuff and related practices in films' she interprets them as contributional to acquire knowledge, get informed, become familiarized and hence make meaning about foodstuff and related practices. Yet, though her statement lays emphasis on a film scene of foodstuff, removed from the film's context, the film scene does not stand as the sole contributional site. Because she acquires the knowledge and makes sense of the foodstuff conjoined with an

experience in her everyday life, with an availability enabled in her work place's dining hall and through its merge with the curiosity initiated and evoked from the film scene:

> In the film *Inglourious Basterds* (Tarantino, 2009) one of the Nazi officers eats a dessert somewhere… probably it was in France… but how with a crispy, crunchy lusciousness… one day at work something like *milföy tatlısı* was served looking very similar to the dessert in the film... normally I don't eat dessert at workplace dining hall but when I saw it I tried it like saying 'ah, it is the dessert in that film' and admired... layered *milföy*, cream inside and powdered sugar on top... if I hadn't seen that scene, I wouldn't have eaten that dessert... now, I want to make that dessert for instance… rather than reading a book scene, that film scene was efficient… otherwise I'd not pay attention to *milföy.*

In her interpretation and reappropriation, participant separates the dessert (strudel) from the context it is embedded, where within the context of film, the strudel eaten with relish by the character Colonel Hans Landa (Christoph Waltz) during his conversation with the character Shosanna Dreyfus (Mélanie Laurent) undertakes an important symbolic representation. Though the 'strudel' in the film, which is used as copresent with 'milk' and 'cigarettes', carries strong associations in filmic narration as an encoded meaning; in her reception, participant decontextualizes and separates 'strudel' from its symbolic meanings deriving from its context. In this manner, she ascribes the scene as a 'curiosity evoking' quality and interprets

it as instrumental in her getting familiar with a new taste in her everyday life food consumption which is a dessert looking similar to the one in the film.

Furthermore, in a similar vein, a 24-year-old, single-female stage actress mentions film scenes as a site to make sense of foodstuff and related practices, with the accompanying explanation based on curiosity and specific interest. Nevertheless, again, she merges agency of film scenes to another media medium, which is internet, to enhance her meaning-making:

> If I see a foodstuff that I don't know I'd be very curious and generally search a little on internet, to understand what it is… and generally you may form an opinion from the things you read, but most of the time I remained curious… I wonder about the cocktails... Aww, but I've never been curious about anything as much as I am curious about the foods and drinks in *Harry Potter film series* (Columbus, 2001; Columbus, 2002; Cuarón, 2004; Newell, 2005; Yates, 2007; Yates, 2009; Yates, 2010; Yates 2011).

As broadly based interviews with participants expose, there is not a sole and dominant site where knowledge(s), meanings and discourses about foodstuff and related practices are produced, renegotiated and circulated. But there is a broad domain of meaning-making constituted by different sites and geographies having a complex and intermingled relationship with each other. Thus, positioning one site superior or inferior to another and ordering them hierarchically seem not possible as well as not effective due to the fact

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that intensification of associations between concepts and signifiers functions *intertextually* within an intertwined domain including many interconnected sites and geographies embedded in people's everyday lives.

Drawing the conclusion that there are multiple sites and geographies summoning people to 'think of', 'make sense of', 'make use of', in other words, to negotiate, to interpret and to 'produce and consume' meanings about foodstuff and related practices in their everyday lives, then, analysis can be proceed by particularly focusing on the specific site, foodstuff and related practices in films. Taking films as an inspirational ground for making sense in that regard, in the following chapter, their mediation and participants' incorporation of them to their everyday lives will be discussed.

CHAPTER V

AUDIENCE RECEPTION: FOOD AND/IN FILM

5. 1. Being In Leading Role: Life as a Film

During interviews, some participants mentioned specific scenes in specific films in order to narrate their reception of foodstuff and related practices in films. On the other hand, some of the participants narrated their interpretations over depicting some scenes separated from their contexts – without belonging to specific films and referred to the detached scenes they cite as *clichés*. Nevertheless, though they refer to different films, different film scenes, whilst narrating the meanings they assigned and poached within these scenes, in their particular stories a shared aspect and an emphasis come into prominence, which is —*self-formation* and *stylization of life*. In that respect, a 20-year-old, single-female, university student's statements in

which she lays emphasis on self-formation and stylization of life, represent

an explicit portray of the shared aspect in participants' narrations:

> When I'm on my own whilst holding a hot mug of coffee inside of my palms of both hands I recall film scenes... in these times I feel like I'm there to think... to think about something... myself... my life... at the moment, in the life I'm living actually I'm making a movie of my own... my life is my film... it is pleasant to be aware of my life and think upon it... whilst living similars of these scenes I create my own film... it is like living a scene from a life I admire... sometimes I do by planning, intentionally... at first it happens like an affectation, but then it settles into my daily life... but any time I do it, it reminds me a film scene... for instance, after watching *Ratatouille* (Bird & Pinkava, 2007) whilst preparing a meal I'm taking and sprinkling small pinches like Ratatouille in the manner of a chef... now anytime I do this I feel like a chef and like in a film...

Similar emphasis can be seen in a 24-year-old, single-female, stage actress'

narration where she states that she reflects on her life as a film:

> Don't know whether it is because I'm trying to be an actress but in too many parts of my life I feel myself like in a film scene... the times I eat and drink are included to that... I know that sometimes when I drink at a bar I think that it would be a very nice scene... like the colors, the light, the atmosphere is so nice and also the thing in my hand looks delicious... and most of the time, at home whilst cooking on my own or siting and eating I'm in a film in my mind in one sense already...

Foodstuff and related practices in films seem to supply participants a

springboard through which they are enabled to jump to think about

something else —something pretty much related about their selves and their

lives. In this manner, nudging them to self-examination, foodstuff and related practices in films, incorporate to their everyday lives and mediate in their making sense of themselves in terms of a discursive element.

At this point, notions of 'arts of existence' (Foucault, 1984/1988; 2000) and 'reflexive project of the self' (Giddens, 1991) seem central and elucidatory in order to analyze how people interpret foodstuff and related practices in films and how they make use of the assigned meanings in their everyday lives by recontextualizing them according to their subject positions and in relation to their everyday life struggles, adversities, hopes, dreams and fantasies. Therefore, in order to clarify the shared aspect in their 'particular stories' and situate their narrations in a theoretical outlook, before beginning to focus on their individual interpretations, giving place to a discussion on these crucial terms related with 'self-identity formation' seems necessary in order to cover the issue in advance. By this means, participants' in-detail stories can be taken into consideration profoundly, and analysis of their receptions can be situated in a theoretical background.

5. 1. 1. Arts of Existence

Analyzing 'subject' within the discourses and problematizations of sexuality, Foucault (2000: 362) touches upon the concept "hermeneutics of the self" pointing the idea that self is a construction –a text, constituted simultaneously within one's relationship with oneself and within one's relationship with the social and cultural structure, and offers to "look for the forms and modalities of the relation to self by which the individual constitutes and recognizes himself *qua* subject." (2000: 362, original emphasis)

In this manner, Foucault (2000) theoretically conceptualizes 'subject' as a construction formed within interrelationships, through one's relationship with oneself and through one's subjectification of oneself, one's formation of oneself as a summoned subject –i.e., a sexual subject, an ethical subject, within the process comprising "codes of behavior and forms of subjectivation". (2000: 368)

On the one hand, by the notion 'codes of behavior' Foucault (2000) implies the regulative forces and discourses summoning to people, operating through a power system consisted of different forces i.e., discipline, surveillance, knowledge systems (Foucault 1975/1995). However, on the

other hand by the notion 'forms of subjectivation' he points the ways how

subjects form and recognize themselves as subjects of their conducts through

self-discipline, self-surveillance, self-examination. For instance, over his

discussion on 'morality' and 'ethical subject', by emphasizing the availability

of different ways of subjectification, he refers 'morality' as a 'form of moral

reflection' conducted by 'ethical subject' who constitute oneself as the ethical

subject of one's conduct, as Foucault (2000: 365-366) states:

> For a rule of conduct is one thing; the conduct that may be measured
> by this rule is another. But another thing still is the manner in which
> one ought to 'conduct oneself' – that is, the manner in which one
> ought to form oneself as an ethical subject acting in reference to the
> prescriptive elements that make up the code. Given a code of actions,
> and with regard to a specific type of actions (which can be defined by
> their degree of conformity with or divergence from the code), there
> are different ways to 'conduct oneself' morally, different ways for the
> acting individual to operate, not just as an agent, but as an ethical
> subject of this action.

Hence, Foucault (2000) describes the process of subjectification of self, or in

other words, one's self-formation as an 'art of existence' where subjects self-

realize, self-invent, self-transform themselves with the discourses and

practices they appropriated, and in this manner, "assign meaning and value

to their conduct, their duties, their pleasures, their feelings and sensations,

their dreams" (2000: 360) and constitute 'modes of beings' by using the

'technologies of the self', as Foucault (2000: 363-364, original emphasis) explains:

> What I mean by the phrase [arts of existence] are those intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life into an *oeuvre* that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria. These 'arts of existence,' these 'techniques of the self,' no doubt lost some of their importance and autonomy when they were assimilated into the exercise of priestly power in early Christianity, and later, into educative, medical and psychological types of practices. Still, I thought that the long history of these aesthetics of existence and these technologies of the self remained to be done, or resumed.

Elucidating the concept 'aesthetics of existence' indicating one's construction of and subjectification of oneself, Foucault (1984/1988: 41) goes back in time and refers the philosophical doctrines of Seneca, Epictetus, Platonists – Albinus, Apuleius, etc. valorizing and counseling an "attention that should be brought to bear on oneself" in the way of 'cultivation of the self' or 'take care of oneself', which are not only akin to the concept of 'arts of existence' but as he refers, also themes grounding the development of constant working out of one's relationship with oneself in the form of 'aesthetics of existence' and 'art of living', as Foucault (1984/1988: 44-45) explains:

> It was this theme which, breaking out of its original setting and working loose from its first philosophical meanings, gradually

acquired the dimensions and forms of a veritable "cultivation of the self." What is meant by these remarks is that the principle of care of oneself became rather general in scope. The precept according to which one must give attention to oneself was in any case an imperative that circulated among a number of different doctrines. It also took the form of an attitude, a mode of behavior; it became instilled in ways of living; it evolved into procedures, practices and formulas that people reflected on, developed, perfected and taught. It thus came to constitute a social practice, giving rise to relationships between individuals, to exchanges and communications, and at times even to institutions.

Nevertheless, whilst explaining 'cultivation of self' issued in philosophical doctrines which indicates a devotion of time, effort and thought on oneself by taking oneself as the object of knowledge and as a domain to be acted upon through exercises, practices and self-examination, Foucault (1984/1988) heads towards a differentiation pointing the characteristic of these philosophical doctrines. He states that "they do not try to determine which measures or punishments might constrain everyone in a uniform manner" (1984/1988: 40) and specifies that the advised form of taking care of oneself in such manner forms a pleasurable practice, enabling one to render oneself object of one's pleasure, as he states:

The subject's relation to himself in this examination is not established so much in the form of a judicial relationship in which the accused faces the judge; it is more like an act of inspection in which the inspector aims to evaluate a piece of work, an accomplished task. The word *speculator* (one needs to be a *speculator sui*) designates this role exactly. (1984/1988: 62, original emphasis) . . . And the experience of

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self that forms itself in this possession is not simply that of a force overcome, or a rule exercised over a power that is on the point of rebelling; it is the experience of a pleasure that one takes in oneself. The individual who has finally succeeded in gaining access to himself is, for himself, an object of pleasure. (1984/1988: 66)

Thus, Foucault (1984/1988) problematizes the transformation of 'ethics' and 'take care of the self' from philosophical doctrines to present through the 'history of the desiring man' and explains that these transformations actualized not because of the strengthened rules and tightened ethical values but due to the shift in subjects' manners towards forming themselves as 'ethical subjects' of their conducts, which become stricter through self-surveillance, self-monitoring, self-discipline, self-examination. Stating that though the regulative forces of ethics summon people "still and always, . . . conform to a certain art of living which defines the aesthetic and ethical criteria of existence" (1984/1988: 67), however, Foucault (1984/1988: 67) highlights his concern that "this art refers more and more to universal principles of nature or reason, which everyone must observe in the same way, whatever their social status."

In that respect, Foucault (1984/1988) valorizes and attaches importance to one's relationship with oneself and one's subjectification of oneself in terms of 'art of living' enabling one to negotiate one's subject position and decide

how and what extent conform to the 'art of living' anticipated by the regulative forces of power system through discipline, surveillance and normativization. Therewith, Foucault (1984/1988) indicates that subject is constructed and recognized in the effort of one's subjectification of oneself as the subject of one's conduct and within the struggle of formation and establishment of self, in the encounter with power system summoning people to subjectify themselves.

When taken into consideration in parallel with his conceptualization of 'power', the importance Foucault (1984/1988) attributes to 'art of living' gains clarification since that 'art of living' by using 'technologies of the self' becomes a way of resistance through the discourses appropriated and used. Foucault (1976/1990) conceptualizes 'power' not as a structure that is gained and possessed but as something that can be exercised in different forms, hence, as something that is not fixed and static, but mobile and in flux among different sites, through realignment and redistribution in the strategic and complex web of power relationships by indicating that "[w]here there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power." (1976/1990: 95) Thus, he points that power is not an exterior condition of relationships, but is

immanent in them, and functions not vertically as an absolute domination from top to down, but through actively flowing among different discourses and diverse social groups horizontally as Foucault (1976/1990: 93) states:

> The omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.

In addition, by pointing the agency of discourse in the exercise of power Foucault (1976/1990: 101) highlights that every discourse holds the opposite in itself and reproduces the 'reverse' discourse as he states, "[d]iscourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it." (See also Gramsci, 1989, on 'power', 'hegemony' and 'consent') From this point of view of power and resistance, the self-formation of subject through 'care of the self' as an 'arts of existence' and constituting one's stance with the discursive elements in one's subjectification of oneself become more of an issue in one's confrontation with the discourses of ethical constructions, prohibitions, sins, norms, expectations; since people conform and resist the discourses through their formation of their subject-positions and constitute,

monitor and delimit part of their conducts by using discourses as 'technologies of the self'.

Foucault's (1976/1990) conceptualization of 'power' not as an absolute domination but as something exercised in different forms and in flux can be considered similar to Certeau's (1980/1984) assertions pointing the power relationships between the macro system of discipline operating with strategies and micro system of everyday life operating through tactics. In a similar vein, Certeau (1980/1984) states that though in the system of power, discipline becomes clearer and extensive, as if there is no place to escape for individuals, he suggests even though one can not escape from the system, one can always detach oneself and perform the art of "making do" — manipulating and enjoying, not to subvert the system but to reach one's goals and desires in the system in terms of a micro-scale resistance applied with the resorted tactics in one's everyday life practices. Hence, he points that people who are the targets of the disciplined system are not passive recipients, but rather operators of reaction in a disguised manner through their reappropriations and adaptations according to their own rules to survive.

5. 1. 2. Reflexive Project of the Self

Corresponding with Foucault's (1984/1988) approach towards subject and subjectification of oneself, though named differently by the use of another terminology, similar conceptualizations of self-identity and self-formation can be found in Giddens' (1991) work in which he deals with the issue in the axis of modernity. Taking modernity as a continuous process involving different periods Giddens (1991) contextualizes modernity through the differentiation between traditional and post-traditional order, and takes modernity and high modernity into consideration referring to a post-traditional time and context. Hence, explaining the foundational characteristics of post-traditional context, Giddens (1991: 83-84) puts emphasis on the 'plurality of choices' deriving from the 'blank' caused by the losing ground of constructions of traditional order, where their strength and credibility declined, as he states:

> [T]he Enlightenment project of replacing arbitrary tradition and speculative claims to knowledge with the certainty of reason proved to be essentially flawed. The reflexivity of modernity operates, not in a situation of greater and greater certainty, but in one of methodological doubt. Even the most reliable authorities can be trusted only 'until further notice'; and the abstract systems that penetrate so much of day-to-day life normally offer multiple possibilities rather than fixed guidelines or recipes for action.

Proceeding with the other particular characteristics of post-traditional order enabling 'plurality of choices', he highlights the influence of "the existence of multiple milieux of action" (Giddens, 1991: 83) and of the segmentation of social life settings into diverse and differentiated *lifestyle sectors* in terms of time-space slices or even in terms of relationships (marriage, friendship). Lastly he underscores the significance of 'increasing globalisation of media' supplying mediated experiences and mediated social situations to people, since with its agency "a multifarious number of milieux are, in principle, rendered visible to anyone who cares to glean the relevant information." (1991: 84)

In this wise, Giddens (1991) points the 'reflexivity' in the construction of self-identity not by the virtue of the absence of normativizations and expectations but due to the people's increased awareness of the constructed structures and thus weakening of the prescriptions of 'ways of doing things' and 'ways of thinking' in post-traditional order. Hence, he indicates that the replenishment of the deficiency formed due to weakening of the predetermined norms and rules becomes a 'reflexive project of the self'. In this manner, Giddens (1991: 70) conceptualizes 'reflexive project of the self' in terms of an heightened reflexive effort in one's self-identity formation,

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through selecting life-styles, making life-plans within the 'plurality of choices' where uncertainty leads people to questionize different social roles on which they will work out as he specifies:

> What to do? How to act? Who to be? These are focal questions for everyone living in circumstances of late modernity – and ones which, on some level or another, all of us answer, either discursively or through day-to-day social behaviour.

Similar highlight can be remarked in Hall's (1992) statements where he states that identities become much more dislocated and fragmented due to the changes and shifts in late-modernity characterized by discontinuity and dislocation. Corresponding to Giddens' (1991) emphasis on 'plurality of choices', Hall (1992) underscores the importance of loosened anchorages and influence of globalization which contribute the emerging of different identities that subjects are able to identify, as he features:

> The more social life becomes mediated by the global marketing of styles, places and images, by international travel, and by globally networked media images and communications systems, the more *identities* become detached — disembedded — from specific times, places, histories, and traditions, an appear 'free-floating'. We are confronted by a range of different identities, each appealing to us, or rather to different parts of ourselves, from which it seems possible to choose. (1992: 303, original emphasis) . . . As a tentative conclusion it would appear then that globalization *does* have the effect of contesting and dislocating the centred and 'closed' identities of a national culture. It does have a pluralizing impact on identities, producing a

variety of possibilities and new positions of identification, and making
identities more positional, more political, more plural and diverse; less
fixed, unified or trans-historical. (1992: 309, original emphasis)

In a methodological similarity, as Foucault (1984/1988) refers to ancient
philosophical doctrines featuring 'cultivation of self' and 'care of self' whilst
conceptualizing 'art of living'; Giddens (1991) integrates to his discussion of
'reflexive project of the self' references from self-therapy books that issue
individuals' 'self-actualisation' and 'self-observation' of themselves, of their
relationships, of their bodies and of their conducts. In this manner, over his
references to self-therapy books, Giddens (1991: 75) states that 'reflexive
project of the self' indicates a continuous autobiographical construction of
self, through forming "a trajectory of development from the past to the
anticipated future" by 'self-observation'. Hence, he explains 'reflexive project
of the self' as a constant working out and remaking of a narrative of self by
creative input in order to construct a coherent sense of self-identity and be
recognized as such.

In that respect, Giddens (1991: 86) underscores the importance of *lifestyles* by
taking account of the fact that there are different availabilities for different
groups of people since "life chances condition life style choices".
Nevertheless, he points that in post-traditional order, due to the 'plurality of

choices' and possibilities, following lifestyles is not an optional choice but a

must-have necessity people feel forced to appropriate since different

lifestyles supply different packages which people use in the formation of

their self-identities and account for their autobiographical self-narrations in

the sense as Giddens (1991: 81) explains:

> A lifestyle can be defined as a more or less integrated set of practices
> which an individual embraces, not only because such practices fulfil
> utilitarian needs, but because they give material form to a particular
> narrative of self-identity. . . . Lifestyles are routinised practices, the
> routines incorporated into habits of dress, eating, modes of acting and
> favoured milieux for encountering others; but the routines followed
> are reflexively open to change in the light of the mobile nature of self-
> identity. Each of the small decisions a person makes every day – what
> to wear, what to eat, how to conduct himself at work, whom to meet
> with later in the evening – contributes to such routines. All such
> choices (as well as larger and more consequential ones) are decisions
> not only about how to act but who to be. The more post-traditional the
> settings in which an individual moves, the more lifestyle concerns the
> very core of self-identity, its making and remaking.

In addition, similar to Foucault's (1976/1990) and Certeau's (1980/1984)

assertions on 'power' and 'power relations' Giddens approaches the

relationship between individuals and social structure through the theory of

'structuration', metaphorically speaking, through a lens focusing on both

micro and macro perspectives as if structure is a composite photograph

wherein macro and micro are juxtaposited and montaged in the same scene

conjunctionally. Gauntlett (2008) summarizes Giddens' conceptualization of

'structuration' as a theory taking into account of both the macro structure and agency of people and as a framework explaining the interaction between them in terms of how macro structure operates in micro-level through the agency of people, as he explains:

> Giddens suggests, human agency and social structure are in a relationship with each other, and it is the repetition of the acts of individual agents which reproduces the structure. This means that there *is* a social structure – traditions, institutions, moral codes and established ways of doing things; but it also means that these can be changed when people start to ignore them, replace them or reproduce them differently. (2008: 102, original emphasis) . . . People's everyday actions, then, reinforce and reproduce a set of expectations – and it is this set of *other people's expectations* which make up the 'social forces' and 'social structures' that sociologists talk about. (2008: 103, original emphasis)

Therefore, it can be concluded that Giddens as well, in a similar vein with Foucault (1976/1990) and Certeau (1980/1984) considers power not as a total domination but as something reproduced and restructured in the acts and thoughts of people in the micro level, which also comprises the possibility that macro structure operating with power can be resisted and even be subverted by the shifts and changes in the act and thoughts of people in the micro level due to the constant interaction between macro and micro affecting their reproduction reciprocally.

Nevertheless, though having similarities in their conceptualizations of 'self-identity' and 'self-formation', and also in the way 'power' operates, as discussed, it seems necessary to mention the point of dissidence where Foucault's (1984/1988) and Giddens' (1991) approaches split. On the one hand, Giddens (1991) considers that post-traditional order, which is a notion he uses in order to refer modernity in his conceptualization, enables the ground and strengthens the 'reflexive project of the self' owing to not diminishing, but weakening of traditional norms and thus due to the deficiency which enables 'plurality of choices' to fill in. Conversely, Foucault (1984/1988) does not relates 'arts of existence' to modernity, yet even more, he approaches modernity somewhat pessimistic and skeptical through addressing modern institutions and knowledge systems (Foucault 1975/1995) as an altered and modified form of discipline and surveillance wherein meanings are rendered 'universal' and 'regulative'. Nevertheless, though Foucault (1984/1988) puts emphasis on the regulative aspects of modernity, yet, he valorizes 'art of living' due to the fact that it enables one to negotiate one's subject position and decide how and what extent conform to the 'art of living' anticipated by the regulative forces. In other words, Foucault's (1984/1988) valorization of 'art of living' differs from Giddens' (1991) valorization of 'reflexive project of the self' in the way that Foucault

considers 'art of living' not as a condition *enabled with* modernity, but as a necessity that should be followed *instead of* modernity.

Even though analyzing the context of modernity differently, notwithstanding, Foucault (1984/1988) and Giddens (1991) coincide on the importance they give one's relationship with oneself and one's self-formation through one's construction of oneself as subject of one's conducts and on the valorization they attribute to creative ways whereby people construct their subjectivities. In order to designate one's self-formation Foucault (1984/1988) uses the phrase 'art of living' to which Giddens (1991) refers as 'reflexive project of the self'. On the other hand, Foucault (1984/1988) comes up with the definition of 'technologies of the self' referring the discourses appropriated and used in construction of 'modes of beings' and hence instrumental in one's working out of one's self-formation, which can be considered corresponding to Giddens' (1991) conceptualization of 'lifestyles' in terms of incorporated elements indicating differentiated 'ways of living' and 'ways of thinking' in one's construction of one's autobiographical self-narration.

5. 1. 3. Identification, Articulation and Manifestation

In this manner, through their emphasis on constitution of self-identity, Foucault (1984/1988) and Giddens (1991) point out that 'self' is not a given fixed entity but is something reflexively made and thus can be worked upon, transformed and invented. In a similar vein, Hall (1996: 2) conceptualizes identity as "a construction, a process never completed – always 'in process'" through *identification.* Thus, he explains one's construction of oneself, which means one's making sense of oneself and one's representation of oneself, by identification and differentiation, through one's positioning oneself in relation to discourses. Accordingly, Hall (1996: 5-6, original emphasis) points identity as 'a point of suture', constituted by identification and invested in by articulation:

> I use 'identity' to refer to the meeting point, the point of *suture*, between on the one hand the discourses and practices which attempt to 'interpellate', speak to us or hail us into place as the social subjects of particular discourses, and on the other hand, the processes which produce subjectivities, which construct us as subjects which can be 'spoken'. Identities are thus points of temporary attachment to the subject positions which discursive practices construct for us. . . . The notion that an effective suturing of the subject to a subject-position requires, not only that the subject is 'hailed', but that the subject invests in the position, means that suturing has to be thought of as an *articulation*, rather than a one-sided process, and that in turn places *identification*, if not identities, firmly on theoretical agenda.

Then, it can be indicated that in the effort of one's self-construction and one's subjectification of oneself as one's conduct, subjects make sense of themselves through their attachments to subject-positions. Accordingly, by articulating and investing in the subject-positions which are positional to discourses, subjects not only make sense of themselves but also represent their subjectivities. Regarding to these points, following sections will analyze the creative ways people construct their subjectivities by making use of the foodstuff and related practices in films as 'discursive techniques and tools' as 'technologies of the self' through their poached meanings in their receptions.

5. 2. Particular Stories

5. 2. 1. Interrupted Films

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter a 20-year-old, single-female university student's emphasis in her statement that 'my life is my film' represents her approach towards her life which she reflects on. Nevertheless, whilst talking about foodstuff and related practices in films she narrates and points out times and instances in her life estranged from being a film scene. In this manner, her particular story represents how she reappropriates and

makes use of foodstuff and related practices in films as a norm for her ideal life.

5. 2. 1. 1. Coffee, Omelet and Autonomy

Whilst talking about foodstuff and related practices in films, the 20-year-old, single-female university student narrates a scene without mentioning a specific film and considers it as a stereotypical expression can be found in many films as a cliché:

> In films, woman comes to kitchen with her morning robe, slippers, pajamas still on, puts hot water to make herself coffee, prepare herself an omelet, that the sounds... the sound of water boiling... the click of the water boiler... in mornings it always gives me the feeling like I'm in a film... it's the image of a woman who lives alone, who can stand on her own feet... that kitchen belongs to her... however, as I still live with my parents sometimes my film scene is interrupted... but it may also happen because the kitchen in our home is not the exact kitchen in my dream... my dream kitchen is like, there was a film, *Last Night* (Tadjedin, 2010) Keira Knightley's film... like the kitchen where she cries near the window, with windows, a studio apartment in a building... it shall be white, simple, and slightly big... generally I prefer Keira Knightley's films, they are romantic-comedies in general but thought-provoking, not empty romantic, that is to say meaningful films... in that film she goes to a man's home and they make kitchen conversations in the kitchen... a kitchen counter where you can sit on whilst talking... I want a kitchen counter... now I can't sit on the counter at home because my mom says get up, it is dirty and such... but in my own home I can do that... I want a counter I can sit on and eat whilst talking... it means on my own, in my home, I can sit on my counter inviting somebody to my home... sitting in bedroom slides to

another meaning, its sequel is different... living room is much more formal... kitchen is both more genuine, talking intended, and beyond talking, it is pleasant having snacks for eating-drinking in your hand.

In his work where he makes semiotic analysis of everyday life cultural objects Berger (1997) describes pajamas, robes (he refers as bathrobes) and slippers as objects comfortable in texture and shape and thus associated with leisure time and domain of home, in contrast with shoes and suits which are much more constrictive in form and pattern and having a correspondence with work time and work domain. Therefore, Berger (1997) considers morning robes and slippers as mediating objects able to give the sense of transition between different domains operational for different purposes. Thus, he states that taking morning robe off and getting into the work outfits and removing slippers and putting on shoes act symbolic to the departure from the domain of home, whereas informing the laborious working routine of everyday life one is about to enter, as he describes the ritualistic function they convey:

The bathrobe is a domestic garment that is part of our ritual of getting up and getting ready for the outside world, the world of work, where most of our energies are expended and satisfactions achieved. (1997: 72) . . . The existence of the slipper implies a classification system and ordering of experience. In this system there are two opposite realms: the world of work in which one wears shoes, and the world of rest, the domestic world, in which one wears slippers. And we signify that we

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are leaving the world of work when we take off our shoes and put on our slippers. (1997: 98)

In this wise, the morning scene participant depicts and portrays in details over her emphasis on cultural objects indicates that the woman character in her slippers and morning robe gets herself ready for a new day, by her self-prepared breakfast consisted of coffee and omelet through the use of quotidian objects like water boiler, before entering the ongoing flow and hubbub of everyday life. Such that, through the familiar aspects between her everyday life and the film scene in terms of getting ready for school and preparing breakfast in the mornings she expresses her identification with the scene by using the phrase 'feeling like in a film' which is actualized not only because of the quotidian-quality of getting ready for the day and having breakfast but also owing to the audio-visual similarities between the film scene and her real life experiences, which are 'aesthetic appeals' and 'recognized sounds' that strengthen her identification and sense of 'being in the film'.

Nevertheless, as it can be inferred from her statements, her 'identification' with the film scene consists 'flaws' and 'exceptions' interrupting her experience and causing a rupture from her sense of being in a film. She recognizes and attains to these flaws and exceptions through her self-

examination, where she subjectifies herself and her life under renegotiation. Her self-examination can be remarked in her emphasis that even though she points her identification with the image of the woman who gets ready for a new day and prepares herself breakfast, then, she self-reflexively acknowledges her awareness of the 'flaws' and 'exceptions' through pointing the differentiations between the 'she in the scene' and 'I in the real life' by making comparisons. Interpreting the morning scene she depicted as "the image of a woman who lives alone, who can stand on her own feet... that kitchen belongs to her" she puts emphasis on the 'self-suffiency' 'ownership' and 'autonomy' which 'the she in the scene' possesses. In this way, she differentiates her subject position through her self-examination, which in comparison lacks 'autonomy', 'ownership' and 'personal power' due to living with her family and sharing the same instutitionalized domain, not having the ownership of the 'dream kitchen' and not having the autonomy indicating one's self-government and self-rule in the domain one owns.

Correspondingly, Berger (1997: 58) points family as a 'domain of struggle' rather than a peaceful and calm site, where household members are constantly in effort to gain consent of another and contend for access to

control and automomy, whereas power constantly flows among different members as he explains:

> [A] family is, among other things, a political entity in which there is generally an unequal distribution of power and authority. . . . Adolescence, then, from this point of view, is a doubly trying stage, for the adolescent is trying to get control of his or her internal forces and at the same time is involved in a power struggle in his or her family—with parents and perhaps also with siblings. . . . Families are often "battlegrounds" in which contending forces struggle . . . except that the reasons for the battles are often not clear and the means of determining who has triumphed are vague. In truth, there are no real or permanent triumphs, for the vanquished remain to battle on.

Hence, the meaning she poached in the scene she depicted, forms a basis and provides a foundation to resort in order to evaluate her subject position and degree of her autonomy and power within her family home where she lives under the rules of their shared roof. Negotiating her subject position through self-examination she relates to herself and reconsiders her subjectification to the authority figures (parents) in family domain. In this manner, she articulates her desire to access absolute authority and control without sharing power and dream to rule her own domain without encountering to any authority figure (parents). During her speech, she not only attains to herself and self-recognizes her subject position but also she self-transforms

and self-invents herself by repositioning herself in relation to the discourses besides manifesting her subject-position through her statements.

5. 2. 1. 2. Self-Construction with 'counter': I will sit on it!

Acknowledging her self-realization through her self-examination initiated with the morning breakfast scene, focusing on the autonomy and personal power she lacks in comparison with the 'she in the scene', without giving a break she proceeds her narration with another poaching from another film including foodstuff and related practices, which supplies her the discursive element to gain the power and autonomy she lacks. Referring specifically to a film, which is *Last Night* (Tadjedin, 2010) she mentions two kitchen scenes; the kitchen of the married couple Joanna Reed (Keira Knightley) and Michael Reed (Sam Worthington) and the kitchen of their friends where the character Joanna Reed has a talk with her ex-boyfriend Alex (Guillaume Canet). The former kitchen she depicts as 'where she cries near the window' stands in the film as the setting of Joanna and Michael's dysfunctional marriage where they argue over their unhappy relationship, accuse each other over their doubts whilst hiding their true emotions and thoughts. On the other hand, participant detaches the kitchen scene from its context in film and

reappropriates it as 'her dream kitchen' through an 'aesthetic appreciation' not as the kitchen of dysfunctional marriage. The latter kitchen scene she depicts, where Joanna makes conversations with her ex-boyfriend Alex whilst sitting on the kitchen counter, is used in the film as the setting where they review their ended relationship and Joanna tests her faith and loyalty to her marriage. Nevertheless, again, participant separates the scene from its context in film and interprets it as a scene symbolic of one's autonomy, where one's sitting on the counter whilst talking with one's boyfriend, is enunciative of one's self-autonomy and ability to self-rule in the domain one situates. Then, acknowledging her present subject-positon that lacks 'autonomy' and 'ownership' and is restricted and interrupted through the expectations and rules in terms of table manners and eating etiquettes by her parents, she reimagines her future-self-concept over her poachings in these scenes. Accordingly, her narration reconstructs her self-concept in terms of a reimagined 'future-self' and suggests a self-sufficient, autonomous woman who has accessed the power, autonomy and ownership now she lacks and who is able to manifest it through sitting on her counter in her dream kitchen.

As it is seen in the particular story of the participant, foodstuff and related practices in films, incorporate her everyday life as discursive elements about her self-concept and mediate as creative inputs instrumental in her autobiographical construction of self as a 'reflexive project' where she answers the questions 'Who to be? How to act?' through her reimagined self. (Giddens, 1991).

5. 2. 1. 3. Self-devotion to ice-cream box: Yay! To autonomous me!

Proceeding her statements, similar renegotiation in terms of her access to autonomy and control can be seen in her narration of the scene which she (the 20-year-old, single-female, university student) again referred as stereotypical:

> I don't know in which film but there is a huge size of ice-cream box, when girl is unhappy, depressive, she devotes herself to ice-cream, eats spoonfuls from inside of it... I also like it very much... but in Turkey you can't eat ice-cream from inside of the box like that, you should put it in plate... however when I eat dipping by dipping my spoon into my box American films come to my mind... and also for a long time there wasn't box ice-creams like that in Turkey... it is a scene that I take out of from many films... I don't remember a certain film.. I mean, there is the depressive girl eating ice-cream in teenage films...

In her study based on college students' approach towards food consumption shaped in accordance with the embedded food rules in U.S. culture, Counihan (1999) suggests that food consumption of college students functions as a way to articulate their subjectivities over their preferences in terms of the kind (bad-or-good) and amount of the food they consume; through the determination and appropriation of their 'own way of consumption' in their renegotiation with the substantial food rules. Thus, Counihan (1999: 118) states, college students' renegotiation with the food rules and reconstruction of their consumption patterns make them able to "express their individualism and independence" as well as enable them to manifest their self-control, autonomy and hierarchical position in social relations through their 'diet' and 'body-size' as she states:

> For students, the ability to determine their own and others' food consumption establishes their place in the social hierarchy and their ability to be autonomous and independent. For male and female students alike, self-control is the ability to deny appetite, suffer hunger, and deny themselves foods they like but believe fattening. Individual choice involves determining for themselves what foods are acceptable and consuming them or abstaining from them when they wish. (1999: 113-114)

Furthermore, Counihan (1999) points how rules of food consumption form a 'field of struggle' between parents and college students. Though, she says, parents exercise power and expect obedience through the norms and rules

on food in terms of the kind and amount that should be eaten, conversely, college students maintain resistance over their eating patterns which deny and unconform their parents' expectations. Therefore, she concludes, college students' construction of their own rules in food consumption through their negotiations, whether they are in an individual and partial level, enable them to reclaim their autonomy, control and personal power. In this manner, their food consumption contributes to the way they determine and define the lines of their autonomous field whilst forming their sense of self-identity, as Counihan (1999: 126) states:

> College students eat to show they are individuals, to be special, to be moral; they eat to be themselves and to declare their place in the complex race, class, and gender hierarchy in which they live.

Taking Counihan's (1999) emphasis into consideration, in participant's narration, the parents' exercise of power through expectations related with food can be seen. However, in the case of participant, norm and expectation do not derive from what or how much to eat; but rather seem much more about the form of the practice of eating itself as *how* it should be eaten in relation to the table manners and eating etiquettes set in the family.

Analogous to Counihan's (1999) analysis, participant considers food consumption as an agent of resistance and as a mediator to articulate her subjectivity in terms of her autonomy and independence over her 'own way of eating ice-cream' which enables her to reclaim her autonomous field and personal power. In this wise, in order to construct her own rules in food consumption she incorporates film scenes of 'depressed girl's eating ice-cream' as an inspirational discourse and interprets 'eating from the box' as a norm of self-autonomy approximating her self-concept to her imagined-self. Hence, by the appropriated meaning she poached in these scenes, she renegotiates with her subject position and degree of her autonomy by acting upon the discursive element, in terms of her conformity to or differentiation from the expectation constructed under her 'family roof'. Besides, generalizing the norm and expectation of eating not straightforwardly from the box but having in plate, from a family standard to an eating etiquette belonging Turkishness she differentiates Turkishness and Americanness over an eating manner and reconstructs her sense of self and sense of place.

5. 2. 2. Constructing Future-Self: Coffee On the Car, Folders Inside

During interviews, a 24-year-old, single-female interpreter refers to a little girl's reception of a scene which she considers as one of the stereotypical

scenes of foodstuff and related practices that does not belong to a specific film:

> One of my friends' little sister is saying "When I grow up I'll put my coffee on my car whilst placing my folders in my car and then I'll go to work", for instance, it is such a scene popped out from a film!

At first sight, though little girl's reading of the stereotypical scene seems like a mere emulation and an encouraged consumerism, however, when her responsive and interpretive identification with the scene is taken into account it suggests that both the film scene and the consumerism it encourages is rendered meaningful and made use as instrumental in little girl's 'reflexive project of the self'. That is to say, when the little girl identifies with the 'she in the scene' and renders her as a 'role model' for her future-self-formation she not only identifies with 'a woman drinking coffee in the morning who has a car and folders'; but instead gets inspired by the figure represented as liberated, busy, working, economically self-sufficient, urbanite woman, which offers a different possibility than the conventional expectations and social roles estimated for women. In relevance with the discussion, Gauntlett (2008) takes 'role models' into consideration not as figures totally copied, but rather approaches them as creative inspiring packages through which people consider possibilities and pick up their

selective-appropriations in order to use in their formation of self-identities, as he specifies:

> The idea of 'role models' comes up often in public discourse, and in discussions of gender and the media, but it's not always clear what the term really means. A 'role model' seems to be popularly understood as 'someone to look up to', and someone to base your character, values or aspirations upon. (2008: 223) . . . understanding of how role models might work: that as people grow up, and indeed advance into their twenties and later years, they look for inspiring or comforting figures who offer positive-looking examples of how life can be lived. These identities are not 'copied' in any big or direct sense, but they feed into our ongoing calculations about how we see life and where we would like to fit into society. As we construct our narratives of the self . . . we are able to appropriate (borrow) the positive bits of other people's attitudes or lives that we fancy for ourselves. We can also position ourselves in relation to more negative characteristics. (2008: 231)

Bearing Gauntlett's (2008) emphasis in mind, it can be concluded that little girl's assignment of the scene as 'the morning ritual of a role model' incorporates to her self-formation as a discursive element and mediates as a tool in her construction of her life-plans which are directed to constitute her imagined future-self, as Giddens (1991: 85) emphasizes:

> Life plans are the substantial content of the reflexively organised trajectory of the self. Life-planning is a means of preparing a course of future actions mobilised in terms of the self's biography. . . . Lifestyle choices and life planning are not just 'in', or constituent of, the day-to-day life of social agents, but form institutional settings which help to shape their actions.

5. 2. 3. Reimagined Families: Festive Gatherings Inspired

Family functions as an important domain wherein people constitute and

work out their identities. As well as being a domain of struggle in which

people contest to maintain and articulate their self-autonomy and

independence as discussed, conversely, it also supplies the ground for

people to constitute their identities as part of the collective and develop sense

of community. In her work, Lucey (2010) takes identity formation as a

'continuous dynamic process' and discusses the psychosocial dimensions of

identity formation within the sphere of family domain, through familial and

intimate relationships, whilst particularly focusing on the relationship

between siblings. In this wise, Lucey (2010: 476, original emphasis) points the

importance of family context in identity formation as she states that:

> One of the tensions that characterizes contemporary experience is that
> arising from the wish to be unique, special, autonomous and 'free'
> (freedom from dependence is seen as particularly desirable for many
> in westernized cultures these days) alongside an equally powerful
> wish to be seen as the same as, be part of a collective, recognized,
> understood and cared for by others: a typically human tendency to
> pull in opposite directions at the same time. Of all the contexts in
> which identities are shaped, it is in families and family-like groups
> that these tensions often work most effectively to pattern the
> frameworks through which we come to make sense of ourselves and
> the world in which we live. It is in these kinds of relationships that
> most of us first experience what it might mean to be an individual and

to be a member of a group, to belong or to be an 'outsider', to feel connected as well as separate, to be dependent and independent, to love, to hate and to feel ambivalence. Focusing on families, kin and personal relationships can tell us something valuable about how we form ideas about ourselves and others in dynamic relation, that is, it provides a context in which to think about the *intersubjective* nature of identity formation.

Separately, but pertinent to the discussion of family context, whilst conceptualizing self-identity in modernity Giddens (1991) as mentioned before, calls attention to the 'plurality of choices' deriving from the 'blank' caused not by the virtue of the absence of normativizations and expectations but due to the people's increased awareness of the constructed structures and thus weakening of the prescriptions of 'ways of doing things' and 'ways of thinking' in post-traditional order. Accordingly, pointing the decline in traditional values and the shift towards 'self-reflexivity', Giddens (1991) suggests that intimate relationships in post-traditional order become a compartment of 'reflexive project of the self' and thus their status approximate to be *pure relationship*. The term –pure relationship, he assigns to conceptualize intimate relationships in post-traditional order implies constructed interpersonal ties not on the grounds of conventional categories, but indicates reflexively worked out and negotiated relationships through voluntary participation where reference point of the relationship becomes ongoing reciprocal satisfaction and mutual fulfillment of the parties.

On the other hand, in her work Valentine (1999) approaches 'home' as a site of individual and collective consumption and analyzes how household members constitute, negotiate and articulate their identities over their 'food consumption' practices within the site of home. Referring to the important case studies in the field (namely Murcott, Charles and Kerr, DeVault, Lupton, etc.) she underscores the conceptualization of 'family meal' as a 'social event' and as a time of 'togetherness' and 'unity' in which family members not only share 'proper meals', and communicate, but also participate in the idea of being family. Pointing how food acts constitutive in construction of sense of family as well as collective identity in the form of 'family meal', besides, she highlights the probability of the sense of fail in 'construction of family' and lack or loss of 'sense of collective identity' arising in absence of 'family meal' and 'commensality'. Moreover, she refers to the postmodern conditions surrounding family consumption practices which lead members to individualized patterns of eating. On the one hand, she touches upon the conditions like women's increased participation in paid labour and the difficulties family members have in coordinating their schedules (different work/school hours) in order to eat together. On the other hand, she points household members' availability of preparing meal easily for themselves owing to the developments in food production and storage

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(frozen and convenience foods) as well as in domestic technologies (microwave, freezer, etc.). In this manner, she analyzes how differentiated/individualized consumption practices enable people to constitute, negotiate and articulate their identities in the family home, bearing in mind the fact that, "these contestations and negotiations do not simply arise out of 'family' relationships and the home, they constitute them." (Valentine, 1999: 505)

A 30-year-old, married-female art historian narrates her reception of foodstuff and related practices in films by especially referring to the representation of Thanksgiving Dinners in films and by representation of cooking and commensality in films of a specific director—Ferzan Özpetek. Though her emphasis as 'in Ferzan Özpetek's films' carries an all-inclusive approach and refers director's whole filmography in character, she memorizes and names *Le fate ignoranti* (Özpetek, 2001), *La finestra di fronte* (Özpetek, 2003), *Saturno contro* (Özpetek, 2007) and *Mine vaganti* (Özpetek, 2010) in order to exemplify. She expresses how she recontextualizes and makes use of the representations in these films, collectively with her sisters in her everyday life as she states that:

Recently we (she and her husband) were invited to my elder sisters'... my elder sister offered that it could be nice to spend time together as sisters and their husbands once a week at dinner... suggested that we should cook together and chat lengthily sitting around table like the people in Ferzan Özpetek's films... last week was my turn, this week was my elder sister's... everything was perfect, we eat a lot... generally we see dinners like that at films... like Thanksgiving Dinner... for dinner all the other plans are canceled... whole family members come together... I can say that this is something I desire for... long to...

In order to analyze participant's reception and recontextualization of the 'cooking and commensality scenes', bearing in mind the referred points in the above paragraphs seems useful, which are (1) family context provides an important domain where people constitute and work out their identities (Lucey, 2010); (2) in post-traditional order alongside the strengthened reflexivity of identities, intimate relationships as well transformed and become much more reflexive as a compartment of 'reflexive project of the self' (Giddens, 1991); (3) food consumption practices play an important role in the way people maintain, negotiate and articulate their identities (Valentine, 1999).

Firstly, in participant's statement a renegotiation with late-modern/postmodern conditions and a 'sense of nostalgia' come into prominence as she expresses her 'desire' and 'longing for' elaborate meals shared with family members, where they are enabled to chat lengthily sitting

around the table and constitute a collective sense. In this wise, her statement seems to point a decline in family meals and an increase in individualized patterns of eating arising from people's everyday life routines full of work and hurry and hence due to unavailability of people to coordinate their different and busy schedules. Nevertheless, though acknowledging their unavailability to get together and eat as a family she does not take the decline in family meals into consideration as a loss and lack impoverishing their collective sense of being family. Conversely, by emphasizing the rarity of their commensality she interprets it as a social event enabling them to reconstruct and reimagine family through the festive quality of their commensality in terms of having a break from their everyday life routine and sparing a special time devoted solely to be together. Therefore, participant and her sisters reconstruct their collective narrative of family not through traditional conventions on family meal but rather through reimagination of family in terms of a leisure activity conducted with the participation of the members who desire and derive pleasure from 'being together'. Rather than considering family meal as a part of normative conceptualization of family and hence an obligation to conform, they reconstruct their 'sense of family meal' through incorporating representations of 'cooking' and 'commensality' in Ferzan Özpetek's films and representation of Thanksgiving Dinners in

films. Thus, by making use of the appropriated meanings they poached in texts, they reimagine being a family through the creative input they borrowed.

By the mediation of film scenes of foodstuff and related practices, they answer the question they face in their 'reflexive project of the self': How do we become family? By incorporating the discourses they poached in films they reimagine different ways of constructing family and forming a sense of collective identity. The answer they give that 'we may become family as if we cook and eat like the people in Ferzan Özpetek's films or like the people in Thanksgiving Dinners in films', then, supplies them the discursive element to constitute their collective subjectivity creatively through reimagination. Besides, the discursive element they use enable them to locate their identities under a shared narrative: we become family when we feel reunited in the rare occasion of 'eating together', wherein we feel joy and derive pleasure in the festive and nostalgic togetherness we conduct just to be together.

As it can be remarked in participant's statements, debate on family and individualization under the conditions of modernity is not restricted to the domain of theoretical discussions, but instead is an alive subject matter embedded in people's everyday lives where they constantly negotiate with

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discourses on family-individuality and constitute and make sense of their identities in their relational positions to the discourses. Accordingly, in participant's everyday life the film scenes of foodstuff and related practices become an asset in her discursive repertoire which she uses to reproduce, reconstruct and reinforce her discourses whilst constituting her subject position. Hence, foodstuff and related practices in films engage to her effort in 'art of living' and 'aesthetic of existence', acting like 'technologies of the self'.

5. 2. 4. Magical Constructions: Flipping Pancakes in the Air

As well as being an enjoyable comforting practice, cooking can be an exhausting, stressful burden. In a similar vein, kitchen can be considered both as the place for joy and happiness and as the domain of disappointment and struggle over laborious physical and emotional work as represented in Martha Rosler's feminist parody *Semiotics of the Kitchen* (Rosler, 1975).

Referring to the studies analyzing how contemporary couples share family work, DeVault (1997) points that in most contemporary families, even though women attend in paid labour and provide economical means to their

family income in equal level with their partners, still for the most part they continue to undertake responsibilities of most of the housework in family domain as a gendered expectation. Accordingly, in her study conducted with interviews, DeVault (1997) puts emphasis on the power asymmetry between husbands and wives in the family domain deriving from unequal contribution and participation in housework in terms of an inclined effort and attention. On the one hand, she touches upon the traditional and taken-for-granted roles assigned to genders and points how 'cooking' and 'domestic service' are associated with womanhood/wifehood/motherhood and culturally conceptualized as the natural expression of women's love and care for their families and as the representation of showing deference. On the other hand, she demonstrates how women put themselves in effort in order to be recognized as an adequate woman and as a good wife/mother and hence try to conform this cultural expectation, which is hard to resist due to its strong associations with love, care and deference. Pointing the pressure women suffer, DeVault (1997) concludes that due to the internalization of the 'morally charged' way of being woman and conformity to the cultural expectations, everyday life of husbands and wives constantly reproduces domination-subordination relationships whether they are implicit or explicit. As DeVault (1997: 197) features:

Many women take pleasure in preparing food that pleases, in serving family members, in rewarding a husband for his work at a difficult job. Many think of the craft of attentive service as work they choose. But few women are themselves the recipients of a similarly attentive service in return. . . . The gender inequalities inherent in language and in a multitude of nonverbal behaviors are woven into the fabric of social relations produced as people go about the mundane affairs of everyday life. Even when fathers cook, their activity—however similar to that of mothers who cook—is framed differently. There are no terms within which men think of cooking as service for a woman, no script suggesting that husbands should care for wives through domestic work. Some women are beginning to insist on more equal relations, and some husbands are beginning to struggle at taking equal responsibility for family work. But these attempts are made without a cultural imagery to support them, and in opposition to established understandings about appropriate activities for men and women.

As DeVault (1997) underscores the lack of 'cultural imagery' to change the prevalent approach towards women as 'natural' cooks and servers, one of the participant's statements represent her effort to constitute such a 'cultural imagery' by making use of the 'discursive material' borrowed from the film scenes of 'cooking men'. Narrating her appreciation and making sense of foodstuff and related practices in films, a 31-year-old, single-female lawyer touches upon the gender relationships in kitchen constituted through cooking and domestic service:

I like the scenes of cracking eggs... I enjoy to see cracking eggs in kitchen by myself like that too... but these scenes appeal to me much more if a man cracks the eggs... a man cooking... but not like simple things... a man really cooking a proper meal, you know, like with

tomatoes, peppers and such... the way he shakes the pan... his manner and posture like he is capable of catching that taste... it's attractive... for instance I adore the scene where the man in *Practical Magic* (Dunne, 1998) makes pancakes... by flipping pancakes in air... I have always wished a man cooking me like that... and also I like the way the woman envisaged the man in the film... his eyes shall be such, his symbol shall be star, he shall be flipping pancakes...

As mentioned thereinbefore, as long as the traditional ground gets much more flexible through people's increased awareness of the constructed structures, prescriptions of 'ways of doing things' and 'ways of thinking' do not diminish but weaken in post-traditional order. (Giddens, 1991) Accordingly, intimate relationships between partners as well elude from the conventional and normative definitions and become much more like pure relationships—emotionally demanding structures negotiated and constituted through romantic attachments; as Giddens (1991: 89) illustrates over 'marriage':

> In contrast to close personal ties in traditional contexts, the pure relationship is not anchored in external conditions of social or economic life – it is, as it were, free-floating. Consider, as an illustration, marriage as it once was. Marriage was a contract, often initiated by parents or relatives rather than by the marital partners themselves. The contract was usually strongly influenced by economic considerations, and formed part of wider economic networks and transactions. Even well into modern times, when the old frameworks of marriage had substantially disintegrated, the marital tie was anchored through an internal division of labour, the husband as breadwinner and wife preoccupied with children, hearth and home (although we should not forget that the labour force has always

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contained a considerable proportion of women). Some of these traditional characteristics of marriage persist, more pronounced among certain socioeconomic groups than others. In general, however, the tendency is towards the eradication of these pre-existing external involvements – a phenomenon originally accompanied by the rise of romantic love as a basic motive for marriage. Marriage becomes more and more a relationship initiated for, and kept going for as long as, it delivers emotional satisfaction to be derived from close contact with another.

In her narrative, over making use of the representations of 'cooking men' in films, participant articulates her partner choice and sense of intimate relationship in the form of part fantasy and part expectation. Rather than taking the 'ideal man', 'ideal partner', 'ideal relationship' into consideration through the conventional normative expectations, she relates to herself and self-determines her needs and wishes –being served and cooked for. Therefore, like the way the witch character Sally Owens (Sandra Bullock) does in *Practical Magic* (Dunne, 1998), she envisages and articulates her 'dream partner' as a man who cooks and serves for her. However, their envisagements differ in the way that, in the film Sally Owens intentionally envisages a 'non-existing man figure' in order not to fall in love by casting a spell using flower petals whereas participant designates a 'dreamed man' in order incorporate him to her 'reflexive project of the self' by constructing a discourse using the film scenes.

In addition, whilst articulating her partner choice through the meanings she poached in the films, she reproduces a discourse on gender roles and gender relationships. Appropriating the meaning "man's cooking is expressive of his attractiveness and represents his masculinity in terms of his competence in kitchen", participant positions herself in relation to the prevalent discourse on women's cooking, as DeVault (1999) mentions, 'natural expression of their love and care'. Through the meaning she interpreted in the film scenes, she reconsiders the normative and regulated definitions constructed through the binary opposition between masculinity and femininity and questions the taken-for-granted expectations and roles charged to genders. Accordingly, reconsidering the conventional assumptions on women's cooking and distribution of gender roles in home, over her responsive discourse poached in film scenes, she detaches 'cooking' from solely being in the domain of womanhood and femininity and reconceptualizes 'cooking' as associated with manhood and masculinity. Besides, she not only reconceptualizes the performance of 'cooking', but through her reallocation she loosens the 'natural' connections of womanhood with domain of kitchen as well as cultural objects like 'pan'.

As Chinn (2010) highlights, performances are central in constitution of gendered selves, and often people feel anxiety in terms of misperforming their genders. Hence, in order to prevent misrecognition, people necessitate to conform gendered norms through self-surveillance and put themselves in a constant effort not to misapply their genders. Chinn (2010: 115) explains how people are compelled to perform according to the expectations assigned to genders as she features that:

> In a culture in which heteronormativity rules with stern resolve, and staying within gender norms is a central element of the heterosexual matrix, being mistaken for the 'wrong' gender is an embarrassment. This is particularly true for men, since to be identified with femaleness is by definition a step down, for women or for men. The words 'sissy', 'nelly', 'effeminate', all have a harsher sting than their equivalents 'butch' or 'mannish'. In many ways, formative learning experiences about gender have shame attached to them: parents or peers saying 'don't do that, it's not for girls/boys'.

Bearing in mind Chinn's (2010) emphasis, it can be seen in participant's statement that, though she assigns to her ideal partner capability of 'domestic cooking' —a performance conventionally associated with femininity, her discursive description of 'cooking man' and the words she chooses do not imply an 'effeminated man' and do not drift her ideal man apart from his man-ness. Instead, rather than considering 'domestic cooking' as a misperformance of masculinity, by making use of the representations in

films she makes sense of masculinity in other terms and reconceptualizes 'domestic cooking' as an alternative mode masculinity can be performed.

Similar pattern of reimagination of masculinity through the performance of 'domestic cooking' can be remarked in a 20-year-old, single-female university student's statements:

> In films in the case that a girl will come for dinner, man gets so excited, makes clumsy things... like as he walks he turns back and look at the table, slightly arranges wine glasses in a perfectionist manner and such... if a man invites me for dinner, probably I think in any case he has done clumsiness like in these films... like he forgets his underwear, socks in living room and such... he cooks something that shows he didn't take the easy way out... it is romantic owing to that... a man breaks the taboos, and do something beyond taboos this is why it is something attractive that makes the heart beat... cause generally it is always expected from women to cook.

As it is seen, by incorporating strategic and selective material from films, in terms of the representations of 'cooking men', participants investing in the subject-position 'femaleness' relate to themselves and make use of the meaning they poached in these scenes in relation to their social and cultural experience. Therefore, the representation of 'cooking men' in films, mediates to their everyday lives as a discursive frame through which they reimagine femininity, masculinity and intimate relationships. Hence, through using foodstuff and related practices in films as 'technologies of the self'; they

constitute, make sense and manifest their subjectivities as their 'reflexive project of the self' (Giddens, 1991) and make 'art of living' (Foucault, 1984/1988).

Last but not least, in our second meeting for reinterview, the 31-year-old, single-female lawyer who has articulated her ideal partner as 'a man who cooks for her' through making use of the meanings she poached in films, came up with a story and said that:

> Coincidence is that... very recently, my boyfriend cooked for me... we went shopping together... he planned what he will cook and we bought the ingredients according to his plan... though I was around in the kitchen I didn't touch anything... he is not flipping pancakes in the air but he definitely makes good whole grain noodle with soy sauce, carrots and red peppers... and invents nice desserts... something like banana flavored whipped cream mixed with muffin pieces served in ice-cream cups... he must have been the magical man I've dreamed of.

5. 2. 5. Science Fiction Diet: Agency of the Body

Approaching appearances of food in science-fiction films more than a 'mere prop' Forster (2004) analyzes the textual significances and metaphorical uses of foodstuff and related practices in science-fiction films which subject food to narrate particular concerns focusing on technology and the body. Hence,

in her analysis of the film *The Matrix* (Wachowski & Wachowski, 1999) Forster (2004) touches upon the three main appearances of food (the juicy meat, the pale glop and the home-made cookies) and explains that each food in the film offers "a different set of meanings to human existence in the matrix and the 'real world,' each reflecting philosophically on the postmodern human condition and subjective consciousness" (2004: 261) and thus plays an important role in the context of film of which questions "how important is consciousness of reality to human fulfilment?" (2004: 262) Proceeding her analysis, she points how 'juicy meat' and 'pale glop' represent the 'shift in consciousness' and the difference between 'matrix' and 'real world' in the way that, wherein the former represents the derived pleasures though being 'false', the latter symbolizes the deprivations suffered but 'real', as Forster (2004: 262) narrates:

> The choice between two worlds—one false but comfortable, the other real but full of adversity—is made clear for the audience through the example of food. The unreal beef steak with its lurid redness and flowing juices, contrasts with the following food scene, which underscores the deprivations incurred by living outside the matrix. The film turns to the ship's mess or dinning room of the Nebuchadnezzar where Neo (Keanu Reeves) and his newfound compatriots are having breakfast. The meal consists of a pale glop that, though it is made of "a single-celled protein combined with synthetic aminos, vitamins, and minerals; everything your body needs," could be, as another character suggests, "a bowl of snot." It might be nutritiously complete, but it provides no pleasure. Difficult

issues of ecology, environmentalism, and health are brought to the fore by these two scenes. The pleasure experienced through food's taste and texture is seen as more meaningful than the nutritional quality any food may contain. Human judgment and consciousness are brought into question through these two examples of food.

On the other hand, during interviews, a 27-year-old, single-male interpreter expresses his fandom of the film *The Matrix* and recalls the scene where they eat 'a white thing' which is referred as the 'breakfast scene of eating pale glop' by Forster (2004) above. Nevertheless, he separates the scene from the film's context, where "the nutritious slop demonstrates the sacrifice involved in denying false pleasures and following the path of conscious reality" (Forster, 2004: 263) as metaphoric to the "measure of the hardship of facing up to reality." (2004: 263) In this manner, he reappropriates and recontextualizes the 'white thing' in order to narrate his attitude towards food and eating through a subjectivity constructed within the sub-culture of 'body-building':

> In *The Matrix* they are eating a white thing as a meal… and say that it tastes bad, why don't we eat something proper instead… the other one says, in this there is everything that the body needs… I'm looking for something like that… this is what I need… if there would be something like that I'd eat it… eating is a necessity for me rather than a pleasure… in that scene they're eating something absurd, but still eating together… the reason why I'm impressed by that scene is that I've wished if there would be something like that so I'd use.

As it is seen, he engages with the food scene of 'pale glop' through a discursive position maintained in the sub-culture of 'body-building', which can be considered as a 'lifestyle' indicating certain values and manners in terms of 'way of living' and 'way of thinking'. Generally, in body-building lifestyle body is conceptualized as a machine to be improved through exercise and specialized diets. Thus, foods make sense in a pragmatic understanding first and foremost for their nutritional values in terms of proteins, carbohydrates, fats, etc. In connection, eating is mostly considered as a systematic intake of sustenance not as an agency of socialization or deriving pleasures. In a supporting manner, participant's daily food consumption pattern features the characteristics of his manner towards food and eating through his appropriated 'lifestyle' and 'way of thinking about foodstuffs and eating' as he narrates:

> Before going work even though I will be late I don't get out of home without having breakfast... I eat cereals with milk and honey... if I'm awake early I boil eggs... I definitely drink milk minimum 200 milliliters... since I do strength training workouts I try to load up protein rather than carbohydrates... I've searched on the internet and talked with the trainers about how much protein should I intake daily... at lunch at the workplace I'm not quite selective whether eating in *table d'hote* or in *à la carte*... if I am to go exercise after work I get chicken prepared as take-away at like 4 p.m. ... I eat that 4-5 pieces of chicken with a plastic fork in hurry... like 7 p.m. I go sports... after arriving home like 9 p.m. I prepare oven baked chicken... if I don't intake protein enough, I strain during workouts.

Hence, his poaching within the text *The Matrix* and his reception of the scene of 'pale glop' make sense with his discursive subject position invested in a certain 'lifestyle', in a sub-culture of 'body building'. He decodes the encoded 'pale glop' through the discourse of 'physical control of the body' by putting pleasurable and nutritional aspects of foods under renegotiation. Besides, he makes use of it to articulate his preferences and choices based on an hierarchical understanding where nutritional aspects of foods have superiority to tastes and pleasures.

Correspondingly, in his conceptualization of 'reflexive project of the self' Giddens (1991) points the importance of 'bodily awareness' and 'agency of body' in self-construction and implies that as well as their identities people also work out their bodies through the regimes on health and appearance:

> The reflexivity of the self *extends to the body*, where the body . . . is part of an action system rather than merely a passive object. . . . Body awareness also includes awareness of requirements of exercise and diet. (1991: 77, original emphasis) . . . Experiencing the body is a way of cohering the self as an integrated whole, whereby the individual says 'this is where I live.' (1991: 78)

Bearing Giddens' (1991) emphasis in mind, then, 'body-building' can be considered as a lifestyle in terms of a 'bodily project' incorporated to people's 'reflexive project of the self'. As a result, it can be indicated that

participant incorporates the 'pale glop' scene in *The Matrix* to his everyday life in order to make sense and manifest his self-identity. Through his poaching in the scene he makes use of the representation in order to negotiate his approach towards foods, eating and body. Therefore, participant not only interprets the scene according to his subject-position invested in a certain lifestyle, but also articulates his discursive position through the meaning he adopted. Accordingly, the meaning he derived from the representation becomes a 'discursive element', which he uses in his relationship with himself—particularly with his body and mediates in his manifestation of himself through self-narration. In this manner, through the meaning he poached he not only relates to himself and reinforces his discursive position he is situated but also articulates his stance and manner. He incorporates borrowed 'pale glop' to his autobiographical narration as he narrates his 'reflexive –bodily–project of the self' in which he reflects on and works out his body through a reflexive attention and a specific regime.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This study offers that foodstuff and related practices in films provide an inspirational ground for audience to poach meanings. In their reception, people interpret foodstuff and related practices in films in relation to their social and cultural experiences and make use of the assigned meanings in their everyday lives by recontextualizing them according to their subject positions and in line with their everyday life struggles, adversities, hopes, dreams and fantasies.

Accordingly, the meanings derived from foodstuff and related practices in films constitute discourses to which people position themselves through their self-examinations. In this wise, through their subjectification of

themselves in relation to the discourses, they negotiate with their self-positions and they not only self-realize but also self-transform and self-invent themselves. However, subject-positions occupied in relation to the discourses deriving from foodstuff and related practices in films, do not constitute official and rigid categories attached, but rather construct much more responsive, flexible identifications which are sutured in a straightforward and faster transitiveness through their articulations in their performances and consumption practices. Therefore, the subject-positions they situate themselves in a much more imaginative manner and through their dreams and fantasies do not erode and diminish the struggles and adversities they face due to the rigid and official identity categories (Bourdieu, 2000) they are attached, like their gender or age. However they let people reconsider and reimagine the process of their subjectifications and put them into operation intended to reposition and reconstruct their subjectivities. In this manner, as a discursive element, foodstuff and related practices in films turn into a 'material' to be used in one's formation of oneself and one's subjectification of oneself as subject of one's conduct which are referred as 'aesthetic of existence' and 'art of living' by Foucault (1984/1988). To put it differently, from Giddens' (1991) perspective, foodstuff and related practices in films supply 'creative input' to be processed in

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'reflexive project of the self' which imply one's self-reflexive constitution of one's stance and one's autobiographical narrative. In that respect, it can be inferred from the particular stories of the participants that their constitution of their autobiographical narratives and subjectification of themselves as subjects of their conducts in terms of an 'art of living' through their interpretations and reappropriations of foodstuff and related practices in films suggest an image of modern life style and an aspiration for modern values.

In this wise, the reconsideration and reimagination of the process of their subjectification become a manifestation of one's working out one's relationship with oneself and point one's taking oneself as the object of knowledge and as a domain to be acted upon through self-examination. As discussed, whereas Foucault (1984/1988) problematizes, where is the subject within the disciplinary system of surveillance and normativization; he concludes, subject exists in one's relationship with oneself and in one's effort taking care of oneself through self-examination, self-negotiation, self-transformation to reach self-fulfillment in one's subjectification of oneself, which he valorizes as an 'aesthetics of existence' and 'art of living'. Bearing this in mind, then, foodstuff and related practices in films, incorporate to

audience's everyday lives as 'discursive elements' supplying a trajectory for

their self-negotiation and self-formation and mediate as a set of meanings

used as 'technologies of the self' which Gauntlett (2008) describes as:

> If ethics refers to a person's concern for the self – a set of internal ideas or loose rules – then the 'technologies of the self' are what is actually done about it: the ways that an individual's ethics are manifested in their mindset and actions. Another definition is that 'technologies of the self' refers to the ways in which people put forward, and police, their 'selves' in society; and the ways in which available discourses may enable or discourage various practices of the self. (2008: 135-136) . . . I think we might as well understand technologies of the self as the (internal and external) practice of our (internal) ethics. The ethics are our set of standards to do with being a particular sort of person; the technologies of the self are how we think and act to achieve this. Such acts, though, are not necessarily done 'for show', to give an impression to an audience; they may be practiced for the individual's own sake. (2008: 136-137)

As participants indicate that they reflect on their lives as their own films, it

can be concluded by this study that foodstuff and related practices in films

supply them the inspirational and creative imagery to be borrowed and used

in their own films.

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